

A STUDY OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING THE
CRITICAL ATTITUDINAL AND VALUE CHANGE
OF THE POPULACE TOWARD PUBLIC EDU-
CATION AS AN INSTITUTION BETWEEN
1952 - 1982

By

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CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In a world of complex and continuing problems, in a world full of frustrations and irritations, America's leadership must be guided by the lights of learning and reason--else those who confuse rhetoric with reality and the plausible with the possible will gain the popular ascendancy with their seemingly swift and simple solutions to every world problem.

There will always be dissident voices heard in the land, expressing opposition without alternatives, finding fault but never favor, perceiving gloom on every side and seeking influence without responsibility. Those voices are inevitable (John F. Kennedy, as cited in Forster and Epstein, 1964, p. 10).

The nature of this study focuses upon a sense of pessimism that essentially pervades all aspects of this country's present society. Over a period of some 30 years, the United States has experienced considerable turmoil and, as a result, seemingly found itself in an age of pessimism, the result being that this consciousness has had a profound affect upon the attitudes and values of American society. In actuality, this country has drastically undergone a change in outlook from previous generations. One could go as far as to conclude that a social

revolution has essentially produced a change in American attitudes and values.

Korda (1982) noted that signs of this new American consciousness are everywhere. It is as if the entire country, having suddenly lost faith in everything from paper money to social security, has turned to a nation of old-fashioned European pessimists.

Korda (1982) goes to the extent of suggesting that American society has turned to pessimism to utilize it as an advantage for relieving our society of a sense of responsibility for the future. In other words, why worry over the future if there is not going to be one?

This kind of thinking has become increasingly evident in the past three decades. In effect, it has influenced much of the country's thinking concerning the institution of education. What one essentially notes is that with the rapid changes occurring in our society and the tremendous impact of events, a sense of insecurity has been brought to the American culture (Johnson, 1953).

The result appears to have been a seemingly drastic change in our society's perception of American public education. While undoubtedly public education has contributed much to the giant technological strides in this complex and ever-changing society, one notes that public education is still criticized to the point that oftentimes its legitimacy and credibility are suspect. Therefore, the thrust of this study focuses upon the gradual

change in attitudes and ultimately values toward public education as an institution during the past three decades. As a result, this paper touches upon literature that reflects a gradual change in the public's perception of education.

It is the premise of this study that, in focusing upon some of the profound events that occurred throughout the past 30 years, it is noteworthy to pinpoint certain events that could have resulted in a change in attitude toward public education. Therefore, the nature of this study presents much of the criticism and skepticism that resulted from specific times and events that may change this society's perception of public education.

It is readily apparent that the institution of public education has recently been exposed to numerous onslaughts concerning its mission and function. The critics of public education are far too numerous for only one paper or text to adequately address. It comes as no surprise that almost all interests--liberals, conservatives, and extremists--have utilized education as a target of their frustrations.

In part of this study alludes to the premise that American society has developed an attitude that promotes, in most instances, a negative response to public education as an institution. Generally, educators have approvingly joined the crusade to point out the shortcoming of American education. Therefore, one notes that since the early

1950's there has been a definite tendency for the American society to view public education in progressively negative terms. Examples of this virtual indictment are aptly pointed out with conflict theorist and revisionist historians, and the advent of the moral majority (Selakovich, 1982).

As a result of this negative outgrowth in attitudes in our society, the institution of public education has apparently suffered more than any of the other institutions that provide the basis for this country's social, political, and economic existence.

Upon examination of certain specified events, insight will be provided into the emergence of a negative attitude. Some documentation of what negative opinions evolved and continue to exist is given, but there is difficulty in pinpointing a basis for many of those negative opinions and observations. It is therefore found in this study some insight into this development of the negative attitude that will culminate in values that are critical of public education as an institution.

It is vividly apparent that in the present dynamic society, all the organizations as well as the institutions and agencies of this society are being faced with new direct demands for vigorous participation in reshaping this society and creating a new culture (Frazier, 1970). It is therefore crucial to have an adequate comprehension of events and attitudes as they evolve in order to more

fully assess the impact of events upon American public education. It appears that this has not been done with much success in the past. It is hoped that by understanding the significance and ramifications of events in regard to public education, one can deal more effectively with the populace's perception of public education and how this perception reflects our society as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

-This study is intended to provide some insight into the populace and educators' perception of public education. The problem exists in that education appears to have been indicted, but there are no conclusive reasons. This paper will provide a rationale or some logical explanation as to why American public education has undergone such severe criticism as an institution.

This research will deal with what prompted or created a change in the public's attitude from 1952 to 1982. Prior to 1952, American society appeared to reflect a belief that its institutions, its way of life, and its values were superior. This is partially reflected by opinion expert Elmo Roper through a nationwide survey (as cited in Scott and Hill, 1954). From 1945 through 1952, the survey, in general, shows the people thought good things about their schools (Scott and Hill, 1954). Throughout American history, there has been a tendency to believe in the superiority of the American culture, values, and this

country's ability to resolve adversity. Prior to the fifties, Americans would have found it difficult to understand this type of negative attitude that now pervades American society. The country had an unbounding faith in the righteousness of its cause and, as a result, believed it would prevail over the difficulties it encountered. This attitude, as one notes, placed a great deal of confidence in the capacity of American institutions to resolve this country's problems (Goldman, 1960).

An excellent example of this attitude is put forth by Goldman (1960) in his text, The Crucial Decade, when he observes that in America, the sense of wonderful possibilities ahead kept breaking into every part of living. Men had mastered the atom and many people did not smile at the featured-page stories which predicted that the average American would soon work 25 hours a week, return to dinner cooked by the flick of a single button, and educate his children by the flick of a button. In a period when medical advances had just resulted in penicillin, only to be followed by streptomycin, it did not seem utopian to talk of conquering many of the medical, social, and economic ills that confronted American society.

This positive attitude was reflected in other ways. For example, Morrison (1965) noted that there was an enormous unsatisfied demand for consumer goods which did not want for purchasers, as almost every class in the community had money to spend. The new cars were

attractive, although double the 1941 price. Television, now nationwide, as well as other labor saving devices, absorbed millions of dollars. Even farmers continued to benefit from high war prices for their cattle, grains, and cotton because of the world-wide demand. However, one began to note a change in attitude of faith and confidence that gradually ate away the credibility of institutions that governed our society. Korda (1982, p. 20) aptly describes this attitude when he states, "The pessimism is part of the European experience, the product of centuries of war, revolution, and financial crisis." Americans once found it difficult to understand this sort of thinking, which is hardly surprising given the enormous wealth and stability of the country's comparatively short history. Here the secret police did not come for you in the night, taxes were not collected by armed soldiers and foreign troops did not sweep across the borders looting and killing. Government was in the hands of the people, not kings. The coinage might bear the line, "In God We Trust," but what Americans really believed in was the future (Korda, 1982).

While this negative attitude did not occur quickly or overnight, it is apparent that throughout the past 30 years, a pessimistic attitude has emerged that has essentially engulfed this country's intellect. It might be concluded that it is now fashionable to be a pessimist (Korda, 1982).

Schlesinger (1969), in The Crisis of Confidence, observed that as the sixth decade of the twentieth century draws to a close, America is undergoing a crisis of self-confidence. In that for most of our national existence, the country had enjoyed a placid faith in its virtue and its invulnerability. He suggested that, except for slavery and the Civil War, this country's history had been one without agony. Schlesinger noted that people appear to be less buoyant today about ourselves and the American future. Events seemed to have slipped beyond this country's control.

Schlesinger (1969) stated that, until recently, the country had always felt that its leadership and resources--moral and psychological, as well as economic--were equal to any conceivable challenge. He concluded by giving the impression that underneath the continuing babble of self-congratulation, more and more Americans are beginning to wonder whether they will be able to cope in the next year.

It is therefore hoped that educators and the American public will free themselves from the bondage of the critics of the past and present. As an educator, one should cease being awed by the general indictment the critics have given education (Magill, 1962).

Practical investigation should be emphasized, and educators should cease wasting energy and time with vain explanations in defense of the educational profession. By

thoroughly understanding the development of this negativism, it is hopeful that one's perceptions concerning the role of public education will be influenced or more fully understood.

In focusing upon this phenomenon, this paper will review literature of the fifties and, in the process, will touch upon some of the events that could have resulted in the emergence of skepticism concerning American institutions in general and public education in particular. The same procedure will be followed with the sixties, seventies, and early eighties.

Synopsis of the Problem

The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the emergence of a value that is prejudicial in nature. A focus upon the critical literature of the past 30 years will hopefully provide educators with insight concerning much of the contemporary criticism directed against education. By having a more adequate comprehension of the presence of this negative value, educators will hopefully address criticisms in a more enlightened manner.

Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations inherent to this study:

1. The nature of this study will focus upon a series of events that occurred in the decades from 1952 through

1982. By focusing on certain specific events and a sampling of the public's critical response, it is the desire of this writer to project the development of an attitudinal response that in many instances insures a sense of negativism and taints legitimate critiques of institutions in general and education in particular.

2. The study is limited to the review of literature in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, and early eighties concerning the criticism of American public education.

3. The primary scope of this study focuses upon the institution of American public education. While references to other institutions will be made, they will be introduced only for clarification and context.

4. The generalizations of this study are the result of literature that depicts a definite decline in confidence in American public education. The scope and sequence of this study did not include any literature relating contrary opinions.

Organization of the Study

The following is presented to provide an understanding of the organization of the study. Chapter II reflects the data and opinions dealing with various periods in the study. As a result of three separate categories of literature studies, this chapter is, by necessity, extensive. Chapter III will focus and provide much of the analysis of the problem of the literature reviewed in Chapter II. As

a result of the investigation, Chapter IV will provide the summary and conclusions, and the recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of related literature that is specifically pertinent to the underlying hypothesis presented in Chapter I. The related literature is divided primarily into four areas: (1) research reflecting a critical attitude, (2) examples of a critical attitude in the fifties, (3) examples of a critical attitude in the sixties, and (4) examples of a critical attitude in the seventies through 1982.

The scope and design of this study and method requires special explanation. Chapter II will focus by necessity on a select series of biographical essays reflecting much of the character and flavor of the designated periods. The purpose is to provide a definite insight into the criticism surrounding events throughout the period of 1952 to 1982. These criticisms will provide insight into an emerging attitude that developed over a period of some 30 years.

The first part of the chapter will focus on examples of the primary criticisms that were evident during the various decades in discussion. This brief synopsis is intended to reveal through the utilization of primary

resources that there was definite criticism attacking public schools.

However, the intent of this chapter is not to focus on the critics or the criticism but rather it is to reveal that this was an age of criticism and frustration. The organization of the remainder of the chapter places emphasis on criticism in relation to many events and how each evolved during the decade.

A portion of the chapter will focus upon a number of selected authors who were influential and will illustrate an insight and understanding of the decade. The secondary resources analyzed and put forth will reflect a seemingly "ripple" effect that will suggest in some measure society's perceptions of certain events. These relationships will be discussed via the tables in a later chapter. Thus, the listing of examples of primary resources, coupled with the "ripple" effect of the secondary resources of criticism, will aid the reviewer in grasping a sense of consciousness that will engulf the various decades.

It is the endeavor of the writer that this chapter will achieve a conceptual view of an emergence of an attitude. It is recognized that this is an antithesis to the analytical and classificatory procedure, but these observations will provide an insight to the influence that will possibly provide a more adequate understanding of the criticism surrounding the decade in question. As

a result of this attitude, there should be ample evidence to consider the possibility of the development of a phenomena of a value that will reflect a sense of pessimism. Therefore, the major thrust of this chapter will be to identify certain critical elements via the utilization of samples of criticism.

Utilization of the Gestalt psychology approach, as cited in Charles (1976), would best describe those elements that would include the important items that can be perceived--people, objects, movements, and processes, for example--on the physical and intellectual levels. The field organization of this criticism and the grouping of events and relationships provide the influence that will contribute to emergence of a negative phenomenon.

Synopsis of Primary Criticism

Smith (as cited in Scott and Hill, 1954) noted that:

A lot of intrepid Americans are plunging into the miasmatic swamp of educational discussion. The going is sticky, but necessity often inspires fortitude, and necessity is upon us. We are faced with the need for a reexamination of the premises and accomplishments of American education (p. 65).

Smith continues by observing that, in reality, in most instances in the United States the philosophy of education is determined not by citizens who own and support schools but by a close-knit group of super professionals over whom the citizens have not even indirect control.

Another interesting contemporary criticism by Eklund (as cited in Scott and Hill, 1954) was noted in January, 1952, when he suggested that almost all attacking forces today are accusing the public schools of teaching socialism. Eklund also observed that the accusers further assert that the fundamentals, the three R's, are being neglected.

One of the more severe critics of the early 1950's, Bester (1953), charged that the professional educators, in their policy-making role, have lowered the aims of the American public schools. And because the expectations have been lessened, there can be no pedagogical efficiency which can ever enable the schools as directed to reach the target or expectations of the American people. Bester suggests that the difference is not a matter of finance, but a matter of adequate aims for education.

Rickover (1959) views American attempts at education in a new technological age as entirely inadequate. He suggests that this country is in a new period and a new emphasis must be placed on educating the young. The consequence of technological progress is that man must use his mind more and his body less. Rickover states that:

Our schools are the greatest cultural lag we have today. When I read official publications put out by men who run our education system--booklets such as Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth or Education for All Youth--I have the strange feeling of reading about another world, a world long

since departed, if it ever existed at all. I sense the kindly spirit, the desire to make every child happy, the earnest determination to give advice on every problem any young person might ever meet in life--and withal so complete a misunderstanding of the needs of young people in today's world that it frightens me (p. 23).

In reviewing some examples of primary critics, they appear to be similar to their predecessors. Goodman (1962) notes that conditions within this country have changed. The changes are so unprecedented that as a people we are not coping with them. Therefore, confused people inevitably try to ward off anxiety by becoming more adamant about old methods.

Goodman (1962) continues by suggesting that this country is in a political crisis. There is such political vitality that it finds its exxpression in paralegal ways. These ways will eventually either renovate the constitution or degenerate into chaos. Also, in conjunction with this atmosphere, there is a proliferation of media of communication and messages communicated, for people need to be informed and desire to be informed; yet, according to Goodman, because of the mass communications and media, there is brainwashing and conformity. As a result of these conditions, the schools are failing to adequately educate. Goodman feels it essential to find alternate ways of educating.

Another provocative critic of the late 1950's and 1960's is Holt (1964). Holt creates an increased

awareness as to why children are failing in schools. He notes that they are afraid, above all else, of failing, of not achieving, of disappointing or displeasing. Holt strives to analyze the ways in which schools foster bad strategies and raise children's needs.

Another critic of the period of some import is Kohl (1969). He presented strategies for functioning in a new time and a new period. Kohl thought that American education needed to change its approach from traditional to a more democratic effort. He strongly suggested the abandonment of the use of power and providing workable alternatives for authoritarianism and structured environments.

The 1970's revealed a similar type of criticism. One notes Silberman (1970, p. 9), who observed that ". . . what educators must realize, moreover, is that how they teach and how they act may be more important than what they teach." The author touches upon a theme close to the purpose of the paper when he states:

The crisis in the classroom--the public school classroom, the college classroom, the national 'classroom' created by mass media and by the operation of the American political system--is both a reflection of and a contributor to the larger crisis of American society (p. 1).

While this brief synopsis provides a brief glimpse at some of the criticism of the various periods, it does not provide one with a real grasp as to why and how come. It is evident that public education was confronted with problems throughout the periods described. And there was much

effort to focus by contemporary educators on those concerns. However, to understand the decades, one must still try and develop a grasp of society in regard to the criticisms put forth.

It is obvious that this rapidly paced society was undergoing tremendous change. McLuhan (1964) observes that just the impact of mass media on society has created a different environment in that the mass media is capable of processes which shape people. He continues by saying that in the past, the media has shaped both content and the consumer. Therefore, it is crucial to note the impact of the mass media on today's student and the effect.

With these considerations in mind, it is interesting to observe the following samples of criticism of the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, and early 1980's, with the ramifications of events and how they related to society. It is therefore the hope that the criticisms will provide a grasp of much of the feeling and anxiety of the period in discussion.

Decade of the Fifties

Much of the postwar literature dealing with education indicates that most Americans were caught up in the euphoria of the times. This is evident in the early 1950's when Americans were generally satisfied with the public schools. For the most part, teachers were not singled out or blamed for the differences in the

achievement of students. It seemed that most of the responsibility for learning was placed on the children. Much of the prevailing thought of this period was that if students possessed the requisite ability and worked hard enough, academic success would follow (Curran, 1982).

This attitude reflects the initial optimism noted in Chapter I. However, the literature reviewed will indicate that Americans would be exposed to events in the early fifties that would have a profound effect on this attitude of optimism.

DiBona (1982) aptly described the beginning of this definite transition in educational attitude by suggesting that perhaps the most difficult time for educators occurred during the cold war that followed World War II. This period was characterized by much anxiety, with international tensions abroad and witch hunts and blacklists at home. Suddenly, under the direction of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the UnAmerican Activities Committees in the Senate sought out subversives not only in government but also in schools (DiBona, 1982).

DiBona (1982) continued his observation by concluding that while the attacks on American public education are well known, the response of professional educators to the pressures has not been studied. The author observed the educational profession as using a "head-in-the-sand" tactic and implied that the power of the critics was so

awesome that nothing much could be done (DiBona, 1982, p. 343).

This abrupt change in attitude is witnessed in Meyer's (1957) Education for a New Morality. The author observed that the cold war was then being fought in the classrooms of Russia and America. The author seemed to reflect an immediate sense of pessimism or pending doom when she suggested that as a result of the country's failure to give education enthusiastic attention and support, democracy continued to lose prestige throughout the world. Meyer's underlying purpose seemed to be to point out the ineptness of the educational system during the early and mid fifties. She indicated that what matters is education's ability to adapt to new conditions; otherwise educators' efforts will result in failure (Meyer, 1957).

Johnson (1953) described the period of the early fifties by examining the sudden impact of events and the United State's new relationship with the rest of the world which had brought a new sense of insecurity to the American culture. Johnson suggested that, perhaps for the first time in our national history, there was a serious sense of insecurity that pervaded the people of the United States. Johnson continued by noting that, due to the presence and menace of a threatening enemy, the atmosphere of the cold war fed this feeling of insecurity. He concluded by revealing that recent developments have

disturbed this sense of security, and, as a result, there has been a behavioral response in many respects characteristic of national habits.

One notes a similar feeling of insecurity expressed by Potter (1952), when the discussion centered on the idea that uncertainty of the future had caused youth to be restless, disturbed, and perplexed. She revealed that youth were cynical, refused to study or to plan ahead, and that there was a definite feeling of "what's the use?" toward school and the future (p. 41). Potter continued by focusing upon the fear of Russian communists and their infiltration into American life with the purpose of undermining this country's security. She suggested that this fear caused the people to be suspicious of everyone and to look for a scapegoat. Potter further pointed out that fear of making potential scapegoats of teachers and superintendents threatened the very foundation of American education.

A familiar theme was reflected by a growing number of novelists of the period when their writing criticized conformity in American life, and expressed pessimism over the condition of modern man and the loss of established values. It is suggested that perhaps the most dominant theme in fiction during the early fifties was the introspective search for self and personal identity (Fite and Graebner, 1972).

According to Fite and Graebner (1972), some writers labeled the years after World War II an age of anxiety. The anxiety was expressed in numerous ways. The fears of communism, nuclear war, recession, and unemployment were prevalent.

In Decade of Experiment, Faust (1961) put forth an analysis of education of the early fifties. Reference is made to 1950, when the educational establishment was reeling under the impact of an unprecedented combination of forces by the simultaneous strains and pressures of the postwar population boom. Faust implied that the population explosion alone would have been a severe burden on public education. In the 1950's, public education received substantial criticism from all quarters for a variety of reasons. Evidence suggested that for some years a controversy over teaching techniques and goals had been going on in professional circles. On one side were scholars and intellectuals who advocated a traditional concept of education and on the other side were professional educators who favored the informal activity-centered programs known or referred to as progressive education (Faust, 1961).

Morris (1978) shed more light on the period of the early fifties when he noted that for Americans who lived through the challenges of the McCarthy era, the anxieties were deep and violent. He referred to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who observed in 1949 that:

. . . frustration is increasingly the hallmark of the century--the frustration . . . of the most generous hopes, of the most splendid dreams. Nineteen hundred looked forward to the irresistible expansion of freedom, democracy and abundance; 1950 will look back to totalitarianism, to concentration camps, to mass starvation, to atomic war (p. 624).

Morris (1978) observed that much frustration in the United States during this era of anxiety was made evident by a proliferation of right wing societies, leagues, committees, councils, and crusades that proposed to stop the clock of social change--to turn its hand back to some easier time when men could move more readily and directly to achieve what they wanted.

Morris (1978) continued by touching upon the fact that during the McCarthy era critics varied widely in their attacks on public education. During the early fifties, critics and groups adopted demagogic and propagandistic methods, charging that educators had become victims of foreign idealologies and were engaged in efforts to subvert American youth to communistic and collectivistic ideas. Other critics of the day decried the "godless" schools, substandard education, educational frills, and socialistic, if not communistic, educational philosophy (Morris, 1978).

Brooks (1978) lends credence to this argument with the observation that since World War II the public schools of America have been under microscopic surveillance by state legislatures, the federal government,

private foundation research agencies, and private individuals with various professional backgrounds and competencies. In Brooks' description one should note that the bulk of the surveillance had been extremely critical in nature. Therefore, to the average citizen, these criticisms not only appear logical but would seem to serve as an appropriate base for an indictment of our public schools.

The examined literature reflected that the Soviet venture into space also augmented the development of an attitude of pessimism. According to Brooks (1978), on October 4, 1957, the American self image suffered a setback when the Soviet Union put the first satellite into orbit. For the American people it somehow did not seem right for a people who were not Americans to accomplish what should have been an American first. Brooks cited that the incident, for many Americans, began to spread the seeds of discontent that would eventually destroy the business-as-usual attitude of American schools and society.

This attitude is also reflected by Zais's (1978) suggestion that in 1957, the Soviets launched Sputnik I, traumatizing America and convincing the critics of their wisdom. Zais noted that many in this society, not without considerable satisfaction, laid the catastrophe of Soviet technological superiority squarely at the door of public education.

Zais (1978) provided examples of this attitude by referring to journalistic exposes like U.S. News and World Report's "What's Wrong With the Schools?" Book-length treatments with similar themes were produced by figures such as Admiral Hyman Rickover, with Education on Freedom, and Koerner's The Case for Basic Education. Also noted by Zais was perhaps the most eminent critic of this era, James B. Conant, whose The American High School recommended what all the critics were calling for (as cited in Zais, 1978).

Benedict (1981) reflected upon the Sputnik period by observing that on October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union humiliated America and stunned the world by launching Sputnik into orbit. Benedict indicated that the launch and events of the period both fascinated and frightened the American people. Americans were embarrassed and terrified; their mastership of technology was challenged. The shock galvanized the United States into rethinking its educational system and launching a counter challenge (Benedict, 1981).

Further examination of Faust's (1961) Decade of Experiment revealed that there was much concern, and as a result there was a searching and self-examination about the goals and achievements, the strengths and weaknesses of American education. When this mood would have been converted into action by its own momentum, no one can say; in 1957 the Soviets launched Sputnik, and this

resulted in public sentiment to do something (Faust, 1961).

Goldman (1960) tended to capture the prevailing sentiment of the period in The Crucial Decade. He noted that in the post Sputnik era, Americans were reading harsh words about their schools and, beyond their schools, about their way of life. Goldman suggested that intellectuals said it then more vigorously than ever. Democrats and dissident Republicans said it, worriedly and angrily.

When reviewing the literature of the fifties, one is constantly reminded of the political and social events of the decade. As a result of the described literature, one is able to detect a sense of uncertainty. Lippmann (as cited in Faust, 1961) reflected the attitude of the decade with the following observation in 1954:

We are entering upon an era which will test to the utmost the capacity of our democracy to cope with the gravest problems of modern times. . . . We are entering upon this difficult and dangerous period with what I believe we must call a growing deficit in the quantity and the quality of American education. We have to make a breakthrough to a radically higher and broader conception of what is needed and what can be done. Our educational effort today is still in approximately the same position as was the military effort of this country before Pearl Harbor (p. 10).

Decade of the Sixties

An examination of the sixties reveals a perpetuation of the emerging attitudes of the fifties. The following

literature will develop a seeming intensification of the critical and skeptical attitude that commenced in the fifties.

One notes the initial development of a new social mood that will eventually stimulate its own variety of criticism. Before the conclusion of the decade, education would undergo an even harsher wave of bitter condemnation.

The year John F. Kennedy was elected to the presidency, the Korean conflict and Joseph McCarthy were unpleasant memories, and the cold war threat of the Soviets began to diminish. What is perhaps most interesting about this new period is the effect it had on the war in Vietnam.

At the same time that the civil rights and antiwar activists rebelled against the racist and war policies of the military and politicians, the new wave of school critics were assailing the repressive and impersonal practices of the educational system (Zais, 1978).

Zais (1978) related that public schools were characterized as drab, joyless, repressive, and dehumanizing. Teachers and administrators were ridiculed for being sadistic martinets who subjected their pupils to an irrelevant and meaningless curriculum.

Fite and Graebner (1972) described the early and middle period of the sixties by indicating that, while most young people wanted to bring about social and political change, others attacked America's basic ideas and institutions. Examples included were the church, the schools, and

certain dominant attitudes toward work, competition, and money. Even formerly sacred concepts such as democracy and capitalism were attacked as outdated and unworkable. They aimed their attacks against the entire establishment.

Fite and Graebner (1972) observed that many young people saw no hope in either changing or reforming the system, and simply turned off American society. Thousands of people literally dropped out of schools, jobs, and all ordinary responsibilities. The authors concluded their observation of the sixties by noting the emergence of a drug culture that had pervaded many corners of American life, especially where the young were predominant. Thus, somehow, almost 20 years of prosperity had created more problems for society than they had solved.

Brooks (1978) characterized the early period of the sixties in a similar manner, by inferring that by the early part of the decade the American home, after a decade of stability, was in trouble. Brooks notes that affluence had not assured the expected happiness. The divorce rate was increasing and family strife was being reflected throughout society; suddenly children were reassessing life and what brought happiness. Thus, in many cases, the parents' emphasis on work, education, and material items seemed to have brought the family to a dead end.

Brooks (1978) reflected the upheaval in American society by focusing on Vietnam and the American commitment. American involvement, he suggested, had a devastating

effect on American secondary schools and colleges. What one noted is that students first opposed the war, then the establishment that supported the war, and finally, the schools that represented the establishment.

This, followed by the political assassinations that engulfed the sixties--the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr.--further angered and frustrated young and old alike. Many, as a result, began to perceive America as a nation bankrupt and failing.

Brooks (1978) concluded by observing that the schools' many patrons became angry and discontented during the sixties. Minorities were angry over their plight, and other citizen groups were angry about all facets of American life. Often these citizens vented their frustrations by running for boards of education. In many instances they won and brought to the board their anger, frustrations, and biases (Brooks, 1978).

In describing the attitude of the sixties, the Harvard Crimson (O'Neill, 1973) observed in 1969 that romanticism about politics also extended to education. This was noted with the proliferation of the free university concept, a concept that was free to all but for a minimal tuition, free of grades, and free of traditional themes.

To characterize the age of the sixties is indeed complex and difficult. Much of the literature reveals frustration, discontent, and a feeling of disillusionment. A good example is reflected by the young black standing in

the ruins of smoke and rubble of Detroit saying: "I just got back from Vietnam a few months ago, but you know, I think the war is here" (O'Neill, 1971, p. 426).

Former Senator J. William Fulbright, in a speech in August of 1967, related the incident above and felt that the connection between Vietnam and Detroit was in their conflicting and incompatible demands upon traditional American values (DeSantis et al., 1968).

Senator Fulbright, in the discussion, related much of the philosophical difficulty of the period when he stated:

Administration officials tell us that we can indeed afford both Vietnam and the Great Society, and they produce impressive statistics of the gross national product to prove it. The statistics show financial capacity, but they do not show moral and psychological capacity. They do not show how a President preoccupied with bombing missions over North and South Vietnam can provide strong and consistent leadership for the renewal of our cities. They do not show how a Congress burdened with war costs and war measures, with emergency briefings and an endless series of dramatic appeals, with anxious constituents and a mounting anxiety of their own, can tend to the workaday business of studying social problems and legislating programs to meet them. Nor do the statistics tell how an anxious and puzzled people, bombarded by press and television with the bad news of American deaths in Vietnam, the 'good news' of enemy deaths--can be expected to support neighborhood antipoverty projects and national programs for urban renewal, employment and education. Anxiety about war does not breed compassion for one's neighbors nor do constant reminders of the cheapness of life abroad strengthen our faith in its sanctity at home. In these ways the war in Vietnam is poisoning and brutalizing our domestic. Psychological incompatibility has proven to be more than financial feasibility;

and the great society has become a sick society (DeSantis et al., 1968, pp. 682-683).

O'Neill (1971), characterized the era of the sixties by suggesting that with its passing, no one mourned. On the one hand, conservatives thought it was an age of riot and license. It could not pass into the bowels of history soon enough. The radicals, conversely, viewed it as a time when the system broke down. Much of the literature of the sixties seems to suggest a time of political, social, and philosophical uncertainty for many people in this country. The country seemed to be yearning for a new sense of direction.

Frazier (1970) observed that what this country seemed to need as the seventies approached was a new kind of leadership. American society was becoming more demanding and thus more critical. As a result, the social expectations were plainly more political than those of the sixties. Thus, society's expectations were more frightening than those of the immediate past. Therefore, it would be entirely probable as a result of societal expectations that schools would be expected to do what they did not know how to do.

Decade of the Seventies

In focusing upon the decade of the seventies, Zais (1978) observed that by 1971, inflation was rampant throughout this country; it had become so severe that

President Nixon was forced to order a 90 day freeze on wages and prices. Polls taken during the presidential election of 1972 showed that anti-welfare feeling and antipathy toward government initiatives on behalf of minorities were even stronger than concern over the war in Vietnam.

Zais (1978) pointed out that unprecedented peacetime price increases continued, accompanied by food shortages, unemployment, and a general economic recession. The OPEC oil embargo of 1973 resulted in an energy crisis. Finally, the president's resignation due to the Watergate scandal and the corruption on the part of many public officials intensified public cynicism. In light of the incidents in the early 1970,s, Zais notes that it does not take a very penetrating mind to discern the effect of such a spirit on the nature of popular school criticism.

Gallup (1975) followed this theme when he noted that during the last part of the sixties and early seventies the prevailing mood of this country was one of disillusionment. He suggested that in the past Vietnam and Watergate years (1974-1978), a new conservatism had prevailed, abetted by the continued status of this country's condition and increasing taxes. Thus, the overall effect of these events and forces had been to lesson the public's respect for the public schools.

Reflecting on the early seventies, Griffiths (1973) observed that American public education had never

been in better shape or worse repute. He noted this phenomenon by stating that both situations were due more to spirited spectators than to members of the education profession. Griffiths, in his review, felt that while the critics took varying approaches, they generally perceived the public schools as institutions that were restrictive, depriving students of their freedom.

Shermis (1974) focused on this kind of criticism of public schools. For the past 15 years, according to Shermis, critics of education have been almost unanimous in their negativism. However, he suggests the possibility that critics are not realistic in their criticism. Shermis referred to the fact that the schools reflect the cultural values and patterns found in the larger society. Therefore, the criticism leveled against public education and the educational establishment is misdirected. Shermis entertained the concept that it is not the schools, curriculum, teachers, administrators, etc., at which critics should aim their criticisms. They should point, rather, to the prevailing or dominant culture. He concluded by suggesting that American institutions of education prepare students for the existing world, and pointed out that people are generally not satisfied with their work, so why assume they will be satisfied with their institutions of education?

Newman (1978) contended that in the mid seventies it had become fashionable among many self-appointed educational experts to fault the public schools for having failed to instruct students adequately in fundamental academic skills. Gallup (1975) referred to this theme and/or attitude prevalent throughout this chapter while focusing on the cynicism and disillusionment which have engulfed many institutions in the United States.

Jackson (1972) suggested that the criticism that occupied much of the educational world of the seventies was a profitable pastime. He indicated that numerous volumes and articles described the evils of our educational system. Jackson noted that, while many people seemed to be unhappy with current educational practices in the seventies, this is not a new phenomenon, in that public education has always been the target of critics from all walks of life.

Jackson (1972) went on to suggest that what is new to this period is the marked increase in the amount of criticism and the universal nature of the criticism. He provided a good case in point when he suggested that the tone of much of this educational criticism verged on hysteria. An example of this attitude is reflected in the following paragraph:

We are told that our present schools are little more than prisons or concentration camps for the young. Teachers are depicted as pig-headed and petty tyrants whose main purpose in life seems to be to keep the halls

clean and the cafeteria running smoothly. Students, poor things, are crushed by their exposure to these horrible conditions and leave school much worse off than when they entered--with psyches destroyed, spirits sagging, and minds devoid of any true knowledge (Jackson, 1972, p. 18).

Park (1979) observed that American society at this time reflected much stress, and the result was a change in the behavior of citizens. He suggested that this society is subjected to such anxiety that this aspect alone warrants one's consideration when viewing public education.

In examining much of the criticism of the decade, Ornstein (1977) contended that teachers and schools have always been criticized by educators and lay people, but only recently has the criticism been flagrant and hostile. This author noted that almost everyone wanted to talk and discuss education, but very few had anything positive to say about it. Therefore, according to Ornstein, the discussion of education is confined to the negative aspect.

In the Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Fiscal Year 1971 (Marland, 1972), the commissioner cautioned against unwarranted pessimism and suggested that if it were a question of justice alone, it would be unjust that the American educational system should be the target of so many social critics. A further observation resulted in the commissioner's revealing that some educators were excessively, perhaps even morbidly, occupied with fault finding. As a result, the

comissioner concluded that our society would be dissatisfied with whatever gains were made in the seventies.

In examining the attitude of the seventies, it is interesting to note that by mid-summer of 1979, Jimmy Carter provided an analysis of America by stating that much of our problems were the result of the American people not being good enough. We had become soft, the President said, soft from having it too easy. "Malaise" was the word he used to describe the state of the nation. To end this malaise would require that Americans reexamine their values.

Thus, as Bakalis (1981) pointed out, the President was trying to describe a void in the American character. Suddenly millions of Americans were not happy and were not satisfied with their niche or plight in life, with the result being that they looked for scapegoats. Unfortunately, public education filled the requirement.

Armistead (1982) summarized the attitude of the seventies by reflecting that opinions about schools and education differed dramatically. He noted this attitude by referring to a remark made by Howard Jarvis of Proposition 13 fame, who stated that "The only difference between public education and the Mafia is that public education steals more money (Armistead, 1982, p. 1).

John Wherry (1981), former executive director of the National School Public Relations Association, touched on the problem when he stated:

We are accustomed to guarantees in America. New car manufacturers vie with each other to see who can offer the most attractive warranties. We are urged to buy 'lifetime' automobile mufflers and batteries. TV sets, transistor radios, electronic games, cameras-- everything has a guarantee.

Even our U.S. Constitution provides guarantees: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly. And our Declaration of Independence sets forth the principle that every citizen is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But strange as it may seem, there is absolutely no guarantee anywhere that our U.S. system of free public education will continue into the twenty-first century (pp. 2-3).

Wherry concluded that to enhance the public's attitude toward education, education must create that guarantee.

Therefore, this reflects and illustrates much of the apparent attitude one sees carried over into the beginning of the eighties. It appears, in reviewing the seventies, that in many instances Americans suddenly began to take on the role of despoilers in that all of their efforts and works depicted a source of corruption and pollution.

As Handlin (1981) noted, society was depicted as a prison. Handlin's concept was the theme of many a novel, and the overpowering sense of revulsion extended to the imperfect world around it. He observed that in movies such as Blue Lagoon and Urban Cowboy, hatred of civilization crept into our movie fare. The reluctance to risk, the trepidation in the face of any alteration in forces deemed natural, and accounted possibly for American

withdrawal from space exploration, from a supersonic-transport program, and from the continued development of nuclear energy. Handlin believes that a slow economic growth, plunging birthrate, and the growth of a nonproductive sector of the population are indexes of a loss of faith in the American future. Thus, according to Handlin, the intellectuals of earlier generations who had looked to the future with optimism and faith suddenly failed to do so. Those intellectuals of the seventies, unable to find hope in progress, turned to the past--not to the immediate, but to some imagined era. They grieved and mourned the loss of innocence. Therefore, as long as the new world was an empty idleness, they inscribed upon it all of the images critical of their own society (Handlin, 1981).

Decade of the Eighties

The eighties have had much the same type of concerns that confronted the three decades already discussed. It would appear to be conceivable that the eighties reflect many of the values discussed throughout this chapter.

These concerns were reflected recently when Bagins (1982 p. 2), National School Public Relations Association President, stated that "Public confidence in education has been and is low. The field of education is suffering from low prestige." The executive director of NSPRA also noted a less than desirable attitude when he observed that in

working with educators from coast-to-coast he found them to be most depressed about the future of education.

This same theme was related by Annison (1982), director of the Rocky Mountain Trend Report. He indicated that:

There is no longer a right way. Whether you talk about marriage, music, art, mail service, finance, magazines or television, you are now talking about many, many acceptable opinions (p. 363).

Banach (1982), of American National School Public Relations Association echoed the same sentiments concerning education and what people believe. He points out, for example, that the values and lifestyles of America's middle generation, ages 21-49, are changing. The 75 million people in this age grouping are increasingly concerned with themselves. He continued by noting that almost half of these middle generation people are materialistic. They are not preoccupied with the future. To them, leisure and recreation are important ingredients in life. In fact, according to Banach, 67 percent indicated that leisure and recreation are necessities, not luxuries. The author concluded by suggesting that unless education provided something new that our clients see as valuable, "we . . . like any business, will go out of business" (Banach, 1982, p. 2).

Zais (1978), in his article, sheds light upon the eighties by observing that the tragedy of the schools is not that they are academic wastelands, but rather that

they have been mindless reformers of their society's values.

Brooks (1978) related a similar theme for the eighties when he notes that civilization today faces rightful challenges. He says that the American public is constantly exposed to the threats of environmental hazards of the ocean, air, and all aspects on which life depends. He feels that this is the last hour in which a successful reversal of trends in our society might still be accomplished but that the decline is certainly very close at hand. Brooks suggested that there must be a rebirth or an awakening on the part of students to create changes in attitudes that are necessary to save mankind.

A continuation of this attitude is noticed by Raywid (1979) in her article, "The Novel Character of Today's School Criticism." She is convinced that educational criticism of today is much different than that of 30 years ago. She insisted that this criticism is approaching such dimensions that there is a legitimacy crisis for educational institutions. It therefore seems that Americans in growing numbers seem increasingly uncertain and skeptical about whether public education is intellectually and emotionally capable of handling students.

Morris (1978) noted that the allegations made by today's critics are really very similar to earlier ones. The abundance of charges of obscenity, immorality, godlessness, and/or otherwise subversive activities leveled

against public schools is not too unlike that of previous generations. The critics of today refer to the quality of books read by the public, the preoccupation with comic books read by the younger generation, corruption in Washington, scandals, crime, the divorce crisis, communism in government, and the level of intellectual quality of public school and college students.

Pinkney (1980) observed that during the past three decades, severe criticism has been leveled at the schools. They have been referred to as prisons, jungles, and institutions producing failure. He indicated that many people find it easy to criticize the schools, and in many instances the public's criticisms are substantiated by educators. Pinkney suggested that the evidence increasingly indicates that large numbers of citizens and parents are disenchanted with or apathetic toward public education.

Williams et al. (1981), in Newsweek magazine, referred to a sweeping poll taken in 1981 in which the public reports a feeling that the schools are failing. They revealed that the public verdict is increasingly shared by professional educators. The article noted that the American way of education is, in some respects, a victim of a more general loss of faith in the American way itself. In 1981, the Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell, suggested that pessimism about the public schools is inevitable, given the national mood (Williams et al., 1981). This revealing article concluded by noting what

Will Rogers said a half century ago: "The schools aren't as good as they used to be, but they never were" (Williams et al., 1981, p. 65). However, the authors of this article feel the key difference is that so many people believe, in fact, that the schools are dangerous.

Grider (1979) of the Washington Post indicated that the supposed failure of the public schools is a favorite message in the media these days. He observed that the loss of confidence is the result of a reemerging conservatism which wants to see the world as bad as it used to be. He ascribed this state primarily to two reasons: first, the school people or educators are poor at defending themselves against criticism. He suggested that they conceal better than they explain. Second, many participate in this strange value system that finds failure more interesting or important than success.

In examining the problems and concerns of education, Ayars (1982), former Superintendent of Schools, Norfolk, Virginia, observed that the confidence crisis is the result of the social revolution that America has undergone in the past 25 years. Ayars contended that the revolution is partially the result of the influence of the public schools in teaching the development of the skill of critical thinking in youth. Therefore, as a result of this new found skill, for many, hypocrisy and weaknesses of American institutions have been exposed.

As a result, this process of criticism of existing institutions and current practices has eroded the traditional respect for these institutions. Therefore, one notes that while schools have always been criticized, there is a much more hostile and flagrant criticism than ever before (Ayars, 1982).

Summary of the Literature

The literature that has been listed and briefly discussed provides an interesting and provocative example of the nature of the criticism that has been directed against public education. It was the intent of the chapter to present a more adequate understanding of the various periods by reading the criticisms and attitudes that are projected.

By examining certain events and the criticism that resulted, the reader should be cognizant of much of the prevailing criticism. Therefore, by being aware of the criticism and the nature of the concerns, it is desired that the reader will consider the possibility of a development of the sense of negativism that will culminate in a set of negative values that could be prevalent in 1982.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF STUDY

Part of the nature of the study is to focus upon criticism of the past three decades. In doing so, the intent is to observe the emergence of a phenomenon that will result in a value of negativism and pessimism. In the development of this study, the complexity is such that it is not possible to control and manipulate factors necessary to study cause-effect relations.

Since it was not possible to manipulate variables and establish controls, this investigation resulted in a causal-comparative study. In this study it can be observed in reviewing the literature in Chapter II the phenomena which might exist and could be the result of or contribute to the occurrence of the hypothesis that has been put forth in Chapter I.

It is indeed obvious to any researcher that causal-comparative studies have limitations, and as a result, often do not culminate in precise, reliable knowledge that can be gained through more structured experimental studies. But the causal-comparative study does provide a means of addressing problems and concerns that cannot be probed in laboratory situations (Von Dalen, 1966).

In understanding the nature of a casual comparative study, the Gestaltist concept best depicts the relationship between events and the emergence of a negative phenomenon. The interrelatedness of various events can be examined more easily utilizing the field concept of Gestalt approach.

Robison (1968, p. 39) said that Gestaltists' main emphasis is upon the individual's perception of a situation, while the topological psychologists are more concerned with the "forces that are affecting the individual in the situation." This paper attempts to blend both views; i.e., the individual's perceptions of the events that are described that evolve into forces that begin to affect (and change) an individual's perception of an event over a period of time.

If the "Gestalt field" could be viewed as a body of water with events viewed as rocks disturbing the equilibrium of the water's surface, the ensuing "ripples" from a succession of events would make separation of the various force effects difficult for an observer on the shore. In the review of the literature, this difficulty of separation and pinpointing of events and time lines is further compounded by the perceptual bases from which the writers view the events that have been selected.

Perhaps one method to visually conceptualize the interrelatedness of the events and their effects upon the

perceptions of individuals would be to make an adaptation of the theory advanced by Curtis (1982) to explain the various components of personality. If one were to think of a "target" composed of a series of concentric rings, each of which is a different stressor, then a corresponding "ripple effect" of the various linked events so chosen is more easily understood. No event can stand isolated by itself.

Finch (1966, p. 20) has said that "Scientific knowledge organizes experience and does not describe some real nature behind these experiences." The organization for and the purpose of this paper is to describe a phenomenon of the development of a critical attitude towards education as an after effect of individuals' perceptions of certain national events impacting upon their lives.

The "ripple effect" is further utilized to explain the emergence of a negative value as a result of "figural after effect." Miller (1967, p. 99) said, "Thus we 'see' in reality what we are prepared to 'see' as determined by our images that have already been formed." The following definition of figural after effect is from Miller and is a compilation of the works of Kohler and Wallach (1944), Kohler and Emery (1947), and Osgood and Heyer (1951):

Prolonged inspection of a curved line, a bounded area, or a patch of color produces after effects which distort the resulting trace in characteristic ways. For example, following prolonged inspection of a curved

line, a straight line will be perceived as curved in the opposite direction, a bounded area appears smaller, a constant area recedes in space, a colored patch (appears) less saturated. This effect may last for several minutes, hours, or days. The after effect or overriding of subsequent percepts has been attributed to satiation, the nature of which remains obscure. It does appear to be a property of the neural pool which exerts its influence without the subject being aware of its presence. Its possible relation to after-discharge in brain wave activity is unknown (p. 99).

The organizational formate that best depicts various interrelatedness of events, perceptions, figural after effect, from a historical perception is the "target" typology. By "target typology" is meant the selection of certain significant events within a time frame (in this instance, decades are used) about which information is gathered to analyze the effects of the event by an "after view"; i.e., historical synthesis.

A rationale is needed on the selection and use of the events that will aid in the determination of the formulation of this negative phenomenon. The majority of events listed were of the political nature which project profound social ramifications. There was naturally a selection of certain specific world events that had a direct political influence upon the United States. Examples include the Korean conflict, Vietnam, and the Arab oil embargo. The three primary areas considered on graphs and reflected with the critical responses of

literature were political, economic, and social events, with the major emphasis being focused on political events.

The accumulation of the "ripple" effect can be illustrated by observing Figure 1 depicting the effects of Miller's (1967) conditioning characteristics. Miller noted:

The conditioning has the following characteristics: 1) it is unintentional on the part of the subject; 2) the subject is not aware that they are changing or learning in some way; 3) the learning is actually the association of two phenomena from the external environment which must appear simultaneously (or nearly so), and this association then leads to a change in the manifest behavior of the subject (p. 106).

In focusing upon the criticism and the data in the review of literature there is much discussion concerning the ills or the concerns of public education, but upon analysis, there appears to be no clear cut basis for these concerns or criticisms. As a result, there is much speculation concerning the status and well being of education as an institution. It therefore seemed appropriate to examine examples of the criticism in hopes of determining additional insight into the plight of public education. In doing so, this study has attempted to provide insight into the development of or emergence of the phenomena of a value of pessimism that will become a

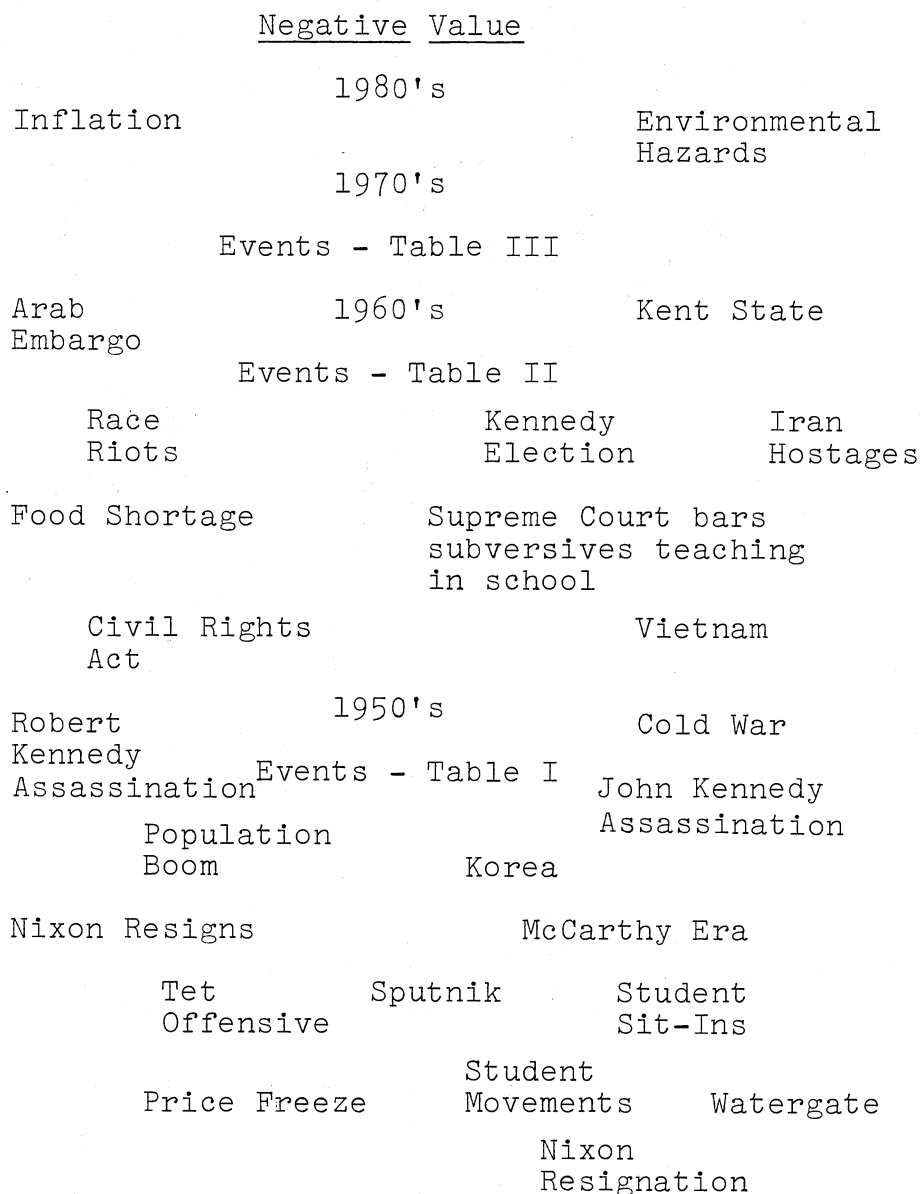


Figure 1. "Ripple" Effect of Events

crucial part of the American society's attitude toward institutions in general and public education in particular.

It therefore seemed applicable to refer to the Gestalt concept of "field theory" and its application to behavior. Learning to the "field theorist" is a process of discovering and understanding relationships in our environment. Therefore, human behavior, according to Gestalt theory, cannot be fully understood without reference to environmental conditions within which it occurs (Kolesnik, 1963).

As a consequence, if one might view the 30 year time span and the environment thereof depicting certain significant political, social, and economic events through examples of criticism, one might detect some understanding of behavioral tendencies that will result in a sense of negativism.

This chapter will focus upon specific events and the resulting criticism and commentary therein. By focusing upon certain specific events and the commentary surrounding those events, it is intended to give the reader a grasp of the decades outlined, and how they are related to education.

Granted, while this is not an in-depth historical treatise of the fifties, sixties, and seventies, it does strive to provide a means of grasping some of the problems and concerns as a result of events that aided and

assisted in determining the intellect of the period. Therefore, this paper utilizes events and examples of criticism and commentary to measure the prevailing sentiment of the period. While this sentiment is reflected through criticism and events thereof, it is not yet a value which reflects an attitude. However, over a period of 30 years there will certainly be a case for such an observation. Table I focuses upon some of the more significant events that had an effect on education.

The Fifties

An examination of the fifties reveals essentially criticism against public education in an age of initial optimism. The research suggests that for the most part Americans were generally pleased with their lives and the institution of public education. Americans were quite optimistic concerning the future of the country in resolving and meeting the more complex problems of the nuclear age.

However, with the advent of the McCarthy era and the attack of communism, this society was apparently sent reeling by this invisible threat that suddenly surrounded and engulfed every aspect of American society. Much speculation indicates that American society and education did not respond well to this new period of criticism. The country seemingly failed to respond in a direct or positive manner. One notes this by the reluctance of the

TABLE I
 SELECTED EVENTS AND CHARACTERIZATIONS
 OF THE FIFTIES

Events	Attitudes
1950 — Cold War — Korean War	Age of Anxiety, International Tension, — Uncertainty, Nuclear War Fear, Distrust
1952 — McCarthy Era — Supreme Court bars subver- sives from teaching public schools	Increased Surveillance, Fear, Witch- — Hunts, Blacklists, Un-American Activi- ties, Personal Insecurity
1954 — Civil Rights Movement	Integration, Supreme Court Separate, — Race Riots
1955 — Population Boom	Strains to System, Frustration Society —
1957 — Sputnik	Fear, Uncertainty, Soviet Tech. Superi- — ority? Critics Substantiated? Curric- ulum Questioned, Educational Credibility

political leadership to curb the excesses of McCarthy and his Senate investigating committee. While the leadership of this country turned away, education buried itself with a total lack of response.

In the review of literature, DiBona (1982), Meyer (1957), and Johnson (1953) discussed the initial impact of the fifties. Their writings concerned the McCarthy period, which reflected a definite change in attitude--an attitude that reflected a new sense of insecurity.

Fite and Graebner (1972) and Morris (1978) noted in the literature that Americans who lived through this period of the McCarthy era were frightened and were quite anxious about what the future held. The decade of the fifties reflected much of the sentiment that these writers alluded to. Table I depicts the concern reflected by Brooks (1978) when he observed that public education in the early and middle fifties had been extremely criticized.

In the review of literature, some reference was made regarding the impact of Sputnik. Zais (1978), Benedict (1981), and Goldman (1960) all noted the ramifications of the launch of Sputnik on public education. One ramification of interest to this writer is the fact that for many, Sputnik resulted in a loss of confidence in American public education.

It is therefore interesting to observe that, for the most part, Americans' attitude as reflected by Curran

(1982), which initially was one of optimism going into the fifties, but which, by the end of that decade, had changed to a considerable extent.

The Sixties

The decade of the sixties will seemingly be a perpetuation of this attitude of disillusionment that evolved from the fifties. However, this attitude appears to be more embittered and hostile than that of the fifties. Table II reflects some of the singular events and the possible effects upon public education.

Zais (1978), in describing the sixties, touches upon the aspect of civil rights and anti-war activists. As a result, a new wave of criticism evolved. In examining certain events, O'Neill (1971) reflected much of the sentiment of the sixties when he noted that conservatives thought of it as an age of riot and license, whereas, the radicals viewed it as a time when the American system faltered.

The Seventies

The seventies, much like the fifties and sixties, released an intensification of the critical sentiment and frustration noted in the previous decades. The seventies and early eighties began to reflect the emergence of a hostile type of criticism. While the decade of the seventies offered the events and the impact of them on this

TABLE II
 SELECTED EVENTS AND CHARACTERIZATIONS
 OF THE SIXTIES

Events	Attitudes
1960 — Kennedy Election Vietnam	Camelot, New Social Mood, Idealism — Patriotism
1962 — Kennedy Assassination Vietnam	Anger, Frustration, Disillusionment — Patriotism
1963 — Supreme Court Legalizes Sit-In Demonstrations	Protests, Individual Rights —
1964 — Supreme Court Civil Rights Act Passed	Discontent, Racist Society, Re- pressive Society, Riots, Democracy Questioned —
1966 — Inflation	Capitalism Questioned —
1967 — Race Riots — Robert Kennedy Assassinated Martin Luther King Assassinated	Social and Political System Ques- tioned — Shock, Dismay, Dissillusionment With Society —
1968 — Tet Offensive	American people betrayed, Conduct of Government Questioned. Ameri- can People Duped —
1969 — Vietnam	War Protests, Casualty Lists —

society, one notes that now this sense of optimism in the American response to events appears more difficult to detect. It now appears, according to Handlin (1981), that intellectually, this country has lost this sense of optimism and faith that had been possessed by earlier generations.

At the conclusion of the seventies, the American political economy seemed paralyzed. The economy appeared stagnant with high inflation and unemployment. For the first time in recent history, fundamental problems such as the energy crisis existed but could not be resolved. It appeared that this country had lost this once innate ability to get things done. This feeling of virtual ineptness that once was foreign to the American consciousness was intellectually rampant throughout this society (Thurow, 1980) (Table III).

According to Thurow (1980), there are a number of reasons for this change. Vietnam and the subsequent political scandals clearly lessened the population's willingness to accept this country's leadership and their judgment. What one notes on reviewing the decade, including thrusts of civil rights, poverty, black power, and the various liberation movements, is that many of the groups that have in the past absorbed economic losses have become militant and anti-establishment. Thus, they are no longer willing to accept their plight without a political fight. The significance of this mood is that, as a result of

TABLE III
 SELECTED EVENTS AND CHARACTERIZATIONS OF
 THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES

Events	Attitudes
1970 — Kent State Protest, 4 Killed	Shock, Police State? Apathy —
1972 — Inflation	Capitalism questioned, Purchase Power Decline, Constitutional Credi- bility, Economic Concern, Shortages —
— Watergate, Food Shortage	
1973 — Arab Embargo	Energy Uncertainty Fear, Apprehen- sion, Capitalism Questioned —
— Energy Crisis, Worst Reces- sion since 1930's	
1974 — Nixon Resigns	Social and Political Shock, Politi- cal Disillusionment, Confidence in Institutions Questioned —
1975 — Highest Unemployment Rate Since 1930's	Apprehension of Economy and Con- tinued High Prices —
— Price Freeze	Apathy in Regard to Capacity of Gov- ernment to Resolve Problems —
1980 — Environmental Hazards, Economy Suspect, Unemployment, Energy Concerns, Nuclear Concerns	Indifference, Apathy, Lack of Con- fidence, Distrustful, Uncertainty —

their initial successes, their militance and civil disobedience sets an example--an example that infects other groups representing environmental, social, and political neighborhoods (Thurow, 1980).

It is interesting to note at this point in our history that, as a result of events, the attitude and feeling reflects marked change. What one notes is a determination of businesses, professionals, and governments to be accountable for their actions and behavior. There is an increasing tendency for the public to assume more direct, personal, and individual control of these activities. This apparently marks an unmistakable trend in American life. The scope of this feeling of disaffection suggests the likelihood of negative sentiment (Raywid, 1979).

Grider (1979), in discussing the aspect of negative sentiment, suggested that the school people would be a good place to start with. Grider feels the educators are notoriously slow and inept at defending themselves. They turn and run before every gust of public discontent. Grider admittedly pleads guilty to participating in the strange value system that finds failure more intriguing or significant than success.

Podeschi's (1982) article in The Educational Forum notes that many people have been seduced into finding the supposedly right method to solve all human problems--whether that method be transcendental meditation, behavior modification, religious righteousness, utopian Marxism,

unbridled capitalism, or other panaceas for perfection. He feels that this is an easy response to an era of social upheaval.

Podeschi (1982) observed that what he says may appear to sound overly negative about America. However, he suggests that this whole process of reflecting upon American culture, with painful introspection, is strangely the American way. "Europeans comment on the energy and worry Americans give to their problems" (Podeschi, 1982, p. 165). A transplanted European said it more sharply:

Certainly, the sheer amount of energy denoted agonizing reappraisals of past events . . . has provided foreign observers with ample evidence in support of the popular European thesis that this is an essentially masochistic culture which enjoys nothing more than flagellating itself in public whenever it has the opportunity (Podeschi, 1982, p. 165).

This type of reflection and agonizing over events and concerns has undoubtedly resulted in a decline in public confidence in the schools. This has troubled educators for some time, but most authorities, when questioned about this attitude, noted that the schools were not alone. "I don't think people have as much confidence in any of our institutions as they used to have," said Schneller (as cited in Fiske, 1982, p. 12), a Connecticut state senator who headed a study of school finances last year. Along this same reasoning, Solomon (as cited in Fiske, 1982), Executive Vice-President of Educational Testing Service, related that since schools are much more visible than

other institutions, they therefore become the whipping boy for larger problems that are inherent within society.

The question one must ask in light of this feeling of discontent is, why has this occurred? It is fairly obvious that today's opinions about schools and education differ dramatically from any previous time in recent history. In 1976, Californians passed Proposition 13, apparently agreeing with its initiator Howard Jarvis that "The only difference between public education and the Mafia is that public education steals more money" (Armistead, 1982, p. 1). Two years later, 10 states had similar measures on their ballots. Therefore, one seeks to discover what has brought this epic distrust of schools and educators. School board members, once viewed as providing an important community service, now face frequent recall elections (Armistead, 1982).

This prompts one to seek an answer to this gradual turnabout in thinking. When Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn spoke at Harvard University on June 8, 1978, he received much attention. He decried the American loss of will and observed a psychological weakness. The search for easy ways out, the evasion of problems, and the effort to gain time by concession amounted, the Russian observed, to a betrayal of ourselves (Handlin, 1981).

Buscaglia (1978) observed that, through his education and work and in his daily life, he has had some rude awakenings. He noted that most people are not happy and

do not expect to be so in this life. He revealed that mental health statistics show tremendous increases in the number of patients in mental hospitals and outpatient clinics. Buscaglia continued by noting that there are 300,000 people now contained in mental institutions throughout this country. There are some 125,000 chronic depressives that are in desperate need of treatment. It has been reported that one out of seven Americans will require some psychological treatment before middle age. Buscaglia observed that the suicide and divorce rates are rising at alarming rates, in a totally unprecedented fashion.

Buscaglia (1978) related that his daily experiences brought him into contact with people who seemed totally lifeless and frighteningly apathetic. Most frightening and disturbing was their complete disregard and dislike of themselves and society. They were suspicious of others and guarded about themselves. They feared risks, lacked faith, and scoffed at hope and optimism as if it were romantic nonsense.

Buscaglia (1978) observed that these people were too frightened to live in the present and were almost totally devastated by the past. They related negative and bitter accusations and blamed an uncaring God, neurotic parents, or a sick society for placing them in a hopeless hell in which they feel helpless. It is interesting to observe that, while Buscaglia did not characterize our total society, he did reflect on much of the present social

problems inherent within this present society. To examine events and the responses and criticisms that resulted, this emergence of skepticism seemingly had a balloon-type growth. Fiske (1982), Thurow (1980), and Buscaglia (1978) all touched upon characterizations of this society as of the present.

Undoubtedly, the events examined and the ramifications over the past 30 odd years had an emotional, psychological, and intellectual effect on the populace of the country. The total behavioral effect would take many studies to complete. However, an aspect of this change within our society would certainly enhance one's perception concerning one's awareness of attitudes in regard to education. Part of the emotional educational community's emotional, psychological, and intellectual growth will be society's reaction to institutions which govern us in general and education in particular.

It will be interesting to speculate concerning the effects of events and the growth of our complex and changing society. Thurow (1980), Handlin (1980), and Fiske (1982) all observed that society's outlook and expectations have changed. When compared to the optimistic outlook projected by Curran (1982) in the early fifties, there has been a drastic change in the public's perception of education.

This change in perception concerning the role and function of education certainly did not occur over a short

period of time. The culmination of events that transpired throughout the past 30 years in actuality played havoc with society's outlook concerning the stalwart institutions that govern and direct our society. Still, the question emerges and must be addressed as to why and how events could profoundly change one's perception of society and, in this particular instance, education.

Research seems to indicate that in the sixties and seventies a more harsh and vengeful type of criticism occurred. Essentially, one notes a virtual indictment of the entire educational process. The onslaught of criticism is not confined to any particular area. It is interesting to observe that the educators and professionals all profess different remedies for the much beleaguered institution of education.

This dilemma presents education with a unique set of circumstances and problems. It would therefore seem crucial to understand the nature and thrust of this age of criticism. As a result, Chapter IV is intended to provide some insight into this age of criticism.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All men turn to the past to help them comprehend the present and grapple with the future. The study of history helps them mold a broad understanding with respect for the uniqueness of individual situations. It enables them to see universal significance in local history and particular examples in general statements. Most of all, it builds a respect for the richness of life and the fullness of the human experience (Danzer, 1973, p. 105).

Summary

The primary purpose of this study is to allow one to consider and entertain the possibility of the emergence of a value or attitude that has been fostered for a period of some decades. As a result of events and the oftentimes extraordinary social response, it should be considered that criticism and social thought have a historical dimension. Neither the dominant conservatism nor the challenging radicalism can be fully understood without an adequate understanding of their past.

It is essential to recognize that the nature of this study focuses upon many intangible elements in deriving its conclusion. However, because of the intangible nature of this study, this does not mean that those phenomenon should be ignored or discounted.

Hartman (1967, p. 102) observes, "We must not at first consider the human art of valuing, we consider instead the formal pattern of this act, the structure that lies behind our valuing."

In focusing upon the emergence of a phenomena that will result in a value as determined by this paper, ample consideration should be given to the more intangible aspects involved in the determination. The lack of logic of descriptive properties does not confirm the nonexistence of a value or phenomenon.

Hartman (1967) provides an example of a mode of knowledge that might apply in the development of this phenomenon when he suggests:

If I tell someone that I have my car outside and ask him to go there and wait for me, and he asks: 'Which one is your car?' and I say: 'It is a good car,' then he will never find it, because he has received no information about it. I have given him no descriptive or natural properties: white or black, whether two-doored, convertible or sedan, etc. Yet he knows a great deal about my car; he knows it is a good car, that is to say, it has a motor, doors, tires, and an accelerator (p. 103).

Thus, the valuational, in this interpretation, does not refer to the individual thing--the car--which the individual does not know, but to the concept of the car, which he does know, since the car possesses the properties of this concept.

This study provides similar properties in focusing on the emergence of a negative phenomenon. The phenomenon

emerge from a "ripple" effect that will lend itself to Hartman's (1967) example.

Any study should focus on those elements that provide the greatest degree of truth or validity. Still, there are no absolutes. If research has taught anything, it is that oftentimes truth is what one perceives it to be. What this paper has attempted to do is to provide insight into why Americans might perceive education differently over a period of 30 years.

To narrow the scope of this study would have taken a valuable ingredient out of the study, and would have limited its purpose. As noted in Chapter III, causal studies prepare the reader for a wide spectrum and a broader grasp of a field of study. If one were to discount this methodology in regard to this study, one would be adopting the same attitude so blatantly exhibited by the so-called scholars in regard to the field of social science in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

It would therefore seem entirely appropriate to focus on this aspect of value formulation in light of the past 30 years. To disregard this phenomenon and the possible implications would appear to be unrealistic, even a catastrophe. Therefore, one must consider facts and the intangibles as a result of those facts. Hopefully, between the two, a more objective and enlightened analysis and understanding of criticism and those who criticize education will be more fully comprehended.

It therefore behooves educators to continue to address criticism, but in the process, to probe into the nature of criticism by understanding the environment and the intellectual premise and climate responsible for it.

Behavior is shaped and determined to a large extent by the society in which a person lives. This shaping process is called socialization. Socialization in most instances can be examined at three levels: the culture, the social group, and the social dyad. At each level, one finds that the social environment determines the behavior (Kendler, 1963). With this insight into behavior one could possibly conclude that over a period of time there could be the development of a value that would reflect a particular mood or tendency on the part of society.

As Chapter II focused on significant events over the past 30 years, and as Chapter III characterized those events, it is important to consider the development and the emergence of an intellectual process steeped with a value of negativism. Webster (1976) defines negativism as an attitude of mind marked by skepticism about nearly everything affirmed by others. This is what Collins (1981, p. 9) refers to when he states, "These attitudinal trends point to a general mood of distrust of public institutions and dissatisfaction with their products and services."

It would seem appropriate to rely on Dollard and Miller's (as cited in Hill, 1971) research dealing with reinforcement theory. One significant aspect of their theory touches upon attitudes, feelings, and behavior. They suggest that attitudes and feelings change first, then behavior.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that over a period of 30 years, events and the reaction and responses to them therefore will result in an intellectual climate that will be conducive to and result in a sense of negativism and an attitude that will essentially result in apprehension, distrust, and skepticism. Figure 2 reflects the suggestions of the researcher. This figure essentially depicts that society, over a period of 30 years, assimilated and evolved a value that will lend itself to negativism, as a result of events. This emerging value will seemingly oftentimes determine society's attitude toward American public education.

Granted, it is difficult to ascertain relative influence with any degree of precision. However, to ignore this phenomenon would seem to lose valuable insight into understanding the nature of criticism and/or the insight therein.

By being aware of the possibility of the value steeped with prejudice one could more astutely recognize and understand the essence and nature of the tremendous onslaught of criticism against education in recent years.

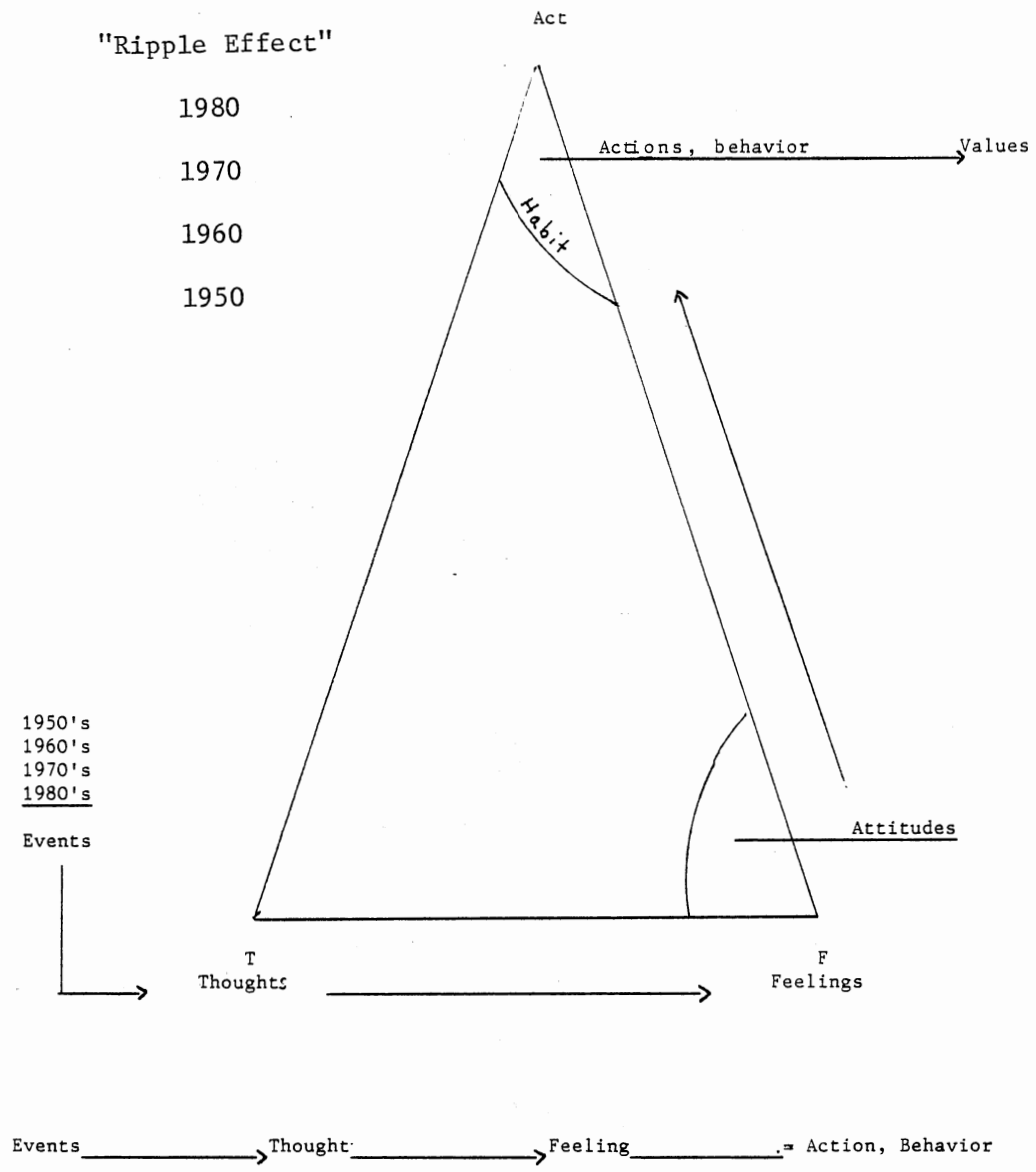


Figure 2. Attitudinal Graph Depicting the Emergence of Values for 1952 to 1982

It seems apparent that society has changed its attitude toward education. In essence, society tends to view things much differently than it did in 1952. It therefore becomes crucial to consider the possibility of particular values relating to criticism concerning education. The validity and quality of criticism must be considered in light of one's understanding of society's values in regard to institutions. If one fails to examine the values and change thereof, how can one appreciate or determine what is valid or legitimate criticism?

This paper suggests that one of the basic tenets of democracy is to speak out on issues and concerns and freely criticize aspects of American social, political, and economic existence. However, with this in mind, there can also result a period when criticism evolves into a sense of negativism as a result of an attitude that has been developed. It is probable that our society can reflect a sense of negativism that exceeds any constructive or useful critical analysis. One might possibly conclude that we have groomed throughout the past three decades a definite sense of pessimism. Research seems to suggest an alarming aura of pessimism and rejection of certain ideals and a lack of confidence.

As noted previously in Chapter I, this is totally contrary to the values and attitudes with which this society commenced. While this country strived to project and reflect a tendency toward a futuristic attitude

concerning this country's social, economic, and political concerns, Americans viewed their society, for the most part, with a feeling that it offered something better.

The country acted as a safety valve for many people, as an alternative to better things. Turner (1921) touched upon this concept with his thesis on the American Frontier in 1890.

This cynicism, this element of doubting the worth of or losing confidence in the stalwart institutions on which this country was founded, reflects an attitude not of criticism, but a sense of negativism reflecting a pessimistic attitude.

Conclusions

The public's increasing unhappiness with public education has become evident the past 15 years. Much of the evidence of this dissatisfaction and unrest is apparent in the rapid expansion and increasing numbers of private and secular schools.

While it is obvious that much of the public's concern over public education has culminated in the expansion of private and secular schools, this researcher feels that this is a periodic phenomenon. As a result, these alternative and private schools will tend to be short-term solutions for the public's unrest and dissatisfaction with public education.

The past 30 years have been a period of rapid and oftentimes drastic social, political, and economic change. As a result, this country's schools have been subjected to much criticism, the nature of which reflects a general attitude of the country toward the more stalwart institutions that foster this country's existence.

Therefore, it is not unreal or surprising to see much criticism and skepticism concerning politics, law, government, or any other institution that serves the public. What one notes is essentially an age of critical thinking and analysis, not too unlike the age of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century.

This country's populace, in a sense, has become critics, not only of education but essentially of every facet of their existence. This attitude of criticism has reached such dimensions that it verges upon negativism and has become rampant throughout this society and country.

While critical analysis and skepticism are essential in any democracy, this country seems to have surpassed any useful productiveness of them. What one notes is a society that has become possessed with a heightened sense of morality regarding its essential institutions. What is unique about this phenomenon is that this society reflects an attitude and values more permissive than at any other time in history. This society has apparently become permissive in regard to behavior, authority, and

respect for institutions and principles on which this country was founded.

Therefore, it appears that much of the problem with public education is that, regardless of the job it performs, it will be viewed by a society with a critical posture. However, the encouraging aspect of this is that the fundamentalist schools and the growing number of private institutions will be encountering the same critical analysis by the same overly moralistic society. This leads one to speculate that private and secular schools will not be the safety valve the moralistic majority contends.

Throughout the sixties and middle seventies, this country suddenly discovered that the formulas ascribed to as individuals were no guarantee of success. This country after World War II, as noted, had been enlightened with a sense of idealism. American society and system of education fostered this idealistic premise. This society taught the students of the fifties and sixties that attending school, going to college, and being patriotic would lend themselves to a happy existence. However, this country lost this illusion of presubscribed success during the late fifties and sixties with Vietnam. Americans lost their sense of respect, faith, and patriotism with the economy, Vietnam, and Watergate. Therefore, instead of constantly looking upward and into the future,

they have become preoccupied with the more minute aspect of our lives and society.

It is therefore convenient to focus much of this hostility, anxiety, and apprehensiveness upon an institution that is very tangible and concrete in American minds. The institution that affects most American lives is public education. In a sense, public education has become a scapegoat for all this country's frustrations reflecting this negative value.

This leads one to believe that the initial interest this society noted with private and parochial schools will be nothing more than fleeting. The reason appears obvious in that the same society that has condemned public education and the use of tax dollars will have the same attitude toward and apprehension regarding private and secular schools.

While it is of no consolation for public schools, it is reassuring to note that alternative schools or private schools are not the answer and will not prove to be for the critics of public education. They could be considered short-term solutions for the frustrations of an idealistic and disillusioned society imbued with a value of negativism.

The problem that educators must confront is to recognize that the strength of any profession comes through an enlightened productive analysis, not the total indictment that many detractors recommend and/or suggest.

Conclusions as a Result of Study

1. Criticism of the system of public education needs to be tempered with the realization of what alternatives exist.

2. It would seem crucial that school systems work more diligently to improve communication with staff and community. It would appear that schools are generally more open to ideas and concerns when sharing information and involving people in significant ways.

3. Schools need a careful and objective appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses and responsible but audacious proposals based on that careful assessment.

4. Districts should examine the feasibility of an organized public and professional relations plan at every building.

5. Districts should strive to establish tangible goals and objectives and acquaint the communities with their achievement.

6. The professional educators should focus and examine criticism and discuss the implications of criticism on public education. Examine criticism and the nature of it to ascertain the validity and its application for public education.

Recommendations for Continued Research

1. As a result of this study, additional research

would seem appropriate in determining the age of criticism and the public's perception of education on a local basis.

2. Research into the possibility of examining a new philosophy of education for a new age must be undertaken. If the acknowledgment of criticism in the determination of the public's perception of education is not adhered to, then a reassessment of the mission and function of education should be considered.

3. Continued emphasis should be placed on the role of criticism in relationship to the populace's perception of public education.

4. There should be continued examination of events and the ramifications in the determination of the public's attitude toward institutions in general and education in particular.

5. School systems need to develop a plan for the utilization of criticisms and how it might apply to their particular institutions.

An Analysis

The British historian Geoffrey Barraclough (as cited in Meyer, 1957) once noted that oftentimes histories must be and are rewritten. His analysis could be considered an excellent formula for public education. Barraclough states:

The importance of history is not to preserve our inheritance to new and ever-changing conditions; otherwise, it can only become a

millstone round the neck. It was the failure to reshape its inheritance, the failure after the eighteenth century synthesis, to create a new idea of man and his existence and activities, the weary plodding along the overgrown humanist paths with no new vision, that brought the old Europe to its end. . . . Only a new inspiration, a new idea of man and his place in the universe, can open a clear vista to the future. . . . But inspiration will not come to those who look back, only to those who look forward and look up (as cited in Meyer, 1957, p. 7).

It is therefore essential to constantly observe and appraise the ever-changing conditions within society. The failure of educators to be astutely aware of societal conditions and attitudes could and oftentimes do influence people's perception of education. Understanding the nature of any society enables the people to adequately evaluate the legitimacy of their institutions. Only with this increased awareness and understanding will educators even remotely reach a general consensus concerning public education's mission and function. Without this distinct understanding and awareness, how can one hope to assess legitimate criticism from jargon-oriented propaganda?

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VITA 2

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Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING THE CRITICAL
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TOWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION AS AN INSTITUTION BE-
TWEEN 1952 - 1982

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