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Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical

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An interpretation of the concept of the practical for the field for curriculum must pay critical attention to the philosophies of knowledge in which the interpretation is grounded. The main traditions of social science (broadly conceived as the empirical-analytic, the hermeneutic-phenomenological, and the critical-dialectical) each have associated with them quite distinct ways of knowing and distinct modes of being practical. This paper seeks to demonstrate that it is only through such critical reflection that the questions of greatest significance to the field can be adequately addressed.

The Concept of the Practical

The concept of the practical is little understood. Schwab probably has contributed more than any author, both to a clarification and to a mystification of the concept (1969, 1971, 1973). He has sought clarification by contrasting it with the concept of the theoretic. For example, a common distinction is made between the descriptive and the prescriptive. The task of philosophy has been to clarify epistemologically the logic that governs the transition from "is" to "ought." In education, the problem is more pointed: How does theoretic knowledge generated by educational research translate into curriculum development, educational policy making, and school practice? How can or should teachers make practical use of the knowledge available to them? In attending to these questions, Schwab identifies the goal of the theoretic with truth, and that of the practical with action. Curriculum concerns are practical concerns. Teach-

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ers are confronted continually with situations wherein they must make practical decisions: What knowledge should be included in the curriculum; why; how should it be taught; and to whom? Schwab stresses that educational decisions are always made for concrete classroom situations, for real schools, and for ever-changing contexts. Furthermore, they are made under the constraints of manifold contingent variables over which teachers have only limited control. He goes on to point out that teachers who must make practical decisions cannot rely on a consistent body of educational knowledge. Educational research and theorizing present a complex of alternative, contradictory, and partial theories. In attempting to link the field of theory with practice, Schwab suggests that practical action should be determined by deliberative and eclectic procedures. Educators, he asserts, must be aware of the many alternative and competing theories that can be brought to bear on practical situations. The awareness of alternative theories and their underlying assumptions, premises, principles, and methods will then help to prevent educators from adopting a narrow and doctrinaire perspective.

A preliminary problem involved in understanding Schwab's papers on "the practical" is the determination of what, precisely, Schwab is attempting to portray in them. It is clear that his "language of the practical" does not describe things empirically as they are. Practical deliberation, as conceived by Schwab, is seldom realized in concrete situations. Teachers freely engage in much talk about their everyday curriculum practices. But whether this talk is heard in the staff room or around the curriculum committee table, it seldom displays the level of deliberative reflectivity that one might hope to hear. When teachers are involved in the process of daily planning, adapting materials, developing courses, arranging subject matter content, teaching, evaluating, and so forth, they do so largely uncritically and unreflectively. This is the attitude of everyday work. The practical in this sense is a concern of ordinary life; it expresses itself in the routines or taken for granted grounds of daily activities.

Another way of looking at Schwab's concept of the practical is by way of Max Weber's notion of "ideal type." An ideal type is a conceptual formulation in social science that is regarded as a working hypothesis until its realistic worth has been demonstrated by observation. An ideal type is created by means of a one-sided emphasis and intensification of one or several aspects of a given event (Shils and Finch 1949). In a sense, this is what Schwab's concept of the practical seems to be. But Weber insists that an ideal type is not just a fictional mental construct. The ideal type of the practical must be found somewhere; it must be visible in the work of some educators. Ideal type is, then, a descriptive device usable both as a tool for classification and as an instrument for understanding reality. Schwab's concept of the practical appears to be insufficiently clear at present to qualify as an ideal type in curriculum. For example, it is not clear what particular events and procedures are described by the concept of the practical; nor is it possible to see where the

construct of the practical can be found in the field of curriculum development.

Instead of interpreting Schwab's concept of the practical empirically or as an ideal type, another way of regarding it is as a *recommendation* for the practical use of educational knowledge in an increasingly reflective manner. Schwab stresses that, in making practical decisions, educators ought to be aware of alternative and conflicting theories, and of the underlying assumptions, principles, and premises of knowledge. Practical deliberation, he states, "must make every effort to trace the branching pathways of consequences which may flow from each alternative and affect desiderata. It must then weigh alternatives and their costs and consequences against one another, and choose, not the *right* alternative, for there is no such thing, but the *best* one" (1969, p. 36).

The most significant problem associated with Schwab's recommendations for viewing curriculum in terms of the practical arises from his use of a narrowly conceived philosophy of knowledge. His references to theory and science suggest that his usage is largely aligned with that commonly accepted in North American scientific discourse. It appears also that his theory of the practical is motivated mainly by the frustrations of educators in their attempt to gain more effective control, by means of scientific knowledge, over the practical activities of curriculum development. Schwab does not give evidence in his writing that he is aware of philosophies of knowledge rooted in paradigms other than the dominant empirical-analytic one. In short, despite an emerging body of curriculum literature that is rooted in different forms of knowledge (phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, and critical theory, for example), the concept of the practical as Schwab presents it is still subservient to the one-dimensional world of empirical-analytic science.

The Practical as Effective Control

Criticism of the role of science in contemporary society has been provided by authors from a variety of orientations. For example, Roszak (1969) has likened science with its objectifying and dehumanizing attitude to the great myth we accept without question. The cultural preoccupation with objectivity functions as a state of being, he says, which fills the very air we breathe in a scientific culture. According to Roszak, it grips us subliminally in all we say, feel, and do. Like most social scientists in North America since the nineteenth century, educators have had almost total reverence for the promise science has seemed to hold for the guidance of practical human affairs. As science victoriously entered the twentieth century, curriculum was born as an independent field of endeavor.¹ An excellent account of the optimism of the early proponents of a scientific curriculum making can be found in the review, by Decker Walker (1975a), of the Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. He writes:

The authors of the Yearbook placed their professional faith in an authoritative science of education. They relied implicitly and explicitly on science as valida-

tion for practices and policies, and therefore they turned to science to justify their own stance—that curriculum-making was properly the responsibility of professional curriculumists. The science of education was hope rather than accomplishment then and has remained so to this day, leaving at best a shaky foundation for claims of professional expertise concerning curriculum. . . .

. . . in asserting the importance of scientific study in curriculum-making . . . they did not indicate any reservations or limitations about scientific study, nor did they acknowledge any competing positions. [pp. 265, 273]

A curious change in the concept of curriculum is visible in the way science was applied to the practical task of curriculum making. Until the late 1920s and especially in Bobbitt's *How to Make a Curriculum*, Charters's *Curriculum Construction*, and in the work of their contemporaries, science was used for the determination of the "what" of curriculum. Scientific methods were employed with the intention of determining socially worthwhile knowledge. However, since Bobbitt and many of his contemporaries operated on the basic assumptions of a no-change, status-quo model of society, the question "What is most worth knowing?" was never really answered. Such developments led Bode, an early critic of the doctrine of scientific curriculum making, to remark: "Just how Bobbitt expects a scientific analysis to reveal desirable abilities and needs I am quite unable to discover. No scientific analysis known to man can determine the desirability or the need of anything" (1975, p. 42).

It was in the late twenties, and most clearly with the work of Charters, that the emphasis in curriculum gradually shifted from a concern with the "what" to a concern with the "how." While Charters, like Bobbitt, applied the practical method of activity analysis for curriculum development to many diverse fields, he also began to apply the techniques of activity analysis to the task of teacher education. Kliebard (1975) has shown how Charter's teacher education program, such as *The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study* of 1929, is a direct precursor of the modern competency-based and performance-based teacher education programs. Before 1920, science was used primarily to determine most effectively the nature of the curriculum content. But as scientific method became applied to teacher education, the idea of "curriculum-as-effective-content" changed into the idea of "curriculum-as-effective-treatment." Probably as a result of the expanding knowledge field, which placed a heavy burden on the amount of subject matter to be taught, the significant curriculum concern now became how to teach more knowledge more effectively. Science was mobilized for the technological determination of the most effective curriculum organizations and approaches for teaching more content. In a sense, curriculum concerns (what is valid knowledge?) were subverted by scientific method into teaching concerns (what are valid ways of teaching the knowledge?).

The early scientific approach to curriculum making found its critics in the 1920s with men such as Bode. In more recent times, parallel critiques of the behavioral doctrines of empirical-analytic science are

provided by a variety of authors.² Huebner, for example, has recently written:

Current curricular ideology reflects, almost completely, a technical value system. It has a means-end rationality that approaches an economic model. End states, end products, or objectives are specified as carefully and as accurately as possible, hopefully in behavioral terms. Activities are then designed which become the means to these ends or objectives. [1975, p. 223]

The concern evident here has been voiced at an even more fundamental level by Jurgen Habermas, one of whose main concerns has been to expose the ideological character of the empirical-analytic sciences in favor of a reconstructed logic of the practical.³ According to Habermas, scientific inquiry has become a one-dimensional world which produces knowledge of a certain kind. Because of its position of dominance over the field of research and theory development, scientific knowledge tends to be reduced to empirical-analytic knowledge in the sense of strict nomothetic theory development or "soft" variations thereof. The danger of a pervading positivist ideology, according to Habermas, is the danger of an exclusively technical civilization devoid of any connection between theory and praxis. Modern industrial society is threatened by the splitting of its consciousness, and by the splitting of human beings into two classes—social engineers and inmates of closed institutions (Habermas 1974, p. 282).

In a culture where the knowledge industry is dominated strongly by an attitude of accountability and human engineering, it is not surprising that the predominant concern of educational practice has become an instrumental preoccupation with *techniques*, *control*, and with means-ends criteria of *efficiency* and *effectiveness*. This concern is visible in the attempt of school systems to improve education by perfecting the administration, and in the heavy emphasis of educational institutes on programs modeled on movements such as competency-based teacher education and performance-based teacher education. The shortcomings of these models lie in their preoccupation with the measurement of learning outcomes, the quantification of achievement, and the management of educational objectives. Critics have argued that this instrumental-practical preoccupation of curriculum prevents more consequential questions from being asked: the question of determining what is, in fact, most worth the students' while, with respect both to purposes and experiences provided by the curriculum.

Empirical-analytic science cannot deal with the issue of worthwhile-ness of educational objectives or with the quality of educational experience. Instead, curriculum is approached as a nexus of behavioral modes which must be monitored, objectified, rationalized, and made accountable. Habermas's theory of cognitive interests shows, from a critical point of view, that much contemporary curriculum thinking and educational theorizing is motivated by a guiding interest which is "practical" only in a technical or managerial sense. The use of empirical-analytic knowledge

which specifies cause-effect relationships, and functional relations of teaching and learning behaviors, and curriculum variables is grounded in its rational-technical manipulability. This technical-instrumental attitude is reflected in teacher education programs where the need for *practical relevancy* is defined in terms of how best to increase teacher competency and curriculum effectiveness. For the teacher, this means that he must learn to apply a variety of techniques to the curriculum and to the teaching-learning process, so that a predetermined set of objectives can be realized most efficiently and most effectively. The relationship between knowledge and practical action is made up of a stock of practical insights in the form of principle-governed techniques and "know-hows," derived from research and propositional theory. It is very difficult for educators not to invest knowledge and theory with technical significance. The dominant position of empirical-analytic science in education and curriculum assures that the practical question is converted almost automatically into an instrumental one: How can knowledge make the curriculum more effective, more efficient, and more productive? The point is not that these are bad questions, but that there are other questions to be asked.

In addition to the epistemological inadequacy of the scientific metaphor, there is increasing suspicion that the concept of curriculum as "applied technique" or as "effective intervention" is inadequate empirically. It is inadequate because there is little evidence that any systematic curriculum treatment large enough to be statistically interesting has been significant in its outcome. Even in cases of system-wide applications of school curricula, it has been difficult to demonstrate differential effects of the curriculum in cognitive achievements (see Walker and Schaffarzick 1974). Home background and social milieu have been shown to be the most significant determinants of student achievement. Large-scale curriculum projects, especially designed to teach subject matter in a more effective manner, do not seem to make appreciable differences overriding those attributable to social class or ethnic background. Teachers know that students enter schools with basic differences possibly reflecting a complex interaction of physiological, biographical, and environmental factors. But, for practical purposes, student achievement cannot be reduced unequivocally to immutable indices of learning ability, attitude, intelligence, etc. Constant reinterpretation of educational research has thrown sufficient doubt on its results that the only moral stance possible is to take nothing for granted.

THE CONCEPT OF ORIENTATION

An examination of the concept of orientation provides both an illustration of the paucity of the scientific metaphor and a way to move toward a more adequate interpretation of the practical.

In formulating learning objectives, educators and methods texts frequently make use of the term "skills" to refer to many cognitive processes to be taught by the curriculum. However, the word "skills" is am-

biguous. It may refer to trainable techniques, procedures, or ways of accomplishing things. This is an instrumental interpretation of skills. But the term may also refer to cognitive processes inappropriately conceived of as trainable in a technical-instrumental sense. For example, it may refer to the critical ability to "see," "perceive," or "notice" things to which other people are unreceptive. Daniels (1975) uses the term "orientation" to refer to such abilities as receptivity. An example of the difference between *technical* skill verbs and *orientational* skill verbs is as follows. In response to the question, "What did you do all morning?" you might say, "I spent this morning memorizing a poem." But you cannot say, "I spent this morning noticing the problem of racism." From an empirical-analytic perspective, the curriculum can deal with technical skills in a means-end manner. But from the same perspective, the notion of "skills as orientations" poses problems which are frequently glossed over. Daniels points out that the pedagogical problem, with respect to "orientations," is that of what we should do to prepare people to be receptive to things. "How can we organize the curriculum so that such and such an orientation skill can be achieved by a certain group of students?" The question might have been, "How can the curriculum produce such and such orientations in pupils?" From an instrumental frame of reference involving measurable objectives, no exact answer can be given.

The point is that "orientation," in the way the term is being used here, often refers to the more significant aspects of the school curriculum. For example, in social studies education students may develop a critical orientation to social problems. The concept of orientation can be understood as the existential referent in such phrases as "having an orientation"; e.g., a scientist has a particular orientation toward the world. Similarly, teachers and students may have various orientations with respect to certain issues or subject matter. Thus, the term "orientation" refers to the specific ways in which an individual looks at the world. Concepts with roughly equivalent meanings are "world view" (*Weltanschauung*), and Von Uexkull's ethological concepts of *Umwelt* and *Wirkwelt* referring to orientations typical of specific species. The concept of orientation also refers to the way in which individual actors define their "action-world" (Parsons 1949); it refers to the "general schemes" in terms of which the individual "defines his situation" (Thomas 1951); and, in ordinary language, it includes the notions of point of view, perspective, a person's way of looking at things, outlook, standpoint, and so on. Underlying every orientation is a definite epistemology, axiology, and ontology; i.e., a person's orientation is composed of what he believes to be true, to be valuable, and to be real. This means that *change* with respect to a specific orientation may be rather drastic with respect to any of these three dimensions. An orientation has the uncanny quality of encapsulating the person who has learned to adopt it. As soon as a student enters a certain realm of thought, be it science or Zen, he has to make the rules of this realm his own; consequently, the evidences flowing from them will appear compelling to him.

In the school curriculum, the concept of orientation may function as a device for making visible how each subject matter or knowledge area constitutes a way of making sense of the world.

As a student, I remember how upon entering an art class my orientation radically shifted from the one I had adopted during a biology lesson. During biology the teacher discussed the structure and function of the human hand. We observed the evolutionary characteristics in the hand bones of a Primate, an Australopithecus, and in modern man. And we noted how there was the straightening of the fingers in this series, and a broadening and lengthening of the last *phalanx* of the thumb. The advances in the opposability of the thumb and the related hand musculature perfected this remarkable organ of manipulation. However, then I walked into an art appreciation class. Some students chuckled as if caught by surprise; there, on the teacher's desk was a marvelous replica of Rodin's sculpture of the Praying Hands. The sensitive fingers, extending upwards in a devoted plea, transcending their instrumental function. How miraculously they expressed their earth-bound spirituality! I experienced the shift in orientation that came over me. I was in a different world with its own reality, its own values, feelings, and beliefs. How inappropriate it would be to think of the *saddle joint*, the *abductor pollicis*, or the *evolution of the last phalanx of the pollex*. How could something so familiar as a hand be a member of such different realities? Taking my place in the classroom, I put my books down and involuntarily regarded my own hands. What strange objects if you thought about it! My own reflections took me back to the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. This author recalls how he once, in reaching under the table for something he had dropped, "saw" his own hand groping. And for a moment it was as if this "thing" was leading a life of its own. It became a foreign object, or being of a different world, acting on its own mysterious impulse. I pondered about this curious phenomenon of being so alienated from something so typically human as a hand. How sensitive the man Rilke must have been to describe this experience in such poetic language that it left an indelible impression upon my mind. I tried to recall the exact words the poet used but the art teacher had started to speak. A quick glance at my neighbour told me that he had opened his book at a chapter on sculpture. The teacher was holding up Rodin's carving and again I was aware of a shift of orientation occurring from the reality of my private imagination to the reality of the classroom. [van Manen 1973, pp. 178-88]

Moving from one orientation to another is usually experienced as a transition between two worlds—as a shift from one reality to another. Alfred Schutz speaks of "experiences of shock" that occur when we move from one reality or orientation (he uses the term "province of meaning") to another. There are as many shock experiences as there are different realities in which a person partakes. Schutz provides some examples:

. . . the shock of falling asleep as the leap into the world of dreams; the inner transformation we endure if the curtain in the theatre rises as the transition into the world of the stageplay; the radical change in our attitude if, before a painting, we permit our visual field to be limited by what is within the frame as the passage into the pictorial world; our quandary, relaxing into laughter, if, in listening to a joke, we are for a short time ready to accept the fictitious world of the jest as a reality in relation to which the world of our daily life

takes on the character of foolishness; the child's turning toward his toy as the transition into the play-world; and so on. But also the religious experiences in all their varieties—for instance, Kierkegaard's experience of the "instant" as the leap into the religious sphere—is such a shock as well as the decision of the scientist to replace all passionate participation in the affairs of "this world" by a disinterested contemplative attitude. [1973, p. 231]

I use the term "co-orientational grasping" to refer to the situation in which one person partakes in the orientation of another. Co-orientational grasping occurs when a parent is playing with a child and momentarily suspends his or her beliefs in ordinary reality in exchange for the beliefs and feelings of the world of the child. And, of course, co-orientational grasping occurs in the classroom when, for example, the social studies teacher lets the student live through some historical event, or when the teacher perceptively pulls the student into the world of the Black Experience. Thus, co-orientational grasping is built into the teacher-learner relationship.

Now, the teacher can make *practical* use of this relationship if he manages to arrive at a reflective knowledge of the structure and function of the notion of orientation. It is not enough simply to make use of an orientation. One must understand the experience of having an orientation and of having a specific one. The teacher must also know how an orientation is being used. Questions the teacher must ask himself should refer to the nature of the student orientation: "What kind of reality do young people live in?" "What is the nature of their beliefs?" "What is considered valuable and important within their orientation toward their social world?" Close examination of an individual's projects and actions makes possible the phenomenological study of the relationship of the experiencing individual to his physical and social world.

The Practical as Communicative Understanding

The practical, as the achievement of communicative understanding of educational expressions, educational actions, and educational experiences, finds its theoretical roots in the interpretation theory of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Gadamer. The contemporary knowledge sources for interpretive practices are phenomenology, hermeneutics, analytic philosophy, ethnomethodology, aesthetics, and the humanities. Hermeneutics may be defined as the science of interpretation, or as the phenomenology of social understanding. Within the context of a hermeneutic framework, curriculum is seen as the study of educational experience and as the communicative analysis of curriculum perspectives, orientations, frameworks, etc. That is, curriculum knowledge is tied to practical educational experience through a concept of curriculum as analysis, interpretation, and communication. This practical attitude is reflected in the work and courses of curriculumists whose approach to curriculum is focused on interpersonal communication, on group processes, on practical deliberation, and on critical analysis of

meanings, claims, and implications of curriculum programs and positions. From the perspective of hermeneutics there are no such things as stimuli, responses, or measurable behaviors; instead, there are encounters, lifeworlds, and meanings, which invite investigation. The focus is on actions, not on behaviors. That is, the approach is not primarily interested in the development of hypotheses and nomothetic propositions regarding the effectiveness of teacher behavior and the curriculum. It is concerned with making visible and understandable (in an existential sense) the educational experiences, actions, and the changing perceptions and preconceptions of teachers, learners, and other participants of the curriculum process. The interpretive approach to curriculum seeks to analyze and clarify meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, and presuppositions. This approach attempts to make experientially meaningful the curriculum as a subjective and interpersonal process. "Understanding," says Peter Winch, "is grasping the point of what is being done or said. This is a notion far removed from the world of statistics and causal laws: it is closer to the realm of discourse and to the internal relations that link the parts of a realm of discourse" (1958, p. 115). Rather than criticizing the hermeneutic idea of knowledge or understanding by applying to it the exacting standards of the strict sciences, one must realize that the concept of knowledge in the hermeneutic-phenomenological sense has little to do with, nor is it in competition with, the categories of knowledge and explanatory understanding of empirical-analytic science. The hermeneutic method, according to Gadamer (1975), has as its task a discovery of knowledge in the sense of *Verstehen* (understanding) that cannot be attained by the strict or empirical-analytic sciences.

William Dilthey (1914) had already provided for an articulation of the *human* or *cultural* sciences. Dilthey, of course, makes the epistemological distinction between the cognitive activities of the cultural sciences and those of the behavioral sciences. The cognitive task of the behavioral sciences is to *explain* by means of causal principles or hypothesized correlations among variables. In contrast, the cultural sciences seek to provide for an *understanding* of the ways in which man subjectively and culturally experiences (perceives, interprets, plans, acts, feels, values, construes) the social world. According to Dilthey (1962), we explain nature, man we must understand. Understanding involves the capacity to grasp the inner realities of the human world—empathy. In ordinary English, we speak of an "understanding look" which suggests more than mere objective knowledge. In Dilthey's terms, we understand ourselves and others only in re-experiencing, by inserting our own experienced life into every form of expression of our own and others' lives. Understanding is reserved to designate the operation in which the mind grasps the mind (*Geist*) of the other person. It is not a purely cognitive operation of the mind at all, but that special moment when life understands life. We explain by means of purely intellectual processes, but we understand by means of the combined activity of all the mental powers in

apprehending. Practical understanding, in Dilthey's sense, is situated in the study of three types of human expressions: linguistic expressions, nonverbal expressions such as gesticulations, and actions. While Dilthey attempted to provide a framework for the epistemological claims made by *Verstehende* social science, Heidegger (1962) moved beyond Dilthey in providing insights into the ontological character of understanding. His concept of understanding reaches a deeper dimension of meaning. For Heidegger, understanding is the power to grasp one's own possibilities for being within the context of the lifeworld in which one exists (see Palmer 1969).

WAYS OF KNOWING

Heidegger distinguishes between two senses of knowing. This distinction is a critique of the more traditional distinctions between thinking and feeling, or between cognitive and affective domains of thought. Among many educators there is a rather sharp conceptual distinction made between knowledge and feelings. Conventionally, theoretical or technical-practical knowledge helps us understand human behavior or it helps us to deal with practical problems in concrete situations. Feelings are considered to be more subjective and less reliable categories, in an empirical-analytic sense, of human thought. This is so even though we admit how feelings usually accompany beliefs. Feelings and knowledge go hand in hand in the learning process. But it is this conceptual distinction between feeling and knowing that Heidegger has substituted, at least in part, for a new concept of knowing. One is reminded of Dilthey when Heidegger replaces the categories of feelings and knowledge with two forms of knowing. In the German language, this distinction is noted by comparing the terms *Erkennen* (knowing) and *Verstehen* (understanding). The word *Erkennen* refers to the traditional sense of theoretical-practical knowledge as it is used in empirical-analytic science. Heidegger employs a special use of the term "moods" to clarify the idea of knowledge that is capable of cognitively grasping the world—our personal world or the world of cultural experience. Heidegger's concept of understanding (*Verstehen*) is closely bound to the concepts of "world" and of "disclosure" or "unconcealment." Disclosures of human lifeworlds are instances of knowledge as understanding. Such disclosures are accomplished by means of a hermeneutic-phenomenological method.

It is the task of hermeneutics or phenomenology to make visible the meaning structures embedded in the lifeworlds which belong to the human expressions under study. For this task, interpretive devices are needed to tease out the hidden meanings from culturally or historically alien "documents." These documents may be texts, art forms, social events, symbolic structures, or actions. This then is a task of hermeneutics: to make available interpretive procedures in a phenomenological rather than in a technological sense. The purpose is to gain practical access, say, to the variety of curriculum data emanating from the planning, teaching, and evaluative stages of curriculum practices. At the

classroom level, the hermeneutic orientation seeks to enhance communication and existential understanding among teacher and students; and at the more general level of curriculum planning, policy, and development, the interpretive approach seeks to enhance communication and interpersonal understanding among all participants of the curriculum development process. The attempt is to self-reflectively explicate assumptions, grounds, axioms, preferences, and points of view governing one's curriculum thinking, so that others can make one's orientation debatable or topical for deliberation. Curriculum orientations which tend toward the hermeneutic approach define curriculum as: (1) the analysis of educational experience; (2) curriculum as deliberation, choice making, and consensus seeking; and (3) curriculum as qualitative and aesthetic approaches to development and evaluation. However, in a brief discussion of the hermeneutic model, Macdonald has pointed to the fact that even in these orientations there remains some preoccupation with the rhetoric of technical control (1975, p. 292).

THE CONCEPT OF EXPERIENCE

From the empirical-analytic frame, experience is something that consists of aggregates of distinct, separable perceptions, conceptions, and skills. Educational experience, in this sense, is the experimental ground upon which our knowledge is constructed. It is a past-oriented, cause-and-effect image of experience that David Hume offered to empirical-analytic science. The study of human experience revealed a regular order of contiguity and succession of the objects of experience.

It appears not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature, but also that this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind and has never been the subject of dispute either in philosophy or common life. . . .

It seems certain that however we may imagine we feel liberty within ourselves, a spectator can commonly infer our actions from our motives and character; and even where he cannot, he concludes in general that he might, were he perfectly acquainted with every circumstance of our situation and temper, and the most secret springs of our complexion and disposition. [Hume 1955, pp. 98, 103-04]

Such a concept of experience as has been articulated by Hume has made possible behavioral learning theory and a curriculum view of teaching and learning that can be formulated in measurable units of cognition and in specifiable behaviors. Thus, learning outcomes are perceived not as a result of an intentional and voluntaristic activity, but rather as natural, inevitable, causal, or correlational processes. Those are the assumptions on which the idea of curriculum as effective treatment is based. In contrast, experience as perceived from the phenomenological frame is future-oriented. It is based on a concept of experience that requires openness and choice, and that presumes the possibility of reflective actions and voluntary commitments.

Gadamer has worked out a concept of experience which is not based on sense data. It is the experience of reflection. Experience in this sense is always seen as contributing to our understanding of something. Gadamer traces the concept of "experience" (by means of the German word *Erlebnis*) to its historical origin.

In the eighteenth century it (*Erlebnis*) is not found at all, and even Schiller and Goethe do not know it. Its first appearance, seemingly, is in one of Hegel's letters. But even in the thirties and forties I know of only occasional instances (in Tieck, Alexis and Gutzkow). The word appears equally seldom in the fifties and sixties and appears suddenly with some frequency in the seventies. The word comes into general use at the time as it begins to be used in biographical writing. [1975, p. 55]

The noun *Erlebnis* (experience) is derived from the verb *Erleben*, which means "to relive" or "to be still alive when something happens." In Webster's, the English word "experience" also connotes "living through," although the etymology of the term is the (Latin) *experientia* which denotes "trial, proof, experiment," and "(to put to) test." The meaning of the English word "experience" also has experimental overtones. This is of interest, since it may explain, at least in part, the difficulty of rendering an English equivalent of the German *Erlebnis*. This difficulty reflects the empirical-analytic orientation of the Anglo-American tradition, in contrast to the more dialectic-hermeneutic one of the Continental stream of thought, illustrated by the word *Erlebnis*.

According to Gadamer, it was Dilthey who first gave a conceptual function to the word "experience." In his essay "Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung" ("Experience and Poetry"), Dilthey (1958) compared Goethe with Rousseau by employing the concept of experience to describe the new kind of writing in which Rousseau turned to the world of his inner experiences. In this context, experience refers to the phenomenon of the immediacy with which something real is grasped, in contrast to something one presumes to know, but the confirmation of which comes through one's own experience. Gadamer states that the word "the experienced" (*das Erlebte*) is used to mean "the permanent content of what is experienced. This content is like a yield or a residue that acquires permanence, weight and significance from out of the transience of experiencing" (1975, p. 55). For Dilthey, the concept experience was seen as a unit or form of consciousness. This view was based on a teleologically conceived life philosophy and also on Husserl's phenomenological concept of experience. Experiences exist only insofar as something is experienced and meant in them. Thus, experiences are intentional and intentions belong to subjects or individuals and to acts of consciousness. Gadamer characterizes hermeneutics as the confluence point of the phenomenology of Husserl, the historicism of Dilthey, and the hermeneutic-existential philosophy of Heidegger.

But Dilthey's formulation of *Verstehen* as the method for the human and cultural sciences is still naive in its epistemological foundation. Gadamer is careful to point out the shortcomings of the subjectivist

theory of intuitive or empathic transposition of the interpreter. He describes the hermeneutic method as an historical, linguistic, and dialectical process. The *Verstehende* method is not a mysterious communion of souls; rather, it is the partaking in a common meaning.

MAKING SENSE TOGETHER

The hermeneutic–phenomenological process, according to Gadamer, is of a conversational nature. It is a type of dialogue which is not adversative but, as Socrates expressed it, “like friends talking together.” This programmatic idea of method as friendly dialogue characterizes all phenomenological social science. For example, John O’Neill (1974) entitles his introduction to “wild” sociology “Making Sense Together.” McHugh, Raffel, Foss, and Blum explicate the collaborative process of analytical sociology as follows:

Our conception of analysis—analysis which is reflexive and yet can be spoken—requires collaboration. By this we mean that it requires an ego who speaks and thereby denies his auspices and an alter who formulates the auspices ego forgets by speaking. . . . our format is consistent with our analytic notion in that original papers are like egos, responses are like alters, and editing portrays the relationship between ego and alter. . . . The papers in this book should be conceived of as displays which require alters. This is where readers come in. Readers are asked to treat our papers reflexively. They are asked to become our collaborators. This is our version of how to read. [McHugh et al. 1974, pp. 7–8]

For Gadamer, too, reading an author who has something to say amounts to a collaborative activity. I, as reader, discover my own motives in conversing with the author. I also discover what interests me about the topic or subject matter to which the author has addressed himself. And by discovering my interests, I learn or am instructed in the topic about which I have questions. According to Gadamer, one starts with answers and ends with questions, in the sense that the reader is now being questioned by the author or by the text materials.

The notion of prejudice is important for the curriculum specialist, and Gadamer’s treatment of it is interesting. In empirical–analytic science, the canons of objectivity guard against possible intrusions of bias or prejudice into the methodology of scientific research and theorizing. But from the interpretive frame of hermeneutics, says Gadamer, prejudice (pre-judgment) is unavoidable since it is an epistemological feature of the theory of interpretation. In every cultural activity we are addressed by traditions, he states—we stand in traditions. And since every interpreter (and educator) always starts with his own existentially defined situation, this orientation will lead him both to pose particular questions and to perceive certain meanings from the materials he is examining.

What does this mean for curriculum—especially for the deliberative activity of evaluating curriculum materials for practical use? It means that, phenomenologically, it is apparently wrong to conceive of analyzing curriculum materials simply as a *recovering* of meanings, understandings,

and intentions somehow *objectively contained* in the texts. Such a statement is not intended to suggest that a text does not have its own integrity. There is a prevalent attitude among educators in which the difference between the role of the university-based, subject-matter specialist and the classroom teacher is seen as being the same as that between *makers* and *users* of a product. Here the teacher is likened to a consumer requiring training in deliberative skills so that he can make informed choices from among alternatives (see Connelly 1972). Such an epistemological consumerism sees the curriculum *expert* offering practical knowledge of educational theory to the *user*, in the same manner that an advertising business or clothing industry offers styles from the tradition of fashion. The danger of this instrumental, *user-expert*, metaphor lies in its tendency to render a superficial understanding of both the interpretive processes involved in curriculum materials adaptation, and the development process as a whole.

INTERPRETATION IN THE CURRICULUM

A teacher who adopts a certain set of curriculum materials as part of his instructional program has to make the intentions and the orientation of the author(s) of the materials his own. It is naive to believe that this is achieved easily. Moreover, it is wrong to suppose that the orientation and intentions of curriculum materials are simply there to be "scooped up." Even collaborators on curriculum projects seldom share the same fundamental orientation. (Think, for example, of the different views held by the developers of *Man: A Course of Study*.) Once a curriculum has materialized, it acquires a voice of its own, so to speak. And thereafter the meanings engendered by the materials are interpreted meanings.

In some respect, curriculum practice is not unlike that of jurisprudence. In law, the objective is to make practical judgments on the basis of the determination of the state of mind, the intentions, and the private perceptions of individuals brought before the courts. One persistent issue of the jurisprudential enterprise is the determination of what went on in the mind of a defendant. This is exemplified by a recent headline in *Time* magazine which read: "The Battle about Patty Hearst's Mind." In curriculum (as in law), justifications, defenses, and judgments are constructed in the process of formulating formal procedures and acceptable rules for practical actions. Teachers do not act on the basis of informed scientific knowledge; rather, they select their courses of action by referring to established norms and precedents for ways of acting that have come to constitute acceptable practice. From the jurisprudential perspective, the study of what constitutes *valid* curriculum—rather than *effective* or *efficient* curriculum—focuses on the legitimating, the rule-determining, and the policy-constituting, practical activities of educators.

Hermeneutic-phenomenological knowledge is practical insofar as it provides for the justification and legitimation of common practices. It is practical also in the very act of bringing about fundamental understandings. For some subject-matter areas, the communication metaphor (rather

than the technological, input–output metaphor) might be more appropriate to describe the events of teaching and learning. In a communication sense, the very act of achieving a genuine understanding constitutes a teaching–learning act. Coming to an understanding is a sense-making and an interpretive enterprise. In this context, practical knowledge does not consist of technical–practical recommendations derived from empirical–analytic theory and research. Practical knowledge, in a communicative sense, is provided by those phenomenological and interpretive bodies of knowledge and literature that help the teacher gain access to the *Verstehende* reality of human lifeworlds.

I am reminded from personal experience, for example, that in Dutch teacher education colleges there was a form of literature and knowledge, available to beginning teachers, that seemed almost totally absent in North American educational programs. This literature was of a phenomenological character, exploring the mind of the growing child and of the inner world of the social reality in which pupils live.⁴ Beginning teachers were exposed to a form of pedagogy and didactics, known as philosophical or pedagogical anthropology. The practical usefulness of such material was not of a technical–instrumental nature. It did not yield practical know-hows, rules, and steps for modifying, structuring, or controlling behavior, performances, etc.; rather, this knowledge was practical in its potential for orienting teachers' actions in practical communicative situations. The programmatic character of the phenomenological idea of knowledge (in the sense of communicative and interpretive understanding [*Verstehen*]) was situated in a sphere of experiential immediacy that rendered such knowledge, if valid, practically relevant. A serious study of hermeneutics for curriculum may have far-reaching consequences for the deliberative processes; reflectivity may increase and communication become clearer.

The Practical as Critical Reflection

From a critical frame as described by Habermas, however, even the phenomenological idea of the practical, as reflectively displaying alternative orientations and traditions together with the accomplishment of interpretive and interpersonal understandings, is limited. The higher level of practical reflectivity, says Habermas, coincides with the progress in the autonomy of the individual, with the elimination of human misery, and with the facilitation of concrete happiness. Habermas's critique suggests that hermeneutics and phenomenological social theory falls short in its analysis of the nature of communication and consensus, as the achievement of practical understandings. In his view, hermeneutics has no adequate way of dealing with the theoretical–practical problem of systematically distorted patterns of communication that reside in the historical structures of everyday institutions. Hermeneutics cannot, according to Habermas, provide criteria by which the practical would be elevated to its original classical status, thereby addressing questions of wis-

dom and the art of living. In the major tradition of philosophy, he says, the relation of theory and praxis always referred to the good and the righteous—as well as the true—and to the life, both private and collective, of individuals as well as of citizens (Habermas 1974, p. 253). Habermas articulates a critical paradigm for describing, understanding, and improving the quality of human life. This critical paradigm implies a commitment to an unlimited inquiry, a constant critique, and a fundamental self-criticism that is most vital to the critical tradition he furthers.

The cognitive interest of this enlightenment theory is declared critical; it presupposed a specific experience, which is set down in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, just as it is in Freud's psycho-analysis—the experience of an emancipation by means of critical insight into relationships of power, the objectivity of which has as its source solely that the relationships have not been seen through. Critical reason gains power analytically over dogmatic inhibition. [Habermas 1974, p. 254]

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

From a critical frame, curriculum knowledge is tied to educational practice through a concept of curriculum as both critical analysis and emancipation. Such a practical attitude as this has not been explored much by curriculumists. However, it is recognizable in the work of educators such as Paulo Freire.

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women participate in the transformation of their world. [Shaul 1970, p. 15]

The critical approach to curriculum seeks to establish interpersonal and social conditions necessary for genuine self-understanding, emancipatory learning, and critical consciousness. Examples of this approach are probably best provided by some of the experiments in alternative schooling, by the curriculum practices of oppressed or minority groups (e.g., black studies), by the raising of critical consciousness among citizens, and by the (culturally) more acceptable rhetorics of the women's liberation movement. The organizational character of this approach is dialogical.

According to Freire, the possibility for the development of a critical consciousness (“conscientization”) is directly related to the practical possibilities of reflective understanding. This practical possibility, says Freire, is dependent on the critical participation of men in their attempt to understand the norms they have embraced as part of their institutionalized social roles. “In problem-posing education, men develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freire 1970, pp. 70–71). Conscientization, in Freire's sense, is the paradigm for

critical practice. It refers to the process in which men, as knowing subjects rather than as recipients, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. Thus, the practical as emancipatory action (in the sense of praxis) has a quality that transforms the life of the person who adopts this highly reflective frame.

CRITICAL THOUGHT

The social significance of such a radically reflective concept of the practical has been explored in a most scholarly manner by Habermas. However, because his writings are steeped in philosophical and social scientific traditions, and his style, at times, is both academic and convoluted, Habermas's works are not easily accessible to educators less familiar with the literature relevant to critical theory. His importance for educators is that he makes available a thoroughly intellectual tradition of scholarship and research for a form of practical reasoning and action that is, like Freire's work, rooted in an emancipatory concern for man and society.

Key concepts in Habermas's critical theory are: the epistemological theory of "cognitive interests" which reside in all forms of knowledge; the sociolinguistic notion of "communicative competence"; the analytical concept of the "ideal situation of communication"; and the normative theory of "systematically distorted communication." Critical theory utilizes a method of reflectivity differing from those of the empirical-analytic and the hermeneutic-phenomenological paradigms in that it employs an *emancipatory* concept of truth. Truth is recognized in the deliberative rationality of formulating norms, roles, and knowledge about possible ways of life—ways undistorted by repressive forms of authority, privilege, and the vested interests of exploitation. Truth as social wisdom acquires the meaning of justice, the possibility for happiness, and the undistorted life forms in the practical art of living. Such truth can come about, according to Habermas, only in an ideal situation of communication. An ideal situation of communication is a distortion-free model of a consensus-seeking community—the prototype of participatory democracy.

Habermas argues that every person has an understanding of the meaning of an ideal communication situation by virtue of the fact that every speaker of a language possesses what Chomsky (1965) has called "communicative competence." Everyone who speaks a natural language has intuitive knowledge of it, and therefore, according to Habermas, is confident of being able to distinguish a true consensus from a false one. An ideal communication situation specifies norms and roles of a social situation in such a manner that no repressive dominance, asymmetry, or inequality exists among the participants of that social situation. In Habermas's words, it belongs to the "structure of possible conversation that we contrafactually operate as if the imputation of an ideal speech situation were not simply fictitious but real" (Habermas 1970, p. 132). The concept of ideal speech situation is an abstraction which posits a

pure (democratic) symmetry of relations among the participants of the communicative process. But even though few social situations are likely to be characterized by such symmetry, the power of the concept of ideal speech is quite real since it provides a measuring stick against which hidden patterns of distorted communication and their underlying repressive social structures can be revealed. Thus, for a community to arrive at universal consensus, free from delusions or distortions, it must anticipate the social structure of a living together in unforced communication.

The formal anticipation of idealized discourse as a way of life to be realized in the future first guarantees the final supporting consensus which binds us for the moment and by means of which every defective factual agreement is subject to the critique of being false consciousness. [Habermas 1974, p. 126]

A prominent task of critical theory has been its social critique of the ideological character of the knowledge industry of science and technology in advanced industrial society. As has been noted earlier in this paper, empirical-analytic science has claimed a virtual monopoly on concepts of knowledge, truth, and social understanding. The cognitive interests of efficiency, effectiveness, and control are powerful moral forces that exercise legitimating functions at the levels of everyday life institutions, social interactions, and policy making. In education, the scientific consciousness is visible in the obsession of bringing the primary domains of the thoughts, values, and feelings of students under the effective control of the school curriculum. This obsession is, no doubt, a function of the fact that accountability is most readily translated into the obligation to be "countable." Michael Apple, who makes explicit reference to the "promissory note" of critical theory (especially Habermas's works), has recently expressed this concern in the form of a credo.

The dominant consciousness in advanced industrial societies is centered on a vulgar instrumentality—a logical structure that places at its foundation the search for certainty, order, the cooptation of significant social dissent, process/product reasoning, therapy to treat surface symptoms rather than basic structural change, and the search for even more efficient instrumentality. It, thereby, vitiates or redefines into less potent issues the political, ethical, and even aesthetic questions of any moment: Hence, politics and manipulation become coequal; educating and the guaranteeing of certainty in human interaction become synonymous. . . .

. . . The problem lies . . . in a fundamental ethic that all important modes of human action can be known in advance by educators and social scientists; and, underlying all of these, that the primary aspects of thought and sentiment of students should be brought under institutionalized control. [Apple 1975, pp. 90, 120]

Quantitative knowledge can be aggregated for the purpose of people who control the lives of other people through the administrative use of objective information. Empirical-analytic science is unmasked as a social ideology both when it is seen to perpetuate existing stratifications in society, and also when it is used to separate the privileged from the underprivileged. The sophisticated systems of testing, designed to dis-

criminate among people by assigning superior worth to some at the expense of others, are never turned against those in positions of control. No standardized tests have been constructed that can investigate or disturb the basis of existing inequalities in society. Only recently have some social scientists applied the critical perspective to their research by studying *up* rather than *down* the lines of power in social systems (see Hymes 1974).

The cognitive interest of radical reflection is served by what Habermas calls "emancipatory" or "practical" action. Deliberations can be truly practical, in an emancipatory sense, only when they lead toward forms of life that are mediated by justice, equality, and the possibility for concrete happiness. If Schwab's idea of the arts of the practical and of the eclectic are extended to this level of critical reflectivity, then the concept of deliberation acquires potentially far-reaching notations. In order that curriculum policy making be most effective, special study must be made both of the institutionalized forms of authority and of the social arrangements of knowledge and influence that either facilitate or hinder decision-making processes serving this classical idea of the practical—social progress, social justice, community and individual happiness.

Forms of Knowledge and Concepts of the Practical

A rough division can be made among three main streams of social research and theorizing (see van Manen 1975). Radnitzky (1973) calls these schools "contemporary schools of meta-science." Each of them provides the philosophical framework for a group of related social theories of man and society. While every social science has its own legitimating meta-theory, one needs to adopt an even more reflective frame in order to create an inventory of the ways in which philosophers look at science. For example, the philosophy of logical empiricism, which speaks for the research tradition of empirical—analytic science, is mainly preoccupied with methodological problems and with theory development. But, says Radnitzky, those oriented to a research tradition cannot critically assess the value of its contribution, any more than you can see the contact lens on your eye, which nonetheless influences your seeing. He sets out to develop a (praxiological) theory of research which constitutes a platform for a critical perspective, i.e., a style of thinking, which enables a placing of the contemporary, stream of science in a wider context. Radnitzky recognizes: (1) the hermeneutic and the dialectical sciences such as phenomenological anthropology, ethnomethodology, analytical sociology, and critical theory; and (2) the empirical—analytic or the strict social sciences such as structural functionalism, cybernetics, and those associated with other behavioral theories. Radnitzky refers to the hermeneutic and the critical sciences as the "Continental schools" and to empirical—analytic science as the "Anglo-Saxon school" of research and theorizing. The point is that in North America social science is broadening its conventional epistemological infrastructure. This broadening of

the field of theoretical–practical possibilities in social science is accompanied by a changing view of the relationship between man and knowledge, and by new concepts of the meaning of objectivity and of the practical possibilities of knowledge in everyday life.

In his book *Theory and Practice*, Habermas (1974) explicates the systematic relationship between the logical structure of a science and the pragmatic structure of the possible applications of the knowledge generated within its framework. Habermas's perspective is capable of forging unique links between theory and practice, knowledge and action, subject and object. At a *quasi-transcendental* level, Habermas bases his theory of knowledge and of practical knowledge and action on the concept of "human interests." Interests are seen to underlie every orientation. The practical significance of knowledge is that owning knowledge, like owning wealth, inadvertently invests the proprietor with the practical interests inherent in the functions of that knowledge. The concept "cognitive interest" is used to refer the existential roots and the practical function of all theoretic knowledge to their anthropological origin. Habermas distinguishes among cognitive interests in the practical activities of (a) production and technical control, (b) communication and interpretive understanding, and (c) emancipation and liberation. Furthermore, each form of practical action is guided by the cognitive interest of the science that promotes it.

If science is looked at as a system that aims at the development of knowledge, then Habermas's notion of cognitive interests focuses on the practical function of the knowledge produced by science. For example, empirical–analytic science develops theoretic knowledge such as a behavioral theory of learning that is, for purposes of practical action, technically exploitable. In other words, if theory can explain and predict learning to take place under controlled and controllable conditions, then this theory can be put to practical use *in making students learn*. Usually, this concept of the practical is associated with the idea of "techniques" and with notions of "effectiveness" and "efficiency."

In a broader sense, science is a complex knowledge system composed of subsystems each characterized by its own internal logic-in-use. This logic-in-use is described in terms of methodological procedures for doing research, and in terms of a complex set of standards or norms both distinguishing valid from invalid knowledge, and also specifying criteria for truth determination and theory construction. Each subsystem for doing science is associated with an internally consistent concept of the practical. Furthermore, each form of cognitive interest commands a distinct and logically identifiable orientation of social science: the empirical–analytic, the hermeneutic–phenomenological, and the critical theory–psychoanalytical orientations.

Thus, empirical–analytic or behavioral science addresses empirical problems. The knowledge generated by this cognitive activity becomes practically useful in its application to technical–instrumental problems. In turn, phenomenological–hermeneutic science deals with interpretive

problems; the knowledge constructed by this cognitive activity is practically significant in its possibility to provide for communication and practical orientation to action. Finally, critical theory and psychoanalytic approaches in the social sciences typically treat normative problems. This normative cognitive activity is directed to involve praxis; i.e., critical knowledge aims at emancipatory practical action, self-determination, and liberation.

LEVELS OF REFLECTIVITY

On the basis of this sketch of the orientations of social science and their cognitive interests, it is possible to outline levels of reflectivity of deliberative rationality, associated with corresponding interpretations of the practical. On the first level of deliberative rationality, the practical is concerned mainly with means rather than ends. The methodological state of empirical theories makes available to curriculum a set of principles, theories, and technical-practical recommendations which seem appropriate for the practical task of achieving certain objectives of curriculum development. On this level, the practical refers to the technical application of educational knowledge and of basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining a given end. Few such principles exist, however. Educational research has difficulty demonstrating that some curriculum approaches are more effective in the achievement of specific learning outcomes than others. When there exist alternative, conflicting, or competing principles, and, therefore, when there are a multitude of technical recommendations available, a pragmatic form of deliberative rationality is necessary. In the face of an abundance of theories, principles, and views, curriculum deliberation permits a translation of a manifold of alternative technical recommendations and their consequences in practice. But (except for those norms which are inherent in the instrumental attitude of a technological rationality) the deliberative rationality of empirical-analytic theory does not offer norms for choosing among alternative practical possibilities. Thus, the rationality of the "best choice" is defined in accordance with the principles of technological progress—economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Thus, the instrumental rationality of empirical-analytic theory forces educators into adopting an attitude that embraces these principles as the criteria for practical action. When the nature of this constraint is recognized, the need for a higher level of deliberative rationality becomes apparent.

On this higher level of reflectivity, it is assumed that every educational choice is based on a value commitment to some interpretive framework by those involved in the curriculum process. The practical then refers to the process of analyzing and clarifying individual and cultural experiences, meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, and presuppositions, for the purpose of orienting practical actions. Curriculum and teaching-learning are seen as processes of establishing communication and common understandings. At this level of the practical, the focus is on an interpretive understanding both of the nature and

quality of educational experience, and of making practical choices. But in order to deliberate the worth of educational goals and experiences, a still higher level of reflective rationality is needed.

It is on this highest level of deliberative rationality that the practical assumes its classical politico-ethical meaning of social wisdom. On this level, the practical addresses itself, reflectively, to the question of the worth of knowledge and to the nature of the social conditions necessary for raising the question of worthwhileness in the first place. The practical involves a constant critique of domination, of institutions, and of repressive forms of authority. The norm is a distortion-free model of a communication situation that specifies social roles and social structures of a living together in unforced communication; that is, there exists no repressive dominance, no asymmetry or inequality among the participants of the educational processes. Universal consensus, free from delusions or distortions, is the ideal of a deliberative rationality that pursues worthwhile educational ends in self-determination, community, and on the basis of justice, equality, and freedom.

NOTES

1. A critique of the work of the curriculum field in the 1920s is provided in *Curriculum Theory Network* 4:4 and 5:1 (1975). In addition to Walker's and Kliebard's articles, cited here, there are reprinted articles by Counts, Rugg, and Bode.
2. These include Huebner, Macdonald, Pinar, Apple, and Willis.
3. Habermas's work continues that begun by others of the Frankfurter School, such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Wellmer.
4. More recently, largely under the influence of North American social science, educators in the Netherlands have turned increasingly toward empirical-analytic research techniques and theory development. A distinct discontinuity is noticeable in the line of phenomenological and dialectical-hermeneutical literature.

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