

THE EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF THE COUNCIL FOR BASIC EDUCATION

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PREFACE

The author would like to express his appreciation for the advice and counsel extended by the members of his advisory committee: Professors Millard Scherich, Ernest W. Dewey, Loyd Douglas, and Robert W. Scofield.

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What should be the character of this public education, and how young persons should be educated, are questions which remain to be considered. As things are, there is disagreement about the subjects. For mankind are by no means agreed about the things to be taught, whether we look to virtue or the best life. Neither is it clear whether education is more concerned with intellectual or with moral virtue. The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed -- should the useful in life, or should virtue, or should the higher knowledge, be the aim of our training; all three opinions have been entertained. Again, about the means there is no agreement; for different persons, starting with different ideas about the nature of virtue, naturally disagree about the practice of it.*

-- Aristotle, ca. 300 B.C.

*Aristotle, "Politics," Book VIII, Chapter 2, The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941), pp. 1305-1306.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The Council for Basic Education was incorporated on July 3, 1956, in the District of Columbia as a nonprofit educational organization. Operating under a grant of \$114,000 from the William Volker Charities Fund of Burlingame, California, the Council was organized by "a group of individuals who had been active in urging, through writings and speeches, an increased emphasis upon the fundamental intellectual disciplines in the public schools."¹ The sponsors believed that the "Council for Basic Education could quickly become a focus for the various scattered efforts now being made to strengthen the basic disciplines of the public school curriculum."² Arthur E. Bestor, Professor of History, University of Illinois, was elected president. Mortimer Smith, the writer and critic, and Harry J. Fuller, Professor of Botany, University of Illinois, were appointed directors. Harold L. Clapp, Professor of Romance Languages, Grinnell College, was elected to the full time position of executive secretary. A monthly bulletin with a circulation of about 10,500 copies has been published by the Council since August, 1956. Among the charter members of the Council for Basic Education are: William E. Hocking, Professor of

¹Council for Basic Education Preliminary Brochure, (Washington, D. C., n.d.), p. 9.

²Ibid.

Philosophy, Isaac L. Kandel, Professor of Education Emeritus, Raymond B. Cattell, Professor of Psychology, Crane Brinton, Professor of History, Harry G. Wheat, Professor of Education, and Mark Van Doren, Professor of Classical Literature.

This organization may represent the culmination of a growing movement on the part of many educators, writers, and publishers who are skeptical of basic trends in current public education and who seek to re-orient public school theory and practice. However, a Field Representative for the National Education Association, Dr. Robert A. Skaife, seems to express a view widely held by professional educators when he warns teachers and administrators to "watch out for citizens groups using the words 'basic education' in their titles." He believes that the Council for Basic Education is one of several reactionary organizations attempting "through their publications to shake the confidence of the American public in its schools."³ Thus, there seems to be divergent views concerning the purposes of the Council for Basic Education, and these disagreements pose the problem of this study: what are the educational commitments and the philosophical foundations of the Council for Basic Education?

Although a basic philosophy may not be explicit in these theories and practices, this study assumes that an educational philosophy cannot avoid reflecting a basic philosophical position, that is, a theory of knowledge, a theory of reality, a theory of value, and a view concerning the nature of man.

The Need for the Study

Critical interest in education has increased in the past few years.

³Robert A. Skaife, "Neo-Conservatives are on the March with 'Sound Education' as Battle Cry," The Nation's Schools, Vol. 59 (May 1957), p. 54.

Many popular journals, such as the Atlantic Monthly and the Saturday Evening Post and Time, have published articles strongly opposed to certain theories and practices. The extent to which criticisms of public education have grown is indicated by a summary of entries in the Education Index under the heading Public Schools--Criticism. The annual number of entries for 1952 is over sixteen times as many as for 1942. These are articles that appear mainly in educational journals. Since the launching of "Sputniks" by the Soviet Union in October 1957, an atmosphere of crisis seems to exist. The Russian satellites were interpreted as a challenge to American education, and waves of criticisms of American education increased with few signs of abatement.

The noted educational historian, Edgar W. Knight, observes:

Probably at no other time in history was there such a wide discussion of acute educational issues as in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Nor in any other period has there been such severe criticism of the work of the schools.⁴

The educational philosopher Isaac L. Kandel also believes:

The state of education is one of greater confusion now than at any time in the history of the country. . . . The crisis in education, insofar as it concerns aims and methods, is the result of a certain feeling of discontent among that part of the public that is not apathetic about education.⁵

Dean Hollis L. Caswell of Teachers College, Columbia University, writes in a prophetic manner:

At no time since the days of Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, in my opinion, has there been such a widespread consideration of basic educational issues. This period will involve fateful educational decisions which might well result in major changes in the course of our educational development.⁶

⁴Edgar W. Knight, Fifty Years of American Education (New York, 1952), p. 47.

⁵Isaac L. Kandel, American Education in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 1-5.

⁶Hollis C. Caswell, "The Great Reappraisal of Public Education," Teachers College Record, Vol. 54 (October 1952), p. 22.

The founders of the Council for Basic Education, in calling for a re-appraisal of the theories and practices of public education, are one of the most vocal groups of critics. The sincerity of this group, however, is doubted by many professional educators. In an article answering the criticisms of Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith, for example, Dean Ernest O. Melby, School of Education, New York University, states:

We believe that the type of criticism now being offered is alarming, not healthy or constructive. It threatens to weaken the whole fabric of democratic living at a time when we can least afford it. . . .

These attacks are dishonest and unjustified in that they are aimed at the heart of good education, the very foundations upon which our educational program has been built. . . . The First [foundation] is that education is rooted in democratic philosophy.⁷

James D. Finn, Professor of Education, University of Southern California, states that the Council for Basic Education is intellectually associated with a reactionary, neo-conservative movement that is seeking to foster an "elite concept" in public education.⁸

William C. Kvaraceus, Professor of Education, Boston University, voices a fear that the educational program of the Council for Basic Education will increase the drop-out rate of the schools with further unemployment of youth as a result:

It is estimated that in 1965 some 1,600,000 boys and girls 14 to 17 years of age will be out of school and that one-half million of these will be unemployed. This exiled group represents a real threat to the future of our society. If the reactionaries in the Bestor camp have their way, this number, a mere half million, may represent a very minimal estimate of future unemployed youth who will have left school.⁹

⁷Ernest O. Melby, "Dishonest and Unjustified," NEA Journal, Vol. 40 (October 1951), p. 441.

⁸James D. Finn, "The Good Guys and the Bad Guys," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40 (October 1958), pp. 4-5.

⁹William C. Kvaraceus, "The Behavioral Deviate in the Secondary School Culture," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40 (November 1958), p. 103.

William Clark Trow, Professor of Education and Psychology, University of Michigan, is very skeptical of Arthur E. Bestor's thesis that the mind can be trained through the intellectual disciplines, for he states that "Professor Bestor's explication and defense of the disciplines is largely based on the now discredited faculty psychology."¹⁰ In a more recent reply to Arthur E. Bestor, Trow states:

We can hardly depend on the transfer of learning from traditional subjects, even when they are well taught, to enable young people adequately to meet the life situations that confront them. . . . We should not sell them short with stale promises of mental training made by ignorant men and based on dilapidated theories which provide only traditional form without needed content.¹¹

In a reply to the criticisms made by Harry J. Fuller, first Vice-President of the Council for Basic Education, Simon Williams and James D. Laurits, both of Harvard University School of Education, make the following observation:

However valid certain of his arguments may have been, the distorting intensity of his words and the questionable quality of his so-called 'bits of evidence' can only serve to further befog and bemuse efforts to understand the nature of the educational problem in the United States.¹²

David D. Malcolm, replying to the criticisms made by Harold L. Clapp, first Executive Secretary of the Council for Basic Education says:

Education for the few is the watch-word, and the goals are the transmission of the cultural heritage of our western civilization and the search for eternal verities in the great writings of the past. Laudable though their goals may be, their concentration on the few to the exclusion of the many and on the past to the exclusion of the contemporary

¹⁰William C. Trow, "Academic Utopia? An Evaluation of Educational Wastelands," Educational Theory, Vol. 4 (January 1954), p. 16.

¹¹Trow, "The Problem of Transfer--Then and Now," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40 (November 1958), p. 71.

¹²Simon Williams and James D. Laurits, "Scientists and Education," The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 72 (May 1951), p. 282.

constitutes a clear-cut betrayal of the educational needs of a democratic way of life.¹³

After editing an anthology of contemporary criticisms of education, C. Winfield Scott and Clyde M. Hill, both of the Department of Education, Graduate School, Yale University, arrive at the following conclusion:

Careful, unemotional study of all the literature provides abundant justification for the following conclusions: . . . Most of the criticisms, not all of them by any means, are honest and they are made by honest, high-minded, well-intentioned, if often misinformed or uninformed people. They come largely from friends of public education.¹⁴

They make it clear that the criticisms of Bestor and Fuller, which are concerned with goals, content, and methods, are not ruthless assaults on education.¹⁵

It may be significant that William O. Stanley, a prominent experimentalist in educational philosophy, made the following statement only recently:

This does not mean that I am aligning myself with . . . Bestor against my colleagues in professional education. . . . But a strong case can be made for the proposition that the time has now come for a searching re-examination of all of our theories of education. . . . The point which I am attempting to make is that the crisis in American education cannot be resolved without a careful reappraisal and revision of existing educational policies and theories.¹⁶

Thus, the above statements indicate that educators hold varying opinions of the Council for Basic Education and its founders. Some believe that the Council is a threat to the democratic system of education,

¹³David D. Malcolm, "The Stranglehold on Education - A Reply," American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Vol. 35 (Autumn 1949) p. 505.

¹⁴C. Winfield Scott and Clyde M. Hill, eds., Public Education Under Criticism (New York, 1954), p. 397.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 395-402.

¹⁶William O. Stanley, "Current Tasks of Educational Philosophy," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40 (October 1958), pp. 13-14.

that it seeks to foster an "elite concept" of education for the few, and that its practices would increase the number of school drop-outs and unemployed youth. Others believe that its theories are based on the now discredited faculty psychology, and that it is trying to undermine the confidence of the public in the schools. However, the study of contemporary criticisms by Scott and Hill concludes that the founders of the Council are honest and well-intentioned people. Finally, a prominent experimentalist educational philosopher states that, although he is not aligning himself with Bester, existing educational theories and policies should be revised in view of the present crisis.

These conflicting statements indicate the need for a study that would analyze the theories and practices proposed by the Council for Basic Education and disclose the nature of its educational commitments and philosophical foundations.

A review of the following sources was made to ascertain whether any studies similar to this proposal are in progress or have been made: The Education Index, the Review of Educational Research, the Journal of Educational Research, Research Bulletins of the National Education Association, the Phi Delta Kappan, the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, and Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities. Insofar as the writer has been able to determine, there have been no studies made of the theories and practices of the Council for Basic Education.

The Limitations

There are 127 charter members and over 1,400 persons in the general membership of the Council for Basic Education. Most of the members have not published books or articles concerned with education. Therefore, some

selectivity or sampling was necessary in order to make this study feasible. This study is limited to the documents published by the Council and to the documents published individually by certain members of the founding group. The following members of the founding group who have expressed their views in written form were considered most representative: Arthur E. Bestor, Mortimer Smith, Harold L. Clapp, and Harry J. Fuller. This limitation is justified for the following reasons:

(1) In a letter to the writer, August 1, 1957, Harold L. Clapp, the Executive Secretary of the Council for Basic Education states:

The founders constitute a somewhat organic group. We have read each other's writings, we have picked each other's minds in numerous gatherings, we have hammered out around a table and in correspondence the Statement of Purposes that is published in our descriptive leaflet, and also numerous matters of policy.

On the other hand, while I think it likely that nearly all of the other charter members would have found themselves comfortable and in substantial agreement all through these deliberations, none of them was a party to them until after the fact.

(2) The founding group appointed themselves as the original directors of the organization and the positions of president, vice-president, treasurer and executive secretary were filled by members of the founding group.

(3) The members of the founding group hold permanent office in the Senate, which is the policy making body of the Council.¹⁷

(4) The official positions within the organization continue to rotate among the founding group. For instance, in the first annual meeting of the membership, October 10, 1957, Mortimer Smith was appointed by the Board of Directors to succeed Harold L. Clapp in the important position of

¹⁷Council for Basic Education Preliminary Brochure, (Washington, D. C., n. d.), p. 8.

executive secretary and editor of the CBE Bulletin. Harry J. Fuller was elected vice-president, while Arthur E. Bestor and Harold L. Clapp were retained among the directors of the corporation.

Thus, the above findings indicate that the limitations of this study are justified, since this group is sufficiently homogeneous and representative of the Council for Basic Education.

The Procedure

The method of this study is philosophic rather than scientific in that it is concerned with the interpretation and significance of ideas, and the fundamental philosophical positions upon which certain ideas rest. It is partly inductive and synthetic in the sense that its conclusions are derived from the analysis of particular issues and positions. It is partly deductive and analytic in that the logical consequences implied by certain premises are made explicit. Since this study deals with conceptions of a comprehensive nature, it is not amenable to the precision of a quantitative measurement, nor the prediction and control that may arise from scientific experimentation.¹⁸ While the discovery of factual data is within the realm of science, it is the concern of philosophy to interpret the ultimate relations and meanings. This distinction is made clear by Good, Barr, and Scates with reference to educational problems:

¹⁸With regard to philosophic research, Aristotle has stated: "It is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits; it is evidently equally foolish to accept probable reasoning from a mathematician and to demand from a rhetorician scientific proofs." (*Nichomachean Ethics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941), p. 936.)

If one specializes in the critical examination of educational theories, hypotheses, and generalizations in the light of data which are already available, we call him an educational philosopher. If one specializes in solving of educational problems by making new appeals to experience through systematic, controlled and uncontrolled observation, in field or laboratory, we call him an educational scientist. . . . These several approaches to research are merely phases of the complete act of thinking, and there can be no fundamental conflict between them.¹⁹

In order to solve the problem of this study, a search was made in the card catalogues of the Oklahoma State University Library, the Cumulative Book Index, the Education Index, the Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, and the philosophic journals to find the publications of the following members of the founding group of the Council who have published in the area of educational theories and practices: Arthur E. Bestor, Mortimer Smith, Harold L. Clapp, and Harry J. Fuller. A letter, requesting a bibliography of their publications, was sent to each of these members. Replies were received from each person except Arthur E. Bestor. In addition, a selected bibliography on the subject "Basic Education," and a complete set of bulletins published by the Council for Basic Education were procured from the Council headquarters. These publications were analyzed to discover whether the above members of the founding group agreed among themselves and with the position taken in the Council publications concerning the aims of education, the nature of the curriculum, and the nature of the educative process.

The evidence for the educational commitments was embedded within criticisms of public education, and it became obvious to the writer that any attempt to clarify the theories and practices advanced by the Council for Basic Education must include an analysis of the criticisms. Therefore

¹⁹Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr, D. E. Scates, The Methodology of Educational Research (New York, 1941), p. 24.

an analysis of the criticisms was made to discover wherein the founders agreed among themselves and with the Council publications. The writer made no attempt to evaluate these criticisms, but rather, to discover precisely what movements, theories, or practices the Council opposes in public education and in the professional education of teachers.

Upon making the analysis of educational commitments and criticisms, it became evident that only the publications of Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith contained statements or propositions of philosophic import, and thus the analysis to discover philosophical foundations was limited to the works of Bestor and Smith. A fuller statement indicating the reasons for this limitation is contained in the introduction to chapter four, In searching for the philosophical foundations, the writer tried to discover the position concerning the nature of knowledge, the nature of reality, the nature of values, and the nature of man in the works of Bestor and Smith.

After completing the study of the philosophical foundations and the educational commitments, the writer discovered that the process of mental discipline in the educative process was a crucial argument supporting the position of the Council for Basic Education. Moreover, this process seemed to rest upon the Aristotelian conception of the nature of man. And in view of the controversy concerning "faculty psychology," the writer proceeded to analyze the conception of mental discipline in the documents of the Council and the works of Arthur E. Bester, and to compare these views with the conception of mental discipline implicit in the philosophy of Aristotle. This study was made a separate chapter in view of the importance given to mental discipline by the Council.

Definitions of Terms

The term "aims of education" is used to refer to the comprehensive purposes of education whether explicitly stated or only implied in the values of an individual, group, or society.

The term "curriculum" is used to refer to the content, including knowledges, understandings, appreciations, attitudes, and skills, designed to achieve the aims of education.

The term "educative process" is used to refer to the fundamental means or method employed in the achievement of the aims of education. Included in the term is instruction, learning, and motivation, with reference to interest, effort, and discipline.

The term "theory of knowledge" is used to refer to that aspect of philosophy concerning meaning, its source, its limitations, and its relation to truth.

The term "theory of reality" is used to refer to that aspect of philosophy concerning the objective basis of experience; for example, whether man's existential medium is to be conceived as realistic, idealistic, or experimentalistic.

The term "theory of value" is used to refer to that aspect of philosophy concerning the good and the right; for example, whether goods are relative or absolute, whether the basis of the good is pleasure, survival, inner consistency, or conformity to a rational or revealed principle.

The term "theory of man" is used to refer to man's origin, destiny, and his peculiar nature; for example, whether he is distinctively rational, whether he is an organism, a spirit, a soul, or a body.

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENTS OF THE COUNCIL FOR BASIC EDUCATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the documents of the Council for Basic Education and of the members of the founding group concerning educational commitments. The analysis was undertaken to discover whether the founding group agreed among themselves and with the position taken in the Council publications concerning the aims of education, the nature of the curriculum, and the nature of the educative process.

Before presenting this analysis, however, it should be pointed out that the Council has published a statement of purposes and a statement of planned activities. Following are proposals which the Council intends to initiate and support:

1. That all students without exception receive adequate instruction in the basic intellectual disciplines, especially English, mathematics, science, history and foreign languages.
2. That the fullest possible opportunity is afforded to students of high ability to reach mature levels of achievement without waste of time.
3. That clear standards of actual accomplishment are used to measure each student's progress and to govern promotion to higher levels of the educational system.
4. That teachers are thoroughly educated in the subjects they teach and in current developments therein.
5. That vocation training is offered in due subordination to the school's fundamental purpose of intellectual discipline and that standards

of achievement are maintained as rigorously in vocational as in academic fields.

6. That school administrators are encouraged and supported in resisting pressures to divert school time to activities of minor educational significance, to curriculums overemphasizing social adjustment at the expense of intellectual discipline, and to programs that call upon the school to assume responsibilities properly belonging to the home, to religious bodies, and to other agencies.¹

It is apparent from the above statement that "basic education" refers primarily to the five disciplines specified in paragraph one. However, it is also evident that the Council for Basic Education promotes other objectives which are related to strengthening basic education. In order to carry out its purposes, the Council proposes the following plan of action:

1. To disseminate, through a news bulletin, (a) proposals for strengthening fundamental instruction in the schools, (b) speeches and statements supporting improved standards, (c) information about schools with exceptionally strong programs, and (d) information about programs that threaten to impair standards.
2. To arrange conferences on educational problems.
3. To sponsor, arrange for the financing of, or publicize the results of investigations into teacher certification, curricular changes, college entrance requirements, examination systems, state school legislation, and so forth.
4. To arrange for or sponsor the preparation and dissemination of specific and detailed proposals for improving school curriculums, teacher training, certification procedures, and so forth.
5. To coordinate the efforts of associated organizations and scholarly and scientific societies to improve education.
6. To arrange, upon request of school boards, and other responsible groups, for school surveys to be made by properly qualified specialists in the various subjects of instruction.
7. To call to the attention of school boards, state and federal educational bureaus, and legislative bodies the necessity for including representatives of the scholarly world in all commissions dealing with school policy.

¹Council for Basic Education Brochure, (Washington 5, D. C., n.d.), p. 3.

8. To cooperate with educational agencies in devising and recommending improved instructional programs, and to use the good offices of the Council to bring about cooperation between school authorities and learned societies in the various fields.²

The above statements of purposes and planned activities were agreed upon by the founding group in launching the Council for Basic Education. They reveal a certain consensus on purposes and plans for action; however, this chapter attempts to present a more detailed analysis of the educational commitments.

The Aims of Education

The Council Publications

The Council places a specific limitation on the meaning of education. Instead of referring to the sum total of experiences, information, and skills an individual acquires in life, the Council refers to education as "the necessarily limited experiences which take place in the formal institution of the elementary and high school."³ The purpose of these educational experiences is "the harmonious development of the mind, the will, and the conscience of each individual so that he may use to the full his intrinsic powers and shoulder the responsibilities of good citizenship." The Council states further that "the security and well-being of the nation call for constant vigilance to preserve the best in the present educational system, to develop new methods and procedures, and to eliminate weaknesses . . ."⁴ Additional clarification of the aims

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Mortimer Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 1.

⁴Council for Basic Education Brochure (Washington, D. C., n.d.), p. 3.

of education is contained in the following statement:

The school has many subsidiary purposes but its primary purpose is four-fold: (1) To transmit the facts about the heritage and culture of the race; (2) to teach young people to read and write and figure; (3) in the process of (1) and (2) to train the intelligence and to stimulate the pleasures of thought; and (4) to provide that atmosphere of moral affirmation without which education is merely animal training.⁵

In another instance the Council states that "the business of education is to preserve, transmit, and cultivate our common heritage," and that "we think the school must insist that its primary task is intellectual training."⁶ In voicing specific objection to the idea that the chief goal of education is the development of physical health, mental and emotional stability, fine personality and effective citizenship, the Council states that "these desirable things are not the chief goal of education, although they may be its by-products."⁷ With regard to effective citizenship, this statement seems to be a contradiction in aims. However, the Council means that effective citizenship and appreciation of the democratic way of life as subjects are intangible and elusive matters which cannot be taught directly, whereas the basic disciplines are considered to be more tangible and factual in leading to effective citizenship. The Council concludes that its purposes "can be achieved only by making intellectual values central rather than peripheral in education."⁸

In general the aims of education are individual and social in that they concern both the intellectual and moral welfare of the individual and his responsibilities to society as a citizen. The Council statements

⁵Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 2.

⁶Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (February 1958), pp. 4-5.

⁷Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 5.

⁸Ibid.

imply that the individual possesses certain intrinsic intellectual powers (a mind, a will, and a conscience) which can be developed in the process of transmitting the cultural heritage and which should be used in the duties of citizenship. Hence, the aim of basic education is to prepare the individual pupil in the basic or intellectual disciplines for the highest degree of enlightenment, which is good for the individual and good for society. Basic education is thus considered essential to the survival of a democratic society because such a society requires intelligent citizens to govern themselves and to preserve their culture.

Arthur E. Bestor

Bestor places much the same emphasis upon the aims of education as that given in the Council publications. He is concerned with both the individual and society. He says that, "the disciplined mind is what education at every level should strive to produce. It is important for the individual. It is even more important for society. It is most important of all for a democratic society."⁹ A disciplined mind is gained through intellectual training, which "means nothing more than deliberate cultivation of the ability to think."¹⁰ Bestor defines the ability to think as the "intellectual power" that mankind has accumulated, rather than knowledge of facts and formulas. "The schools exist to teach something," he says, "and this something is the power to think."¹¹ He argues further that clear, systematic thinking involves the logical organization of

⁹Arthur E. Bestor, Educational Wastelands (Urbana, 1953), p. 59.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹Ibid., p. 10.

knowledge, which is provided by a liberal education. "Liberal education," he says, "is essentially the communication of intellectual power . . . and means the deliberate cultivation of the power to think."¹² Although Bestor is more concerned with intellectual power, he also stresses basic subjects as the tools or means to provide this power:

An indispensable function of education, at every level, is to provide sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking represented by history, science, mathematics, literature, language and other disciplines evolved in the course of mankind's long quest for usable knowledge, cultural understanding, and intellectual power. . . . The learning of facts is not intellectual training, unless those facts are seen as the conclusions of systematic inquiry and as part of a larger structure of knowledge.¹³

Thus, Bestor is essentially in agreement with the Council publications concerning intellectual training, but he does not specifically include as an aim of education the development of the "will and conscience." He implies that man possesses a will, however, in three statements which refer to the responsibility of the public school to encourage intellectual effort on the part of every young person who has the "capacity and the will" to apply himself to intellectual training.¹⁴ Thus, Bestor agrees with the Council publications that the aim of education is also the development of the "will" in the sense that it is the duty of the public school "to encourage intellectual effort and respect for intellectual effort on the part of every citizen."¹⁵ On the other hand, he is rather specific concerning the relationship between education and moral training. Bestor asserts that "morality permeates all activities of life, assuming special

¹²Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹³Bestor, The Restoration of Learning (New York, 1955), pp. 7-8.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 30. Also, Bestor, Educational Wastelands (Urbana, 1953), pp. 9, 16.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 16.

form in each."¹⁶ While insisting that the primary purpose of education is to provide intellectual training, he believes that this purpose subsumes moral training:

Morality enters the classroom and the study as it enters all the chambers of life. It assumes special form as intellectual honesty and as that species of reflectiveness which converts a mere taboo into an ethical imperative. . . . A school that sticks to its job of intellectual training is not thereby indifferent to the . . . moral conduct of its students.¹⁷

He does not believe that the public school should offer a course in "how to be good," but should insure that classwork is done honestly, that rewards are based upon performance, and that prestige is attached to serious and worthy activities. "A school administrator may talk about morality," he says, "but if he permits the intellectual ideal of the school to be debased, he contributes to the debasement of all ideals."¹⁸ Thus Bestor agrees with the Council publications that the school should provide an atmosphere of moral affirmation, but as an aim of education it is subordinate to intellectual training.

Although Bestor stresses intellectual training as the aim of education, he is no less emphatic concerning societal aims. He states that "the purpose of public education today is what it has always been: to raise the intellectual level of the American people as a whole."¹⁹ He believes that the ability to think is a prerequisite to good citizenship.²⁰

¹⁶Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," New Republic, Vol. 128 (January 1953), p. 12.

¹⁷Bestor, The Restoration of Learning (New York, 1955), pp. 28-29.

¹⁸Bestor, Educational Wastelands (Urbana, 1953), p. 16.

¹⁹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 17, 10.

²⁰Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 2.

He argues further that a democratic society, more than any other kind, is in need of intellectually trained citizens:

A republican system of government requires citizens who are highly literate, accurately informed, and rigorously trained in the processes of rational and critical thought. If the schools fail to raise up a nation of men and women equipped with these qualities of mind, then self government is in danger of collapse . . .²¹

However, Bestor is not only concerned with the mental qualities of citizens, but with knowledge and culture in itself. He says that "science is a source of power . . . [and] literature, philosophy and the arts are measures of the greatness of a civilization."²² He adds that "the school must transmit to the public at large, not merely to its own students, a respect for knowledge and cultural achievement . . . [and] must uphold for all men the ideal of disciplined intellectual effort."²³ While admitting that intellectual training was once monopolized by an aristocracy, he argues that to emphasize the narrowly practical and life-adjustment education is, in effect, to perpetuate an undemocratic view. Bestor insists that every citizen in a democracy should be given an opportunity to develop his mind to the fullest extent possible and should acquire a command of the intellectual resources that were once the property of an aristocratic few. He concludes that the work of the hand is not ignoble, but that the work of the mind is more powerful.

Thus, it is evident that the aims of education in Bestor's position concern the welfare of both the individual and society. The overarching aim of education is to provide intellectual training, which is the cultivation of the power to think in the individual student. While he does

²¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 26.

²²Ibid., p. 94.

²³Ibid., p. 95.

not express direct agreement with the statement in the Council publications that education should develop the will and conscience of each individual, he does insist that if the school gives attention to its primary aim, it will also provide an atmosphere of moral affirmation and strenuous effort. Intellectual training is considered good for the individual and for society because it is the source of mental power which self governing citizens need in a democracy and is the means of raising the intellectual level of the entire nation.

Mortimer Smith

Mortimer Smith states that the educational reformers of the early nineteenth century "believed that the aim of education was to produce the good individual, and that in the aggregate these good individuals would make the good society."²⁴ He adds "that ought to be the aim of education today, to produce the good individual who in turn will be the good citizen."²⁵ However, he notes that educational leaders today are interested in collective ideals, in emphasizing the sociological rather than the human side of education.²⁶ Smith agrees that "one of the aims of education is to teach man how to adjust himself to community living," but he insists that "the most important aspect is just that intellectual and moral development of the person as a person which educators believe is now outmoded."²⁷ More specifically, Smith states that "the primary

²⁴Smith, And Madly Teach (Chicago, 1949), p. 91.

²⁵Smith, The Diminished Mind (Chicago, 1954), p. 8.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 94.

function of the school is to transmit the intellectual and cultural heritage and knowledge of the race, and in the process to teach young people to think, and to buttress moral values."²⁸

It is evident that Smith is in total agreement with the Council publications concerning the aims of education, yet he places a more definite emphasis upon moral development than does Bestor. Smith argues that "the task of the schools is chiefly intellectual and moral in nature: it must deal with ideas and it must form ideals."²⁹ He believes that all students should learn about "the spiritual history of mankind" through literature and history "where the visions of men are recorded."³⁰ He also makes a statement concerning happiness as an aim of education which is not emphasized by the Council publications nor by Bestor:

The schoolman must . . . transmit to his charges an understanding of how humankind got this way. Only out of that understanding and intelligence will come enjoyment of living, which is the real end of education.³¹ . . . School work is only the means, the always slow and sometimes painful means, by which a child develops towards the understanding that is necessary for happiness and a feeling of pleasure in life.³²

Smith agrees with the Council publications and with Bestor that education should be provided for everyone, not merely for the intellectually gifted or an elite class. He believes that, although not everyone has the same abilities and capacities, everyone has the same needs which can be met only by a "humanizing and liberalizing education."³³ He holds that

²⁸Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 6.

²⁹Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 10.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 11.

³²Ibid., p. 39.

³³Ibid., p. 60.

intellectual training is particularly valuable as preparation for citizenship:

If we expect not only the bright person but the average and below average person to assume the responsibilities of citizenship then we are going to have to do something more than develop his personality and adjust him socially; we are going to have to make some effort to train his intelligence and to provide him with a background of the knowledge indispensable to the functioning of intelligent citizenship.³⁴

Smith particularly objects to the idea that public education should be concerned only with the superior student:

American educators talk eloquently about 'the democratic right of all to education.' . . . but they betray as profound a distrust of the ability of all youth to 'take' education as did the late Albert Jay Nock, who felt that most people were 'sub-human' and that only an infinitesimal portion of the population is educable; an idea, incidentally, shared by the great democrat, Thomas Jefferson, who advocated a system of competitive schools which would weed out what he rather undemocratically called 'rubbish.'³⁵

This statement is specially noteworthy in view of the fact that a recent apologist for contemporary education writes that the Council for Basic Education "has another full-blown elite theory" which is derived from such conservatives as Albert Jay Nock. He refers to Nock as a "para-philosopher" who provides "a sort of intellectual fountainhead to much of the Bestor-Smith-Fuller stream."³⁶

It may be concluded that the aims of education in the position of Mortimer Smith concern both the individual and society with much the same emphasis found in the positions of Arthur Bestor and the Council publications. By giving primary attention to basic knowledge and skills and

³⁴Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," College and University (Spring 1957), p. 307.

³⁵Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 59.

³⁶Finn, "The Good Guys and the Bad Guys," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40 (October 1958), pp. 4-5.

the cultural heritage, the public school can provide the intellectual and moral training for all youth to learn to think, to understand the culture, and to cherish moral values. From understanding the culture arises enjoyment of living and intelligent citizenship. Finally, by giving more attention to the education of persons than to life-adjustment, the good individual in the aggregate will constitute the good society.

Harold L. Clapp

Harold L. Clapp has written only a few articles on the subject of education and much of that consists of criticisms of public education. However, there is enough evidence to indicate that he is essentially in agreement with the Council publications, Arthur Bestor, and Mortimer Smith concerning the aims of education. Clapp states that "it is irresponsible to talk about staff needs and building programs without going back to the fundamental question of the aims of education."³⁷ He argues that if all pupils are to "assume democratic citizenship and thus determine the role and fate of our nation, we know desperately those youngsters need the soundest possible basic training and humane learning . . ."³⁸ In attempting to answer the question of how the ideal of universal education can be reconciled with quality in education, he says:

More than the selective school of the past, the democratic school must enthrone intellectual effort as its central inspiring ideal. It must make good, so far as it is able, the deficiencies of cultural background which it finds in its students. More than that, it must compensate for the intellectual seriousness missing in the homes of

³⁷Harold L. Clapp, "Initiative or Referendum?" CBE Bulletin No. 11 (June 1957), p. 9.

³⁸Clapp, "The American Scholar and Public Education," South Atlantic Bulletin, Vol. 22 (January 1957), p. 6.

so many of its patrons by concentrating its own attention as never before upon serious intellectual pursuits.³⁹

Clapp states that when the Council for Basic Education refers to strengthening public education, it aims to produce mature citizens in a free society. The mature citizen is one whose education in the intellectual and cultural traditions has taught him to pursue the good life for its own rewards and cherish virtue and moral stamina because he has seen its effectiveness in the lives of men living and dead.⁴⁰

Although Clapp does not stress happiness or leisure any more than Bestor and Smith, he says that happiness does not mean "the cult of childish pleasure today," but rather "disciplined preparation for enlightened achievement in life."⁴¹ "For leisure," he says "men need most of all inner resources, and these we think most likely to come from mastery of the basic disciplines."⁴²

Thus, Clapp's position on the aims of education is similar to the other positions. Intellectual training in the basic disciplines, which provides knowledge of the culture and develops moral stamina, is good for the individual, and also good for society through its effect upon citizenship.

Harry J. Fuller

Harry J. Fuller has published only three articles on the subject of

³⁹Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁴¹Clapp, "Initiative or Referendum?" CBE Bulletin No. 11 (June 1957), p. 9.

⁴²Clapp, CBE Bulletin No. 12 (July 1957), p. 14.

education, all of the nature of criticisms. However, he is included in this study because of his position as a founder of the Council for Basic Education. Fuller states that the public schools should have four objectives:

. . . To give students some vocational tools that may aid them in earning a living; to give them knowledge of the social and economic problems of our civilization, with necessary guidance in their own social problems and adjustments; to give students mental fortitude and the ability to reason out difficult problems with discrimination, accuracy, and thoroughness; and to give them a knowledge and an appreciation of the uniqueness of man, of the splendor of his creations, and of the laws of nature.⁴³

He believes that the schools are carrying out the first two objectives reasonably well, but "they are becoming increasingly ineffective in doing the last two." Fuller argues for the "restoration of the humanities, the arts, and the sciences to their properly dominant position in our educational system."⁴⁴ He says that these disciplines provide an enduring source of valuable lessons in "manners, ethics, behavior, personality development, beauty, and social adjustment." He states further that the liberal arts "can mold characters, broaden minds, and make sound and mature citizen-adults."⁴⁵ Most important, however, is the mental discipline involved in the "experience of hard, toughening mental work or of intellectual stamina." He believes that all high school students should be compelled "to acquire a strong and tenacious discipline" by solving difficult mental problems.⁴⁶ Through restoring emphasis on the humanities, arts, and sciences in the public schools, Fuller believes that the study

⁴³Harry J. Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Dementat," The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 74 (January 1951), p. 41.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 36.

of man's achievements and thought processes in the past and present can offer much that contributes to "the enjoyment of life, the improvement of human relations, the building of character, and the evolution of a happier society."⁴⁷

Although Fuller expresses himself somewhat differently than Bestor, Smith, and Clapp, he is in close agreement. It is evident that the aims of education concern both the individual and society in his position. For the individual, preparation in the liberal arts and sciences provides knowledge of the cultural heritage, moral stamina, and training in the power to think. For society, the result is sound, happy, and mature citizens.

The Nature of the Curriculum

The Council Publications

The Council states that the curriculum should consist primarily of basic education, by which is meant fundamental intellectual disciplines: English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign languages. This is the "corpus of knowledge that is the need of everyone and can be transmitted to all save the definitely moronic."⁴⁸ Committed to the principle of universal education, the Council would offer both the student of high ability and the slow learner the best education possible in the basic disciplines. To level down the curriculum for the able student is considered "a denial to him of equal democratic opportunity and a threat to

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin No. 10 (May 1957), p. 5.

the security of the nation."⁴⁹ While recognizing the importance of individual differences, the Council states that too much emphasis on the uniqueness of each person "tends to belittle what we have in common as human beings."⁵⁰ For those who have less ability, the Council recommends that the curriculum should differ in degree from that described, but not essentially in kind.⁵¹ Although children of average ability or less will take longer to learn these intellectual disciplines, the Council believes that they should "learn them within the limits of individual capacity . . . for the sake of their own dignity and social responsibility." In the duties of citizenship they, too, will be called upon "to judge and vote and take a stand."⁵²

The Council agrees that James Bryant Conant, in his book The American High School Today, "casts his vote for quality and for basic education." However, disagreement is expressed with Conant's conclusion that only 15 to 20 per cent of secondary students are academically talented: "CBE will continue to believe that a far greater proportion of students than is usually claimed can benefit from a program of solid intellectual content."⁵³

The Council's statement continues:

The school has a special duty to the slow learner as it has to the fast learner, to bring him as far as it can along the intellectual trail. It is easy but unjust to adopt the so-called dumping-ground technique of

⁴⁹Council for Basic Education, Descriptive Brochure, (Washington, D. C., n.d.), p. 5.

⁵⁰Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 4.

⁵¹Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (December 1957), p. 13.

⁵²Ibid., p. 5.

⁵³Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 3 (February 1959), p. 7.

pushing such students into shop or similar courses merely because it is far less trying to deal with them there.⁵⁴

The Council holds that the main task of the elementary school is to provide a strong foundation in symbolic experiences and factual data as a "preparation for the refinements of secondary school." This means that less emphasis should be placed on pupil judgment and reasoning, and more emphasis on the learning of factual data, in the elementary school:⁵⁵

The primary, though not the only, task of the elementary school is preparatory in nature; it is the time for providing . . . those sets of symbols and sets of facts -- involving reading, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography -- which are indispensable before understanding can come alive.⁵⁶

In order to be more specific concerning the nature of basic education, the Council proposes that the following should be the "bare minimum expected of a normal child finishing the elementary school:"

He should be able to read and write with some fluency, and spell, add, subtract, multiply, and divide with accuracy; he should know the basic geographical facts of his country and the world; have a knowledge of elementary science; know something of the culture and history of other peoples and much of his own. . . . This is the bare minimum, not an inclusive list.⁵⁷

With regard to the secondary school, the Council says that the "high school student is naturally capable of more judgment than a pupil in the elementary school and should be interested not only in the appearance of things but in their significance as well."⁵⁸ Thus, more thinking and reasoning are expected of the secondary school student through logically

⁵⁴Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (June 1958), p. 6.

⁵⁵Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 4. Ibid., (February 1958), p. 2.

⁵⁶Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 2.

⁵⁷Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 3.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 4.

organized subjects. The Council would be prepared to defend for the "average and the above average" student the following basic subjects:

English (literature, composition, grammar) throughout the four years; two years of history; a year of plane geometry and one of elementary algebra, another of biology, and one of a physical science; some foreign language for all, much for the college bound; an opportunity to elect advanced math; music and art as electives; and physical education properly subordinated to the academic program. This or a similar program, should be the basic curriculum in any high school--academic, business, or vocational.⁵⁹

Certain vocational courses such as commercial education, machine shop, and drafting, are considered to be valuable, provided they are offered in subordination to the basic disciplines, and provided the principles underlying the technical manipulations are taught.⁶⁰ The Council believes that the teaching of the principles involved prevents technical courses from becoming too narrowly practical. On the other hand, specific objection is voiced to the proliferation of the curriculum with such courses as "driver education," "bachelor living," and "dry-cleaning." The Council states that "safe driving is not a matter of formal education, nor is it an intellectual or manual skill. It is, rather, a moral and emotional attitude."⁶¹ That basic education, however, should receive primary emphasis in the curriculum is evident in the following:

We have no quarrel with special provision for talent in such fields as music or art (providing, of course, basic education gets its full due). Nor do we favor putting bright little monsters under a spotlight. We are only saying that society's needs might be better served by more wholehearted concentration on man as a thinking animal.⁶²

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin No. 10, (May 1957), pp. 2-3. (Lane Technical High School, Chicago, Illinois, is described as a model institution of this type.)

⁶¹Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (December 1957), p. 9.

⁶²Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin No. 6 (January 1957), p. 4.

Thus, the curriculum proposed by the Council is designed to achieve the aims and fulfill the purposes of education previously stated.

Intellectual training should be provided by means of the symbolic disciplines of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and science in the elementary school with emphasis on a factual background for the work of the secondary school. In the secondary school, the curriculum should consist of the basic academic disciplines of English, history, mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Allowances are made for certain vocational courses and electives, provided they are subordinate to the basic curriculum. Therefore, basic education would be the means to prepare future citizens for a life which is intellectually competent and morally good.

Arthur E. Bestor

Bestor uses the word "discipline" in three distinctive ways, which should be clarified before analyzing his conception of the curriculum. First, he uses the word "discipline" to mean the control of conduct in the sense that teachers should direct behavior and control classroom order, as well as encourage self-discipline on the part of pupils. Again, he uses the term to refer to the process of directed learning in the sense that one develops a "disciplined" mind trained in the processes of rational and critical thought. Finally, he uses the term to designate certain forms of knowledge which are characterized by formal structure and particular techniques of investigation and which are also fundamental ways of thinking.⁶³ The latter are the intellectual disciplines which,

⁶³Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 27. Also, Bestor, "When the Teacher Calls it 'Social Studies,'" Good Housekeeping, Vol. 147 (July 1958), p. 18.

he holds, should be central in the public school curriculum.

Bestor argues that "certain intellectual disciplines are fundamental in the public-school curriculum because they are fundamental in modern life."⁶⁴ He states that it is a realistic appraisal of the modern world rather than tradition that points out these disciplines as fundamental. For the elementary school, he maintains that reading, writing, and arithmetic are indispensable studies because everything that comes later rests upon them. In addition to these basic skills, he recognizes other responsibilities in the elementary school:

Because the activities of the elementary school are wide-ranging and discursive, the pupil can also be introduced, though not as yet in a very systematic way, to a good deal of data from the natural sciences, from history, from geography, and from other disciplines. . . . He can easily be brought to realize the existence of languages other than his own and to commence their study.⁶⁵

Bestor states that the junior high school is supposed to mark the real beginning of organized study by making a transition to more formal subjects. He notes that a transition is made from arithmetic to more abstract mathematics, from a diffuse study of scientific phenomena to a methodical study of one of the sciences. Also, history begins to assume its true structure and order, and the study of English and a foreign language is carried forward to a usable intellectual skill.⁶⁶ Thus, the junior high school student is expected to acquire the ability to pursue a subject methodically and to employ some abstract reasoning.

For the secondary school, Bestor says that "science, mathematics, history, English, and foreign languages are the essentials because con-

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁶⁶Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 42.

temporary intellectual life has been built upon a foundation of these particular disciplines."⁶⁷ He asserts that these disciplines are fundamental in education for practical life and for citizenship, as well as in training for the professions. They are "essential elements in the education of any citizen who expects to be well-informed in the modern world."⁶⁸ He believes that a realistic analysis of the modern world points to the necessity of disciplined study in these five separate areas in both the secondary schools and colleges. Therefore, he is strongly opposed to the core curriculum, common learnings, and social studies. He reasons that these integrated curriculums prevent the continuous and orderly mastery of the separate disciplines as "genuine tools of thought."⁶⁹ He is also opposed to integrated curriculums because he believes that they are attempts to perform the culminating acts of thought, while omitting all the antecedent steps of analysis.⁷⁰ Bestor insists that a student "needs to know the inner structure and logic of any system of thought if he is to use its resources to any serious purpose." He points out that social studies, for example, offers "no perspective on the issues it raises, no basis for careful analysis, and no encouragement to ordered thinking."⁷¹

With regard to vocational instruction and physical education, Bestor believes there should be a place for "typing, shopwork, home economics,

⁶⁷Bestor, "The Retreat from Learning," National Parent Teacher, Vol. 49 (October 1954), p. 32.

⁶⁸Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 42.

⁶⁹Bestor, "When the Teacher Calls it Social Studies," Good Housekeeping, Vol. 147 (July 1958), p. 213.

⁷⁰Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 54.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 55, 142.

and athletics," preferably without academic credit. He states that vocational training "should be set as late in a student's educational career as possible, so that he may bring the broadest background of liberal education to his task."⁷² It should be noted that Bestor uses the term "liberal education" to refer to both the fundamental intellectual disciplines and learning to think by employing the "powers of the mind."⁷³ He objects to any strong emphasis on vocational training and athletics, since he believes that such emphasis contributes to anti-intellectualism by debasing the intellectual ideals of the school and fostering disrespect for intellectual effort. Thus, vocational training is thought of as a final stage in education in which the student should bring to bear the broadest and firmest foundation of liberal education.⁷⁴

He states succinctly:

Liberal education is a preparation for life. Hence, it can and does properly include preparation for the making of a livelihood. But education ceases to be liberal if it is directed exclusively to the latter end, because then it produces, not free citizens, but men enslaved by their occupations.⁷⁵

Bestor points out that what goes on in the elementary and secondary schools affects every aspect of the intellectual life of the nation in scientific and technical progress, professional skills, and cultural activities. He argues that American citizens must try to bring back the substance of a liberal education in the intellectual disciplines in order "to pull the country through the present crisis."⁷⁶ He insists that

⁷²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 80.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 373, 403.

⁷⁴Bestor, "Liberal Education and a Liberal Nation," American Scholar, Vol. 21 (April 1952), p. 142.

⁷⁵Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 60.

⁷⁶Bestor, "The Soft Curriculum," Good Housekeeping, Vol. 147 (May 1958), p. 118.

intellectual training should be provided for all students, the slow learners as well as the average and mentally gifted. In voicing specific objection to a stratified or class society, Bestor states that "we are not perpetuating aristocracy but destroying it if we make the same education available to all the people," that, indeed, "the test of democracy in education is whether we have given to the many the things that none but the few could once possess."⁷⁷ However, he recognizes that such a curriculum entails many problems with students of varying abilities.

In order to provide "sound and rigorous training in the basic intellectual disciplines," Bestor proposes a change in the grade-structure of the public schools "which would permit both the slow and the fast learners to advance at their own pace, [and] which would preserve for all students the inner logic and order of the disciplines."⁷⁸ He believes that the grade-structure of public schools should be based upon mental age for academic work and upon chronological ages for non-academic work, such as social activities, physical education, recreation, and student self-government. His purpose is not to plan for homogeneous grouping as such, but rather to set up a system of "enforced prerequisites" which would group students according to the point they have reached in their educational development.⁷⁹ He says that the level of intellectual maturity can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy "through intelligence, aptitude, and 'readiness' tests, provided these are interpreted with care . . ."⁸⁰ He would use batteries of achievement tests to measure the

⁷⁷Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 87.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 296.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 301-303.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 302.

information and skills students possess. Bestor would create a new mental age grade-structure by distributing "the kinds of learning supposedly carried out in the six grades of the present-day elementary school" among new mental-age grades one through nine. In his hypothetical system any child with a mental age of six would be enrolled in grade one regardless of his chronological age; similarly, any child of mental age seven would be enrolled in grade two; those of mental age eight in grade three. While children at the lower limit of average intelligence would complete all of the mental age grades, those of average intelligence would regularly skip grades four and seven, and those at the upper limit of average intelligence would skip grades one, four, seven, and eight. Grade nine would have as a prerequisite the minimum mental age of twelve years.⁸¹ At the onset of puberty, about the chronological age of twelve, he would have all students transferred to the high school. Bestor states that no student should be asked to repeat a grade with the stigma of failure. "If he is in difficulty, he simply does not skip a grade as he would otherwise do, or, in extreme cases he is pulled out for remedial work."⁸² In this way he believes all students would find an honorable and congenial place in the school and could master the intellectual work assigned. Also, the public school could fulfill its role as an agency of intellectual training.

Thus, Bestor is essentially in agreement with the Council publications concerning the importance of basic intellectual disciplines in the curriculum. However, he uses the term "liberal education" to refer to "basic education." Moreover, he is in full accord with the Council statements

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 316-317.

that the curriculum should differ in degree, but not essentially in kind, for students of varying abilities. In addition he makes a specific proposal for meeting the problem of individual differences. His position concerning the subordination of vocational education to the basic disciplines is also in agreement with the Council publications.

Mortimer Smith

Mortimer Smith also employs the word "discipline" in three different meanings in the same manner as Bestor. By "discipline" he means the control of conduct or maintenance of classroom order; the process of directed training or mental discipline; and the basic subjects of the liberal arts tradition.⁸³ He states that the content of liberal education consists in certain logically organized disciplines such as "mathematics, biology, history, languages, literature, philosophy---subjects forming a combination of . . . the two roads to knowledge, that of analysis (the sciences) and that of intuition or imagination (the humanities)."⁸⁴ He gives special emphasis to literature and history, which he believes should provide the necessary background for future citizens to make judgments. He reasons that these are the disciplines by which students learn to communicate intelligibly and understand the ideas which have shaped the country and the world.⁸⁵ He agrees with Bestor in noting that "history in the schools tends to be more and more concerned with contemporary problems and to be losing its identity in the so-called social studies."⁸⁶

⁸³Smith, And Madly Teach, pp. 49, 72.

⁸⁴Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," College and University (Spring 1957), p. 299.

⁸⁵Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 49.

⁸⁶Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," p. 305.

Smith explains that "strictly speaking, liberal education is something that takes place in college as distinct from school." However, he believes that when the schools maintain high standards in the fundamental skills and the basic intellectual disciplines, they are laying the groundwork for liberal education:

On the elementary level the child is being instructed; he is learning how to read and write and figure and is learning facts, facts of history, geography, language, literature, and poetry. On the high school level the student continues to be instructed, now in subject matter of increasing complexity; for he is old enough now not only to see the appearance of things but to be interested in their significance; and this interest in and recognition of meaning and significance is part of the process of liberal education.⁸⁷

Smith does not offer a specific plan for solving the problem of individual differences, but he does agree with Bestor when he states that "nothing will be solved by the device of abandoning real education for those who are less facile with ideas."⁸⁸ He states that he does not "wish to review the classical trivium for American high schools" and that "physics and four years of Latin may not be the ideal curriculum for young people with I.Q.'s of ninety."⁸⁹ He recognizes, however, that the public schools are less selective than they were a generation ago and that the present heterogeneous population of the schools is not comprised exclusively of "potential geniuses and scholars." Accordingly, he states:

The curriculum of the high school is going to have to be revised for the average student . . . but the revision needs to be in the direction of discovering new and better methods and techniques for reaching this group with the values of the cultural heritage and . . . with

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 300.

⁸⁸Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 48.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 3.

the values inherent in subject matter, especially English and history.⁹⁰

Smith is quite firm in his conviction that vocational training should be subordinated to the intellectual disciplines especially for students who do not continue their education. He points out that "there are some twenty-five thousand different kinds of occupations in this country . . . far too many for the schools to include them all." "A great many vocational skills," he says "can be far better and more quickly learned on the job."⁹¹ The value of a liberal education, however, which is concerned with producing the good individual and the intelligent citizen, is the need of all students:

This is not to say that everyone has the same abilities and capacities, but only that everyone has the same needs, needs that can never be met by vocational training but only by a humanizing and liberalizing education.⁹²

In addition to opposing vocationalism, Smith agrees with Bestor in his opposition to the Core Curriculum and common learnings, since he believes these programs "all abandon formal subject matter in favor of integration of all subject matter towards an over-all objective of functional learning."⁹³ He says that "no matter how much good will and sincerity may be behind them, [these programs] are almost unfailingly anti-intellectual, trivial and a caricature of genuine education."⁹⁴

It is evident that Smith agrees with the Council publications and Arthur Bestor concerning the importance of basic intellectual disciplines

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 7, 48.

⁹¹Smith, And Madly Teach, pp. 11, 56.

⁹²Ibid., p. 60.

⁹³Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 27.

⁹⁴Ibid.

in the curriculum. However, he stresses literature and history in the secondary school since these subjects are sources of "the spiritual history of mankind." Furthermore, Smith states that, although he does not advocate the teaching of dogmatic or doctrinal religion in the public schools, "every student, bright or average, needs . . . to gain some understanding of the totality of life through religious and philosophical study suitable to his age and ability."⁹⁵ He makes clear, however, that this understanding is to be gained through literature and history. Thus, his conception of the curriculum is consistent with his emphasis on moral values as well as intellectual discipline in the aims of education.

Harold L. Clapp

Since his writings consist primarily of criticisms of teacher education programs, Clapp makes even fewer statements concerning the curriculum than he does concerning the aims of education. He says that the public schools should "provide the essential skills of language, numbers, and orderly thought and transmit in a reasoned pattern the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic heritage of civilized man."⁹⁶ In making a plea for liberal education before the Southern Humanities Conference, he stated:

We [The Council for Basic Education] are working for the soundest kind of education that can be devised for the full utilization of human resources; we can afford nothing less than that for the sake of national security--and, beyond that, for the sake of human dignity and the cause of civilization. . . . The testimony of the professors whom I know indicates an imperative need for solidifying the high school curriculum that is dangerously diffused and relaxed. It calls for reemphasizing

⁹⁵Smith, "Introduction," in The Public Schools in Crisis, (ed. by M. Smith), Chicago, 1956, p. 7.

⁹⁶Clapp, "School Boards or Boards of Education?", CBE Bulletin, No. 11 (June 1957), p. 1.

the essential disciplines."⁹⁷

Clapp strongly criticizes the public schools for lack of standards in formal English. He cites a handbook of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction in which teachers are admonished not to make corrections for certain erroneous sentences; e.g., "who do you want?", "who are you working for?", "have father or Jim call me?"⁹⁸ He points out that such instruction provides no foundation for recognizing good writing and he urges attention to sentence structure and idioms in the curriculum in order to develop precision in language.⁹⁹

Clapp is no less emphatic than Bestor and Smith in his opposition to integrated curriculums and vocational courses:

No one knows more authoritatively than do the scholars how inadequately is the mind disciplined and furnished by a curriculum of 'general' science, 'general' social problems, scene shifting, boy-girl relations, and driver training.¹⁰⁰

He also agrees with Bestor and Smith that vocational courses should occupy a subordinate position in the curriculum, and when offered, should stress theory more than manual skills:

I am not arguing for the abandonment of technical or vocational work in the public schools; I am saying--and I think the business world knows it, and should say so emphatically--that any such work that is done should stress principles more than practices, basic theory more than the specific skills of a particular trade, lest a mechanic graduate knowing only as it were, how to crank a motor the day before the invention of the self-starter.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Clapp, "The Need for Substance in Secondary Education," The Southern Humanities Conference, Bulletin No. 7 (October 1957), p. 25.

⁹⁸Clapp, "The Prose that Depresses," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 26 (November 1955), p. 433.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 434.

¹⁰⁰Clapp, "The American Scholar and Public Education," South Atlantic Bulletin, Vol. 22 (January 1957), p. 6.

¹⁰¹Clapp, "The Need for Substance in Secondary Education," The Southern Humanities Conference, Bulletin No. 7 (October 1957), p. 31.

Although Clapp does not elaborate upon the elementary curriculum, he does refer to the importance of habits and attitudes:

If young minds are not properly trained and amply furnished in the lower schools, they will never catch up, so that business and society lose in the long run whether a high school career is terminal or a step toward higher education. Perhaps more important, habits and attitudes are developed in the lower schools.¹⁰²

Thus, Harold Clapp's conception of the curriculum agrees with that of his colleagues. He makes a plea for the separate intellectual disciplines of liberal education for all students which is the means to discipline minds and "transmit in a reasoned pattern the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic heritage of civilized man."¹⁰³

Harry J. Fuller

It is difficult to distinguish any positive statements from criticisms concerning the curriculum in the writings of Fuller. However, he says that "I am arguing for the restoration of the humanities, the arts, and the sciences to their properly dominant position in our educational system."¹⁰⁴ He is particularly concerned with the "substitution of societally significant subjects" for sound education in the humanities, the arts, and the sciences:

Within the past twenty years there has occurred in our high schools an extensive de-emphasis of courses in languages, the sciences, literature, and history, in favor of a grab bag of new, 'societally derived' courses, such as social behavior, how to win friends and influence people, how to succeed in marriage, air science, family life values, being an effective consumer, group dynamics (whatever this may be), occupational adjustment, zeal for democratic processes, directed activities, and

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 31-32.

¹⁰³Supra, p. 40.

¹⁰⁴Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Dementat," The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 74 (January 1951), p. 41.

other such windy and vacant substitutes for thought.¹⁰⁵

He points out that proponents of the new education often use the traditional course names to accomplish the same results:

Rhetoric and English literature may still appear under those names . . . but their content may become 'communication arts,' a melange of hints on radio acting . . . and salesmanship. Biology courses may still bear the tag of biology, but their content is often reduced to personal hygiene. . . . Physical science, too, has suffered its debasement . . .¹⁰⁶

Fuller argues that certain "social service" courses and vocational courses have a valuable function in the curriculum, but he says "I am convinced that the burgeoning of such courses has been excessive and beyond the limits of their value."¹⁰⁷

His concern for liberal education also extends to the college and graduate school. He states that he attempted to learn something of the cultural backgrounds of 15 candidates for the doctorate in botany, horticulture, agronomy, and zoology by asking them to identify these items: "The Renaissance, The Reformation, Monroe Doctrine, Voltaire, Koran, Plato, Medici Family, Treaty of Versailles, Bismarck, and Magna Carta." The results were totally unsatisfactory, and he concludes that "perhaps we are overtraining both our graduate and undergraduate students to the detriment of their education."¹⁰⁸

Fuller's argument for the separate intellectual disciplines is essentially in agreement with Bestor, Smith, and Clapp. He states that he is not concerned with knowledge for the sake of knowledge, that "good

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Fuller, "Education or Training," Science, Vol. 120 (October 1954), p. 546.

teachers value knowledge for the legacies it can give to the unfolding and training and equipping of human minds . . ."¹⁰⁹ Thus, he advocates a curriculum for mental discipline "to provide young Americans with sound knowledge and training in the tools and intellectual methods of educated people."¹¹⁰ His conception of the curriculum is consistent with his aims of education: to "mold characters, broaden minds, and make sound and nature citizen-adults."¹¹¹

The Nature of the Educative Process

The Council Publications

It has been shown that the Council considers the elementary school as a means of preparation for the refinements of the secondary school. Methods of teaching involve the imparting of content to the minds of pupils. The Council states that although "a child cannot always see the 'why' of learning some of these facts and symbols, this is no argument for soft-peddalling or postponing them."¹¹² In objecting to the displacement of subject matter with the problems approach, the Council points out that children have a special facility for rapid observation and memorization, which is not in opposition to thinking and problem solving.

That is the reason why logically organized subject matter, involving drill and memory work, is a time-tested method for inculcating in the young those symbols and facts which must be part of the natural

¹⁰⁹ Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Dementat," P. 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Supra, p. 26.

¹¹² Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (September 1957), p. 2.

furnishing of the mind before it can solve any problems.¹¹³

. . . It is possible for many children to acquire abstract ways of thinking when foundation experiences are provided.¹¹⁴

Beyond the foundational experiences of the elementary school, however, the evidence is conclusive that the Council for Basic Education advocates a type of mental discipline in the educative process. The method is that order or procedure which is inherent in the logically organized disciplines. Learning is dynamic and purposive rather than static and mechanical, since thinking is the process of inquiry and investigation required by the order and structure of the intellectual disciplines. The Council states that the following "constitutes an admirable summary of CBE's position:

Educators are coming to see that a subject prepares for an unknown future solely in proportion as it (and the teacher) demands hard thinking--as it educates in analysis, reasoning, evaluating, self-discipline. Some subjects lend themselves to that more than others.¹¹⁵

The following statements clarify the function of English composition and literature:

Rigorously taught, courses in composition are among the most valuable sources of mental training . . . /in/ the ability to understand clearly and to convey intelligibly the meanings which students find either in books or in first hand experiences. . . .

Without language, man would be but the most miserable of beasts, his power of reflective thought, his greatest resource, as impotent as if it never had been. . . . But with the written word, time is suspended, reflection is possible, analysis can be repeated, and criticism unhurried. What other human act provides a superior kind of mental discipline?¹¹⁶

¹¹³Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 6.

¹¹⁴Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 3 (June 1959), p. 3.

¹¹⁵Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin No. 6 (January 1957), p. 1.

¹¹⁶James D. Koerner, ed., The Case for Basic Education, (Boston, 1959), pp. 22, 85, 86.

The thought processes involved in the discipline of history are explained as follows:

As a mental discipline the study of American history (1) trains students in analytical and objective thinking, (2) broadens their horizons by adding the time dimension . . . The historical method as a mental discipline is useful far beyond the field of history. . . . And history . . . stresses the need for objectivity in formulating judgments, the careful weighing of evidence, and the necessity for searching analysis before a final decision is reached. These are valuable mental traits in any situation.¹¹⁷

The sciences in basic education are biology, chemistry, and physics, each of which is an intellectual discipline in thinking:

Biological science . . . offers training in scientific attitudes and methods of thinking that are especially applicable to the problems of life. . . . Biology provides a basis for a more rational way of life. . . . The time consumed in biology is very well spent if the work is designed to give the student the experience of obtaining objective evidence, of clear and accurate thinking about experimental methods, and of interpreting observations.¹¹⁸

Chemistry offers excellent illustrations of the nature of the scientific enterprise. Its methods are, in part, deductive, like those of physics and mathematics, but they are also, in part, inductive, like those of botany and zoology.¹¹⁹

. . . Physics is an orderly intellectual process as well as a body of knowledge, not unrelated to life, nor out of reach of the average mind. . . . Furthermore, physics is a way of thinking and a language as much as a body of knowledge . . .¹²⁰

Mathematics in the educative process of basic education is justified in much the same manner:

Mathematics is a tool, a language, and a logical structure. . . . The permeating powers of the mathematical mode of thought are seen in the fact that the methods and language of mathematics are playing an ever greater role in even the social sciences. . . . the scientific use of inductive reasoning and its contrast with deductive mathematical

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 170, 185.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 189.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 204-205.

proofs can well be clarified.¹²¹

Latin and modern foreign languages are also regarded as ways of thinking, but the Council states that no one could restore classical languages to a monopoly in secondary education and "few responsible American classicists would want to see it happen."¹²² Moreover, the Council points out that Latin is not the best way to learn English grammar.¹²³

The concepts of 'mental training' and transfer of training from one field of study to another were attacked by the educationists many years ago, with arguments that were influential at the time but by no means conclusive. If training of the mind and transfer of training are not possible, there is little sense in spending the millions we spend on public education. . . . There is no good reason for accounting one language more 'logical' than another. . . . Whether Latin is inherently logical or not, its structure is . . . different enough from that of most modern European languages, especially English, to make some kind of analytical behavior a necessity. It puts a high premium on accuracy in diagnosing the exact meaning of a morphologically or syntactically ambiguous form. . . . The student who has penetrated through the unfamiliar words and modes of expression of a [modern] foreign work to make its ideas his own has performed an exacting intellectual feat and greatly sharpened his powers of thought and analysis as well as his command of words.¹²⁴

Interest, effort, and discipline in the sense of control of conduct are important in the educative process. While the development of intellectual powers is facilitated by interest on the part of the learner, it is held that the student often does not become aware of his interest until after learning something that has no initial appeal.¹²⁵ The Council does not believe that the dogma "that the curriculum be based on the child's needs, interests, and abilities . . . is all foolishness"; on the other

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 155, 158-159, 163, and 166.

¹²²Ibid., p. 124.

¹²³Ibid., p. 127.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 4.

hand, neither does it believe that "a good education is simply one which teaches you about the things in which you are interested."¹²⁶ Although intrinsic interest in the form of intellectual curiosity is esteemed valuable, the Council states that "nothing is more satisfying to a child than accomplishment in the face of uncertainty and difficulty."¹²⁷

In criticizing some current trends in education, the Council states that, "most children start school with great eagerness to learn, especially to read--an eagerness often dampened and extinguished by the sort of withholding policy that is currently in vogue."¹²⁸

Although interest and effort are closely related in this theory, it is evident that effort is regarded as more important in the serious business of preparing for a mature life through intellectual training. In addition to intrinsic interest, extrinsic motivation in the form of positive incentives such as intellectual leadership, special distinctions, money, prestige and other marks of society's favor is deemed valuable.¹²⁹

In view of the Council's conservative position on the nature of the educative process and its emphasis on the cultural heritage and intellectual training, it follows that discipline is conceived of as respect and obedience to proper authority. It is pointed out that the "dogma of freedom . . . implies that discipline, both in the sense of control of conduct and as the process of directed training, is somehow harmful to the youthful personality."¹³⁰ With strong objections to a completely

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 3.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Koerner, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (March 1958), p. 4.

¹³⁰Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 5.

permissive classroom atmosphere "where the children 'plan together' in committees," the Council states that, "inescapable in the formal educative experience is the authority of the teacher. . . . Children are by definition immature and if learning is to take place they need firm and purposeful guidance."¹³¹

Thus, the Council advocates firm discipline in the educative process. To do otherwise would be considered an "abdication, not only of the rights of the teacher, but of the duty she owes the children as one superior in knowledge and understanding."¹³²

Pointing out that life itself contains many failures--mentally, morally, physically, socially, economically, and spiritually--the Council believes that it is a grave disservice "to tell a child he cannot fail," that "few of us have reached maturity unhelped by failure."¹³³ With regard to the possible psychological effects of failure on the personality of children, the Council states that, "against every child whose feelings are hurt by 'failure' in school must be weighed all those whose integrity has been wounded by keeping them from the truth."¹³⁴

Therefore, the Council believes that in order to maintain high academic standards, discipline should reflect the vicissitudes and realities of life outside the school. However, such training is expected to culminate in personal responsibility and self-discipline in order that each student "may use to the full his intrinsic powers and shoulder the

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin No. 6 (January 1957), p. 10.

¹³⁴Ibid.

responsibilities of good citizenship."¹³⁵ Thus an educative process through mental discipline affirms the Council's commitment to the purpose of education as the "harmonious development of the mind, the will, and the conscience of each individual."¹³⁶

Arthur E. Bestor

It has been shown that the aims of education in Bestor's position are directed toward the improvement of both the individual and society. He states emphatically that intellectual training in the educative process is the means to achieve these goals:

The inescapable fact is that many of the most vital needs of men and society can never be satisfied except through the extensive and rigorous application of intellectual means. . . . But in what does intellectual training consist? No misconception is so prevalent and so deceptive as the notion that liberal education is merely the communicating of factual information. . . . The liberal disciplines are not chunks of frozen facts. . . . They are the powerful tools and engines by which a man discovers and handles facts. . . . Liberal education, in other words, is essentially the communication of intellectual power.¹³⁷

Thus, according to Bestor, although the liberal disciplines contain facts of subject matter, they are more important as ways of thinking which can be systematized and taught. "Schools exist to teach something," he says, "and this something is the power to think."¹³⁸ The duty of the teacher, then, is to communicate this intellectual power to students. However, Bestor points out that it cannot "be communicated [by teachers] if they

¹³⁵Supra, p. 15.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 33-35.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 110.

pay too much attention in their classes to what they have learned and too little attention to how they have learned it."¹³⁹ He states further that "the basic scientific and scholarly disciplines must be presented, not as mere repositories of information, but as systematic ways of thinking, each with an organized structure and methodology of its own."¹⁴⁰

The mental processes involved in the discipline of history consist of weighing evidence, investigating relationships, and making judgments, rather than memorizing facts. In the linguistic disciplines of English and foreign languages, the processes of thought consist in grasping the meaning of the written page and in expressing one's thought with precision and vigor. Mathematical thinking is considered to be deductive in nature; for example, Bestor says "the essential thing is to grasp the orderly process by which a group of postulates can be made to reveal their implications in theorems of increasing complexity."¹⁴¹ Scientific thinking involves the methods of investigation and controlled experimentation.¹⁴² These are the powers of the mind encompassing "reasoning, investigation, criticism, expression, and comprehension" which the teacher should develop in the educative process.¹⁴³ Although Bestor states that the classroom should exemplify "the ordered quest for knowledge," he concludes that training in thinking is more important:

Facts and formulas may be necessary parts [of a liberal education]. . . but actually a student will remember a great many facts without special

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁴⁰Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 36.

¹⁴¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 36, 364, 406, and 439.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 400.

¹⁴³Ibid.

effort if he has really entered into the process of investigation which produced them. . . . Memory and disciplined thinking do go hand in hand, but we must never forget that it is the latter that really counts. . . . Every course must discipline the mind of every student who enrolls in it.¹⁴⁴

Bestor points out that "instruction need not always follow a strictly logical or chronological order," but the teacher should make certain that students understand the order inherent in a subject, since this is "the most significant and most useful of its characteristics."¹⁴⁵ "A teacher may conduct his class smoothly and expertly," Bestor says, "but if he does not know what constitutes disciplined thinking in the field, he may be teaching the most arrant nonsense."¹⁴⁶ He states further that "every teacher [must] be a scholar, thoroughly trained in the discipline he teaches. . . . [and] the disciplines are simply the methods men have perfected for . . . bringing their intellectual powers into action."¹⁴⁷ Thus, it is evident that intellectual training or mental discipline is the general method of instruction, although the particular method depends upon the type of liberal discipline employed and presupposes the learning of facts and the acquiring of attitudes and appreciations by the student. Bestor states that there should be no artificial dichotomy between intellectual growth and mastery of knowledge, since "knowledge and intellectual skill in combination are essential to form an educated man."¹⁴⁸

Problem solving, as such, receives no major emphasis in the educative process. Bestor defines problem solving as a stage of integration

¹⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 65, 400-401.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 415.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 421-422.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 291.

or synthesis, in which one brings his separate intellectual powers to bear, in combined fashion, upon some obscurity. "To a mature man already trained in a variety of disciplines," he says, "this may be merely a matter of a few hours' work. To a young student, however, it may point forward to months or years of systematic study."¹⁴⁹ Thus, the teacher should stress the powers of analysis in the educative process rather than problem solving in itself. Objecting particularly to excessive attention to contemporary issues, Bestor states that systematic instruction in the intellectual disciplines "brings the problems of the day into particular perspective of its own." Such instruction requires different methods:

These methods involve the systematic accumulation of data, the mastery of techniques of analysis, the development of competence in the handling of ~~ab~~stractions, and the deliberate quest for objectivity and perspective.¹⁵⁰

In this way he believes the teacher can provide a nucleus of ordered thinking about which the student can develop his various intellectual powers.

Bestor considers interest, effort, and discipline to be important factors in the educative process. Both positive and negative incentives as forms of extrinsic motivation are considered desirable aids; however, he believes that intrinsic motivation is necessary for the development of the highest intellectual powers:

Effective teaching presupposes a vivid and deeply felt interest on the part of the student. Learning involves effort, and genuine incentives are necessary if anyone is to engage in sustained and productive labor. External pressures--rewards and penalties, competitive rivalry, and the like--provide incentives of a sort, and these ought not to fall into disuse to the extent that they have in American public schools. Nevertheless, it is perfectly true that external motivations of this kind will not carry a man along very far in the development of his highest intellectual powers. If he is to use his mind effectively throughout his

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 134.

life, the incentives must come from within himself.¹⁵¹

Bestor explains that the problem of arousing and sustaining interest is only a means to an end, that although the teacher should attract the student's attention and show the relevance of learning to the student's interest, this process should not turn the school into a "mere entertainment hall."¹⁵² He argues that motivating students requires intelligent and imaginative teaching, in which the teacher knows his subject and his students' problems well enough to make the connection.¹⁵³ However, he regards effort rather than interest as the key to learning. "More than the selective school of the past," he says, "the democratic school must enthrone intellectual effort as its central, inspiring ideal."¹⁵⁴ His argument for effort in the educative process is stated succinctly:

What counts in making an intelligent and reflective man is the effort he expends on the generalized intellectual and cultural disciplines. . . . Education requires serious and sustained effort on the part of any man . . . The school must uphold for all men the ideal of disciplined intellectual effort.¹⁵⁵

It may be concluded that, according to Bestor, the teacher should cultivate the power to think in students through the disciplines of liberal education, each of which requires certain abstract mental processes or ways of thinking. Although mental discipline is the dominant concern of the teacher, the classroom should exemplify an ordered quest for knowledge, in which effort is an inspiring ideal. However, life long development of intellectual power requires deep intrinsic motivation.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 82, 95.

Mortimer Smith

Mortimer Smith does not elaborate upon the nature of the educative process in itself since he is more concerned with content rather than process, but his statements concerning the aims of basic education and his criticisms of public education reveal a substantial agreement with the Council publications and Arthur Bestor. Smith agrees that the elementary school should be largely preparatory for the work of cultivating the intellect in the secondary school. He states that an educational system should provide

. . . those sets of symbols and sets of facts that are the essential preliminary to all later learning, and . . . on the secondary level an education that stretches and enlarges and liberates the mind.¹⁵⁶

He believes that teaching is the art of transmitting, imparting, or communicating the content of the logically organized disciplines to the minds of students, and that "in this process [the teacher] should be training the intelligence, teaching the child to think."¹⁵⁷ He argues further:

This transmission, in view of the range of intelligence and ability, presents a task of great difficulty and complexity to the teacher.
. . .¹⁵⁸

The fact that teaching is a difficult and subtle art is no reason for abandoning true education and telling ourselves that training in [vocational] skills is an adequate substitute. . . . I'm not at all sure that drill, practice, and memorization are as ineffective in the learning process as our modern schoolman would have us believe. . . . Do they not constitute the indispensable spadework that must be gone through before understanding can come alive . . .?¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶Smith, "Our Schools Need More than Money," Tax Review, Vol. 19 (February 1958), p. 6.

¹⁵⁷Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," College and University (Spring 1957), p. 308.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Smith, And Madly Teach, pp. 43-45.

In objecting to the emphasis on scientific method and professional education in the preparation of teachers, Smith stresses teaching as the art of communication:

. . . Liberal education equips one with the basic art of communication, or teaching, which needs only actual practice for its development.
 . . . Communication (which is what teaching is) can never be wholly objective, an effort to teach only a knowledge of conditions as they are; indeed, teaching would be very dull if that is all it was. . . . The person who would communicate anything moving or inspiring . . . must go beyond what is and venture into the realm of what ought to be.¹⁶⁰

Although Smith refers many times to teaching as the art of communication and the "transmission" of knowledge, he is concerned no less with mental discipline in the educative process. In making a book review in one of the Council Bulletins, he argues:

The somewhat cavalier dismissal of mental discipline, which has been presented to teachers in training as an unquestionable truth of the higher pedagogy, has contributed much to the current downgrading of rigorous subject matter in the school curriculum.¹⁶¹

In objecting to the emphasis on vocational training in the schools, he says:

The individual who is best prepared for any kind of occupation is one whose intelligence has been so well trained that he is able to adapt himself to any situation, and whose point of view has been so humanized by his education that he will be a good person in any job or calling, and these qualities are the result only of a liberalizing education.¹⁶²

While Smith does not make any definitive statements concerning the nature of thinking in the educative process, it is evident that he agrees with the Council publications and Arthur Bestor that intellectual training is training in thinking and that this is accomplished through a liberal education.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 61, 69, and 70.

¹⁶¹Smith, "Two Recent Books," CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (May 1958), p. 12.

¹⁶²Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 58.

Smith's views of interest, effort, and discipline are also similar to those of the Council publications and Arthur Bestor. Smith believes that the educational program ought to take account of the child's interests, provided this "valid doctrine" is not "perverted into a mere catering to what the student thinks he wants."¹⁶³ He argues further:

. . . It is obviously true that all students do not have the same interests or the same abilities and that learning will be most effective when it takes account of these individual differences. . . . But for the teacher to deduce from this circumstance that the curriculum ought to be centered around your interest . . . is to abandon objective values and to say in effect that a good education is simply one which teaches you about the things in which you are interested.¹⁶⁴

Smith also holds that serious effort should be required in the educative process if the school is truly concerned about "real life" experiences:

Real life is full of compulsions; it is dominated by competition, and the adult is constantly having to submit to examinations with his fellows; but these are conditions the thoroughgoing modernist will not permit in his classroom. . . . The young person . . . will find when he graduates into the adult world, that the idea of being 'in competition only with yourself' bears little relation to that world.¹⁶⁵

In consonance with his views on interest and effort, Smith states that "discipline . . . is a responsibility adults owe to children." He explains that although some practices in the past "had the grim stamp of Calvinistic theology on them," a more moderate view is "to think of discipline as something to be imposed with enlightened and patient common sense . . ."¹⁶⁶ In objecting to the freedom of "progressive education," Smith argues that the lack of firm discipline results in "the inability of so many young

¹⁶³Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 18.

¹⁶⁴Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 37.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 54-55.

people nowadays to make up their minds on any issue."¹⁶⁷ His view is summarized concisely as follows: "I believe that young people, no matter how irksome they may find it at the time, depend on direction and leadership and are at a loss when it is withheld from them."¹⁶⁸

Harold L. Clapp

Since he is more concerned with criticisms of public education and promoting the aims of basic education, Harold L. Clapp gives even less attention than Mortimer Smith to the nature of the educative process. What he says, however, tends to confirm the conclusion in the other positions that mental discipline or training in the thinking demanded by a liberal education is of primary importance. Clapp maintains:

A subject prepares for an unknown future solely in proportion as it (and the teacher) demands hard thinking--as it educates in analysis, reasoning, evaluating, self discipline. Some subjects lend themselves to that more than others. . . . If young minds are not properly trained and amply furnished in the lower schools, they will never catch up. . . .¹⁶⁹

In a statement before the Kansas Conference of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards of the National Education Association, Clapp reveals his conception of the educative process in a poetic manner:

If I had my way, all teachers would be wise, resourceful, humanely educated men and women with well furnished and disciplined minds, with clear scholarly competence in some one area of the liberal curriculum, with an irresistible zeal for setting young minds on fire to the limits

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁶⁹Clapp, "The Need for Substance in Secondary Education," The Southern Humanities Conference, Bulletin No. 7 (October 1957), pp. 27-31.

of individual combustibility.¹⁷⁰

Harry J. Fuller

In much the same manner as Smith and Clapp, Fuller makes no direct statement concerning the educative process. One may infer, however, from the following statements that he advocates an approach to mental discipline or training in thinking:

Most of our present university freshmen have never confronted a really difficult mental problem. . . . Every high-school student . . . should have been compelled to acquire a strong and tenacious discipline. . . . High School students approach the problems of life with no real experience of hard, toughening mental work or of intellectual stamina.¹⁷¹

It is also evident that he considers effort to be more important than interest. He points out that "educational chaos" results when students, who do not work hard and master their courses, are passed:

The lazy, the incompetent, the procrastinating student soon learns that he will get by without working; the able and industrious student learns with disgust that the rewards of his industry and achievements are the same as those of the dullards.¹⁷²

Summary

This chapter contains an analysis of the documents published by the Council for Basic Education and of the writings of certain members of the founding group. This analysis was made in order to discover the educational commitments of this organization. It has been shown that

¹⁷⁰Clapp, "The Education of Teachers--If I Had My Way," (Mimeographed paper presented before The Kansas Conference, Lawrence, Kansas, June 24, 1959), p. 1.

¹⁷¹Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Dementat," The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 74 (January 1951), p. 35.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 371.

the founders agree among themselves and with the Council publications concerning the aims of education, the nature of the curriculum, and the nature of the educative process.

The most general aim agreed upon is that of intellectual training, or the perfecting of the highest capacity which man possesses--the power of reasoning. This aim has reference to the improvement of both the individual and society. It is good for the individual since it provides for the development of the highest qualities of man and the affirmation of moral values. It is good for society, since individual man in the aggregate constitutes society, and a democratic society needs intelligent citizens more than any other kind for its self-perpetuation.

In order to carry out these aims, the Council promotes basic education in the curriculum, which is also referred to as intellectual disciplines or the liberal arts and sciences. The argument for the intellectual disciplines is based upon two premises. First, the disciplines provide for the transmission of the cultural heritage; second, they provide the organized content (i.e., the facts, data, relations, entities, and theories) which requires the development of orderly habits and skills to master. Thus, to learn a discipline means more than the acquisition of knowledge and understandings; it means the development of intellectual power, the type of thinking and reasoning demanded by the logical order and structure of the discipline.

General agreement was found concerning the nature of the educative process. In the elementary school, the method consists of transmitting or imparting facts and symbols which are the foundational experiences for the process of mental discipline in the secondary school. To provide for mental discipline, the teacher must stimulate the student to learn in

the process of thinking, judging and reasoning, required by the logical order of the intellectual disciplines. While there is agreement that interest is an important form of motivation in the educative process, more emphasis is placed upon effort as an inspiring ideal. Indeed, one may conclude that effort is considered an act of the will apart from interest, inasmuch as the Council holds that the purpose of education is "the harmonious development of the mind, the will, and the conscience of each individual."¹⁷³ Discipline (in the sense of control of conduct) is considered a duty the teacher owes the student and is accomplished by developing habits of obedience to the proper authority. However, interest and effort are to culminate in self discipline so that the student may be prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of citizenship.

The educational commitments of the Council for Basic Education were, to a large extent, found within the context of criticisms of certain programs of public education and certain professional groups. The next chapter contains an analysis of these criticisms and indicates how the criticisms are related to the educational commitments.

¹⁷³Supra, p. 16.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICISMS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

In chapter two it was shown that the founders of the Council for Basic Education agreed substantially among themselves and with the documents of the Council concerning the aims of education, the nature of the curriculum, and the nature of the educative process. The evidence for the educational commitments was largely embedded with criticisms of public education. The purpose of this chapter is to discover the nature of these criticisms and in what way the criticisms are related to the educational commitments. It is not the purpose of the writer to make an evaluation of these criticisms, or to determine whether the criticisms are correct or incorrect, good or bad.

The Council Publications

One of the most central criticisms made by the Council is that the public schools have assumed too many responsibilities ordinarily carried out by other agencies of society. Harold L. Clapp states that the "Council for Basic Education came into being" . . . in the absence of an agency among organized educators "that was taking a firm, clear, public stand in support of the point of view represented by the [National] Manpower Council's call for reappraisal [of education]."¹

¹Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (November 1957), p. 5.

The National Manpower Council had called for a reassessment of the American secondary school in 1954 "to distinguish as sharply as possible between the primary responsibilities and the host of collateral objectives it has accumulated during recent decades." The National Manpower Council advised that "secondary education must utilize its limited resources to accomplish its primary missions and must beware of dissipating its facilities on peripheral undertakings."² The Council for Basic Education also feels that the school must have a more limited function if it is to be an efficient institution:

Nothing is more needed in American education than a reappraisal that will attempt to define what the home and community are best equipped to do for the child and what the school is best equipped to do. The school cannot function efficiently without priorities and without a rather more humble and limited goal than 'total' education.³

In criticizing elementary education in particular the Council states that:

The failure of the American elementary school is traceable to the official philosophy of education which has prevailed for the past thirty years in teacher training institutions, state and university departments of education, the U. S. Office of Education, and the National Education Association and its subsidiary organizations--in short, among those agencies that together determine the program and viewpoints of our schools.⁴

This official philosophy of education is described as "an ill-informed progressivism, . . . a scientific naturalism . . . an uncritical behaviorism . . . and an unexamined hedonism."⁵ The Council states that this philosophy has resulted in "a great orthodoxy of thought and

²Ibid.

³Smith, ed., GBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 5.

⁴Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 2.

⁵Clapp, ed., GBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (August 1957), p. 9.

practice among those in charge of . . . education . . . and is sustained by state and regional certification requirements."⁶ The Council maintains further that "seven deadly dogmas" follow from this "mixture of sound psychological insights and much dubious psychological and sociological interpretation, exaggeration, and naivete:" the dogmas of readiness, interest, the whole child, freedom, integrated subjects, scientific knowledge, and professionalism.⁷

The Council argues that the idea of "readiness" sometimes means that serious study of reading does not begin until the third grade; that the "dogma of interest" leads to the disregard of essential subjects; and that the school cannot be responsible for total education when this means emotional, physical, and social as well as intellectual development. Furthermore, the Council feels that excessive freedom in permissive classrooms fosters irresponsibility toward authority; and that the dogma of integrated subjects and "real life experiences" detracts from the basic disciplines and theoretical knowledge. Scientific knowledge is not regarded as an infallible guide to method and content. Moreover, the Council believes that the "cult of scientism" has engendered the "dogma of professionalism" in education which professes that a knowledge of "how to teach is more important than a knowledge of what is to be taught."⁸

Another area of criticism with which the Council is concerned is the "lack of attention to bright or gifted children." The Council maintains that professional educators perpetuate a "mythology of the common

⁶Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (February 1958), p. 2.

⁷Ibid., pp. 3-8.

⁸Ibid.

man" and a "grotesque fear that special attention to the gifted will create a special social class."⁹ The Council believes that the fear of an "intellectual elite" is a form of compensation for mediocrity, which neglects the gifted child. "Of course, we all share the guilt. . . . We have all neglected the gifted child," the Council adds, but then states further that professional educationists are the ones who should have given this attention twenty or thirty years ago.¹⁰

It should be pointed out that most of the Council publications are highly critical of the field of professional education. In fact, one of the purposes of the Council is to serve as a critic of professional education, as evidenced by the consistently negative tone of the Council Bulletins and the depreciatory remarks concerning teacher education programs and professors of education. "One of the most serious of our charges," the Council says, "has been that American schools are operated by a closed circle of 'professional educators.'"¹¹ Professors of education are referred to as "educational technicians," for example, in an otherwise friendly description of the NEA conference on the education of talented pupils.¹² On the other hand, the Council asserts three years later:

We want to correct the notion that CBE takes the position that all professional educators are ogres. . . . We know of many superintendents who are heroes . . . in the cause of sound education, and we are sorry if anything we have ever said has tended to lump them with the life-adjusters.¹³

⁹Koerner, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (March 1958), p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (August 1958), p. 4.

¹²Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (November 1957), p. 6.

¹³Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 4 (January 1960), p. 2.

Other efforts to be positive are made by the Council in describing certain "Programs in Practice" which exemplify basic education. However, the Council argues:

This effort to emphasize the positive must not abrogate our right to view with alarm, nor does it imply that (as some would insist) all criticism must be 'constructive.' . . . To be sure, the channels of communication between us and, let us say, N.E.A., are still strewn with reefs, some not even charted.¹⁴

One major area of criticism is directed toward advocating the reduction of requirements in professional education courses for the training of teachers. In the belief that these requirements unduly interfere with the liberal education of teachers, the Council hastens to point out instances when state legislatures reduce the credits required.¹⁵ This is described as a "victory of subject-matter over methodology."¹⁶ No definite commitment is taken by the Council concerning what should be required in the professional education of teachers:

Possibly CBE's directors and members are not in agreement as to the proper amount of education requirements, if any, but certainly we can all look with favor on any actions which reduce them to more reasonable dimensions.¹⁷

A more recent expression of attitude toward the training of teachers indicates a conciliatory tone:

Some scholars and liberal arts teachers take a radical view of professional training; they would be willing to abolish Education as such altogether, and do away with what they feel is the artificial fragmentation of psychology, history, and philosophy into educational psychology, educational history, and educational philosophy. . . . The Council for Basic Education believes this radical view of professional

¹⁴Clapp, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (November 1957), p. 6.

¹⁵Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 2 (April 1958), pp. 3-8; also Vol. 2 (June 1958), p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷Ibid.

education to be not only untenable but also irrelevant. . . . The problem is one of living with it and adjusting to it and being thankful for small concessions.¹⁸

Arthur E. Bestor

Bestor is fearful that American education is moving in the direction of anti-intellectualism. He says:

My purpose is, and has been, to expose the fallacies of this dangerous and deceptive emphasis or direction in education, and to reaffirm a sounder set of intellectual values. . . . The question of direction, let me repeat, is the crucial one.¹⁹

Bestor's main contention is that the school is a particular kind of institution which should have specific competencies and thus, specific limitations. He is particularly critical of Life Adjustment Education which proposes "to meet the common and the specific individual needs of youth."²⁰ He points out that there are other agencies of society which should minister to young people's needs:

The family, the church, the medical profession, the government, private business--all exist to satisfy the needs of men and women, young and old. . . . The idea that the school must undertake to meet every need that some other agency is failing to meet is a preposterous delusion that can wreck the educational system. . . . The school has its own job to do, and the nation is threatened with disaster if the school fails.²¹

Moreover he believes that the Life Adjustment movement is essentially antidemocratic in that it does not have any faith in the intelligence of the masses of people:

¹⁸Smith, ed., CBE Bulletin, Vol. 4 (December 1959), pp. 2-3.

¹⁹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 4.

²⁰U. S. Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, Bulletin No. 22 (Washington D. C., 1951), p. 16.

²¹Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," New Republic, Vol. 128 (January 1953), p. 12.

It [Life Adjustment Education] enthrones once again the ancient doctrine that the majority of the people are destined from birth to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to a select few who, by right of superior fitness, are to occupy the privileged places in society.²²

The National Education Association, however, takes another view:

Life adjustment education . . . is designed in part to fill the gap in traditional education by providing useful education to those who are going to become sales clerks, gasoline station attendants, homemakers, ordinary laborers, and so on.²³

Bestor disagrees with the NEA about what is useful education. For him, intellectual training is not only useful, but imperative for all; consequently he believes vocational training should be provided as late as possible. Those who promote Life Adjustment Education recommend it for sixty percent of the future citizens.²⁴ For this reason Bestor believes that it contributes to anti-intellectualism and should be repudiated by the American people.²⁵ He argues further:

To destroy anti-intellectualism we need to do more than combat its arguments. We need to identify and expose the groups that are promoting it, so that we may check their disastrous influence upon policy-making.²⁶

He asserts that the groups responsible for anti-intellectual trends are principally professors of education who have formed an "interlocking directorate" or a "bureaucracy" among themselves and with schools of education, public school administrators, and state departments of education.²⁷ Bestor feels that this "interlocking directorate" is revealed

²²Ibid., p. 13.

²³National Education Association, "Life Adjustment Education," NEA Research Bulletin, Vol. 35 (December 1957), p. 141.

²⁴U. S. Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, Bulletin No. 22 (Washington, D. C., 1951), p. 16.

²⁵Bestor, Educational Wastelands, pp. 82, 101.

²⁶Ibid., p. 101.

²⁷Ibid., p. 111.

in the policies governing the training of teachers:

State educational officials exert control over such programs by the requirements they lay down for the certification of teachers, and these universally include substantial course work in pedagogy. Public school superintendents and principals reinforce this emphasis by the criteria they use in employing and promoting teachers. The beneficiaries are the professors of education, who are thus assured of a steady flow of students through their courses.²⁸

Thus, he is not only critical of Life Adjustment education in the public schools, but of what he considers to be an "excessive" emphasis on professional education in the training of teachers.²⁹ Bestor argues that all prospective teachers should acquire an education in the liberal arts and sciences with particular emphasis on the subjects they are going to teach. He recommends a minimum of work in professional education: a course in the principles of "pedagogy" and supervised practice teaching.³⁰

His position concerning the education of teachers is summarized in the following:

A new curriculum for the education of teachers, based firmly upon the liberal arts and sciences, rather than upon the mere vocational skills of pedagogy, will do more to restore the repute of the public schools than any other step that can be taken. Not only will teachers be adequately trained in the disciplines they undertake to teach, they will also be imbued with respect for those disciplines and will be prepared to resist the anti-intellectualism that currently threatens the schools.³¹

Mortimer Smith

In voicing the same criticism as the Council publications and Bestor,

²⁸Ibid., pp. 111-112.

²⁹In a questionnaire study of certification requirements in the United States, Bestor found that "every state requires a minimum number of hours in education for certification; the median is eighteen semester hours." (The Restoration of Learning, p. 257).

³⁰Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 145.

³¹Ibid., p. 147.

Smith also believes that the public schools have assumed too many responsibilities that should be carried out by other agencies of society. He explains:

Any formal institution to be effective must have a selective and specific function, not an indiscriminate and miscellaneous one. We seem to have lost sight of this simple principle when it comes to the institution of the school. We seem to have decided that it is going to be all things to all men.³²

While the home, the school, the church, and the community are social forces impinging on each other, they are each distinctive in nature and have different functions.³³

Smith believes that the assumption of indiscriminate functions in the public schools is a condition which stems "from a philosophy, from a way of looking at man and the universe." And he adds that "if we would understand why conditions are what they are we will need to understand the philosophy."³⁴ This philosophy is described as the pragmatism of John Dewey, with its radical development in the reconstructionism of Theodore Brameld, and the policies of the Life Adjustment Education movement. Smith refers to this philosophy as "a bias involving the repudiation of ultimate truths in favor of pragmatic testing, the perversion of science into idolatry of the scientific method, the dethroning of man as individual in favor of sociological man."³⁵ More specifically, he states:

Under its aegis [pragmatism and reconstructionism] we are abandoning standards and refusing to acknowledge that any body of knowledge is appropriate for all men or that some subjects are intrinsically more

³²Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," College and University, Vol. 32 (Spring 1957), p. 308.

³³Smith, And Madly Teach (Chicago 1949), p. 27.

³⁴Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 84.

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

important than others; in the name of science we are pretending to fit human beings into fixed and rigid categories of aptitude, thus perpetuating an argument made by opponents of universal education a hundred years ago, namely, that many persons are uneducable; and we are belittling man's inviolable privacy and individual responsibility and declaring that he can only find purpose as part of the collective and the group.³⁶

Smith asserts that pragmatism is "the official philosophy of public school education." He points out that pragmatism refuses to set up any ultimate ends for education, that in pragmatism the educative process is its own end through the "reconstruction of experiences."³⁷ He thus reasons that pragmatism lacks a value system and a sense of direction, which has resulted in attention to immediate experience, successful living, and the re-creating of "real-life experiences" in the classroom. From this position, he says, modern education is trying "to meet the needs of the whole child; not only the intellectual needs, but the emotional, recreational, social, and all other needs."³⁸ Without a sense of direction and priorities he feels that the schools are diverted from the primary responsibility of intellectual training.

Although opposed to pragmatism, Smith takes even a stronger stand against the reconstructionism of Theodore Brameld which he describes as a development of pragmatism. He states that the reconstructionists plan to use the public schools as the means to establish a collectivist society in which the individual would become merged into the "group mind." In objecting particularly to the reconstructionist doctrine of "consensus" as a principle of truth-seeking, Smith asserts that Brameld

³⁶Ibid., p. 137.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 78, 81.

³⁸Ibid.

"is all for what the majority wants after he has had the opportunity to mold the majority's desires."³⁹ It is no surprise that Smith is critical of reconstructionism in view of his thesis that the quality of society will rise only through the improvement of the individual.⁴⁰

Smith is as vehemently critical of Life Adjustment Education as Bestor. He asserts that Life Adjustment Education reflects the "anti-intellectual bias of many of those in charge of American public education . . . in making the school a sort of gigantic social service agency aimed not at education but adjustment."⁴¹ He argues that Life Adjustment Education is an attempt to abandon the basic disciplines for the majority of the pupils in favor of adjusting them to "real life problems." He believes that this policy is not only anti-intellectual but anti-democratic since it implies that "the majority of American youth--sixty per cent--are so dull that all the school can attempt to do is to adjust them to their environment."⁴² He points out that "everyone has the same needs, needs that can never be met by vocational training but only by a humanizing and liberalizing education."⁴³ Smith believes that the problem of individual differences can be solved without sacrificing the quality of basic education:

Certainly the high school curriculum needs to be reorganized and improved but the efforts of the professional educators in this direction never seem to touch the great major problem, viz., how to reach the

³⁹Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁴⁰Supra, p. 21.

⁴¹Smith, "Our Schools Need More than Money," Tax Review, Vol. 19 (February 1958), p. 8.

⁴²Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 22, 24, 25.

⁴³Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 60.

less gifted with the values inherent in subject matter. . . . If we expect the boy with an I. Q. of 90 to become a citizen and make the judgments required of a citizen we ought to be busy devising ways of making him understand the ideas which have shaped his country and world.⁴⁴

Smith is in agreement with the Council publications and Bestor in charging professional educators with the responsibility for anti-intellectual trends in public education. He makes the accusation that "the schools of education and the teachers' colleges, aided and abetted by the NEA, constitute a closed union in public school education."⁴⁵ He argues further:

As the art of pedagogics has developed into the science of education, it has also become a vested interest, supported by a gigantic interlocking bureaucracy which controls public education and is beginning to threaten private education.⁴⁶

Smith believes that the influence of professional education has been on "how" rather than "what" in the preparation of teachers. He says that "the prospective teacher must spend about one-fourth of the period of his higher education taking courses in Education. . . ."⁴⁷ Although Smith advocates a thorough preparation in the liberal arts and sciences for teachers, he recognizes the value of some professional preparation:

A knowledge of the history of education, of the psychology of learning and growth, and some hours in practice teaching are important in the training of all teachers, but those responsible for teacher training are not content with anything so modest in the way of professional preparation.⁴⁸

Thus, Mortimer Smith is essentially in agreement with the Council

⁴⁴Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 48, 49.

⁴⁵Smith, "The Failure of American Education," The Freeman, Vol. 1 (December 1951), p. 138.

⁴⁶Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 76, 77.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 86.

⁴⁸Ibid.

publications and Arthur Bestor concerning the criticisms of public education. Unlike Bestor, however, he makes a more detailed analysis of the philosophical basis of "anti-intellectualism" and concludes that it emanates from the pragmatism of John Dewey and the reconstructionism of Theodore Brameld, as well as the Life Adjustment policies of the U. S. Office of Education.

Harold L. Clapp

Clapp believes that the root of the problems of public education is in its failure to answer this question: "How can the ideal of universal education be reconciled with quality in education?"⁴⁹ He points out that "what underlies much of current public school theory and practice is essentially the unthinkable equation of democracy and mediocrity." For him, democracy in education means equality of opportunity in which students could "develop according to individual capacities and varying degrees of zeal."⁵⁰ He agrees with Bestor and Smith that the Life Adjustment movement promotes mediocrity in education:

The 'Life-adjustment' program, out of the U. S. Office of Education, is the handiwork of defeatists, who tell us that sixty per cent of our children are ineducable: theirs not to think and judge, theirs but to 'adjust'⁵¹

Much of Clapp's caustic criticism is directed toward professional educators and the requirements in professional education for teachers:

. . . 'Education' . . . is the force which controls public education.
The Educationist sets the standards of American education by establishing

⁴⁹Clapp, "The American Scholar and Public Education," South Atlantic Bulletin, Vol. 22 (January 1957), p. 4.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

the requirements of teacher training. Since these requirements are largely in terms of the courses taught by the Educationists themselves, this approaches the definition of a racket.⁵²

It is apparent that Clapp agrees with Bestor and Smith that an "interlocking directorate" or "bureaucracy" is operating in professional education. Moreover, he asserts that "subject-matter requirements for teachers are pitifully inadequate, and . . . consequently, the appalling fact is that our most poorly educated college graduates are our teachers."⁵³ In a later statement before the Southern Humanities Conference, he assumes a more conciliatory attitude toward professional educators:

Some of you may . . . think me an unlikely person to be asking for cooperation with professional educators. I have on occasion made forthright and probably too sweeping attacks on them. . . . But to a degree that I have not always recognized, I know now that many of them are working for the same ends as we, and so it seems to me highly important that we make every effort to work with them.⁵⁴

It is evident that Clapp has made an effort to cooperate with professional educators. As a representative of the Council for Basic Education, he participated in the first and second national conferences of the Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards of the National Education Association. At the second conference, he made a plea for the "best possible, traditional liberal education" which he believed would attract more competent students for the teaching profession. Instead of offering a major in professional education, Clapp suggested for every teacher of every subject, "a full-scale, undiluted, honest-injun major

⁵²Clapp, "The Stranglehold on Education," American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Vol. 35 (Summer 1949), p. 337.

⁵³Ibid., p. 341.

⁵⁴Clapp, "The Need for Substance in Secondary Education," The Southern Humanities Conference Bulletin, No. 7 (October 1957), p. 28.

in one of the central disciplines of the liberal curriculum."⁵⁵ In regard to professional education, he states that the following would be sufficient: "about three beefed-up courses incorporating the pertinent aspects of psychology, and educational history and philosophy including something of the history of the curriculum."⁵⁶ He believes that practice teaching should be provided as "on-the-job apprenticeships," rather than be the responsibility of the four-year college.⁵⁷

Harry J. Fuller

Fuller states that the basic assumptions that "education is a process of fulfilling needs . . . and only those things needed for adjustment in society should be taught" is "colossal rubbish." He asks: "How many students have a need to read and study Hamlet . . . or Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg . . .?"⁵⁸ His argument is summarized in a caustic statement:

What I am arguing for is . . . the elimination from our schools of the silly fads, the tawdry tricks, the superficial subject matter, and the cheaply utilitarian educational philosophy forced upon them by some education professors.⁵⁹

Fuller asserts that public education is controlled by a "deeply entrenched" bureaucracy. This is his most serious criticism, and one in which he agrees with Bestor, Smith, and Clapp. He states that this

⁵⁵Clapp, "The Education of Teachers--If I had My Way," A paper presented before Section II, The Kansas Conference, Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, (Lawrence, Kansas, June 24, 1959), p. 2.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Demantat," The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 74 (January 1951), p. 34.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 41.

bureaucracy has "interlocking relationships" in its parts and "dictates the laws which govern the certification of teachers, controls the training of large numbers of teachers [and] determines educational philosophies and practices" ⁶⁰ He argues further:

This bureaucracy consists in part of the faculties of our schools and colleges of education, in part of superintendents, principals, and . . . in part of powerful educational organizations of national scope and pervasive power. ⁶¹

Fuller believes that this "bureaucracy," which makes a "fetish of methodology," could be shrunk if Colleges of Education were reduced to departments of education within liberal arts colleges. ⁶² If this shrinkage were to be accomplished, he believes that more superior students might be attracted to the teaching profession. ⁶³ Although he does not specify what should be included in the professional education of teachers, he states that "certain courses in education (albeit a small proportion of all education courses now offered) are valuable in the training of teachers." ⁶⁴

Summary

The analysis of the criticisms of public education indicates that, in addition to advocating a particular philosophy of education, the Council is exerting effort to reorient public school theory and practice

⁶⁰ Fuller, "The Bureaucracy of Education," The American Biology Teacher, Vol. 18 (March 1956), p. 119.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. 123.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

in the direction of its own educational commitments. In making a distinction between indiscriminate learning and education, the Council and its founders feel that the public schools have undertaken too many functions which should be the responsibility of other institutions of society. There is general agreement that the Life Adjustment movement fosters anti-intellectualism and threatens the quality of basic education in the public schools. However, Mortimer Smith's criticisms differ in that he analyzes the philosophical basis of anti-intellectualism which he believes to be the pragmatism of John Dewey and the reconstructionism of Theodore Brameld. He attacks particularly the relativity of values in pragmatism and the emphasis on the group in reconstructionism. To him, both of these philosophies are detrimental to basic education, which strives to uphold objective, intellectual values as a principle of public education instead of the expediency of adjustment to immediate "real-life" experiences. It is evident that the Council is demanding that educational opportunities for individual excellence should be broadened. Moreover, the Council insists that this objective is not only more compatible with democracy than Life Adjustment, but is necessary for the perpetuation of democratic society.

It is evident that the founders agree among themselves and with the Council publications that educators in professional education have exerted a "bureaucratic" influence on public education and have directed the goals of public education toward vocationalism and Life Adjustment. They also agree that too much emphasis has been placed on professional education in the preparation of teachers.

In an avowed effort to be a focus for those who are discontented with public education and in trying to reorient public school theory and prac-

tice, many of the early criticisms of the Council were caustic in nature. At present there is evidence of a more conciliatory attitude toward professional education. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the specimen findings of the Second Bowling Green Conference, in which the Council for Basic Education participated, indicate that areas of agreement may exist among educators in the liberal arts and sciences and those in professional education. Following are important findings, which though not representing the consensus of the conference, are published as "agreements reached by groups:"

The primary function of education in the schools is intellectual training. Primary emphasis should be on the intellectual heritage and one's ability to formulate and express one's thought and knowledge. . . . The school has been remiss in intellectual training, has overstressed socialization, . . . Teaching the student to think is fundamental to the school's reason for being. . . . Problem solving is an essential step in learning--not an end in itself. . . . The schools have become 'custodians' of a large segment of the public. . . . Society determines the purposes of education, and society today is calling for an upgrading of the quality of education both in content and in instruction. . . . The schools cannot do all things for all people. . . . NCTEPS should continue the practice of inviting representatives from liberal arts fields to its national conferences.⁶⁵

Thus, regardless of whether the Council for Basic Education is successful in reorienting public education, it is now evident that some of its propositions are at least nominally agreed upon by leaders in professional education.

With this background of educational commitments and criticisms of public education, the next chapter turns to the question of rationale, the philosophical foundations upon which the Council for Basic Education stands.

⁶⁵National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NEA), The Education of Teachers, New Perspectives, The Second Bowling Green Conference, (Washington, D. C., 1958), pp. 5, 6, 7, and 26.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL FOR BASIC EDUCATION

In chapters two and three, the educational commitments and criticisms of public education were discovered by analysis of the documents of the Council for Basic Education and the publications of certain members of the founding group. In this chapter, however, the discovery of philosophical foundations is limited to two members of the founding group: Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith.

Bestor is primarily an historian and Smith is primarily a writer and editor. Neither of these men has set forth a systematic elaboration of philosophical principles. It is the thesis of this chapter, however, that their publications concerning educational theories and practices reflect a consistent philosophical position that is the foundation upon which the movement in the Council for Basic Education stands. Upon the founding of the Council, Bestor was elected the first president and has subsequently occupied a position as one of the directors of the corporation. Smith was the first executive secretary and has assumed the full-time position of editor of the Council Bulletin for the past three years. The aggressive leadership of both of these men in educational controversy has been recognized by the nationwide attention given to their publications.

In the Council's first bulletin, the books and articles published by the founding group were listed as references for those "who know

little about its background."¹ The works of Bestor and Smith are the only ones among the list that contain statements of philosophical import. Bestor states in his most comprehensive book that "the present volume should be read as an essay in the philosophy of education."² Also, he envisions the formation of the Council for Basic Education, when he urges scholars to form an organization to promote a common viewpoint.

Unity of purpose is essential for the success of any great undertaking . . . like American public education.

The first step, as I see it, must be for the learned world to create an agency entirely its own through which it can state its views on public-school policy independently and unitedly. . . . It must address its remarks directly to the public, who make the final decisions on educational policy. . . . If scholars will create for themselves an organ through which they can expound their educational principles with clarity and force, I am confident that they will be listened to with respect. The basis for such unity indubitably exists. . . . They share a common purpose: the advancement of understanding and the augmentation of that intellectual power upon which mankind depends for its very existence. They share a common respect for knowledge, for the disciplined mind³

Similarly, Mortimer Smith also envisions the formation of the Council for Basic Education:

What would probably be of some help . . . is the formation of a small commission--academic, or part academic and part lay--which would undertake a serious study of the schools. . . . I think such a commission should be frankly 'slanted' in that its membership should be expected to believe in education, not training or adjustment, as a worthy ideal for all in a democracy.⁴

If it is assumed that the theories and practices advocated by the Council for Basic Education represent the values and objectives of

¹Council for Basic Education, Preliminary News Bulletin (No. 1, August 1956), p. 2.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 6.

³Ibid., pp. 221-223.

⁴Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 134-135.

responsible thinkers, then they must have been formulated within a context of philosophical thought, either expressed or implied. The purpose of this chapter is to discover the nature of these philosophical roots.

In making this analysis, three distinctive philosophies were considered as criteria: (1) the idealism of Herman H. Horne, which holds that reality is spiritual and that the origin of man is God, the nature of man is freedom, and the destiny of man is immortality; (2) the experimentalism of John Dewey, which maintains that reality is experience, conceived of as interaction between the individual and the environment in a naturalistic world, in which nature is considered to be inclusive of all reality and man is considered to be an organism continuous with nature; and (3) the realism of Frederick S. Breed, which affirms that the world, which exists independent of man's perceptions, is a result of emergent evolution, and that man, whose highest value is self-preservation, is an insignificant factor in the evolutionary process. Each of these criteria was rejected since there was no evidence of a similarity with the Council's position. In regard to idealism, for example, there was no indication that Bestor or Smith conceive of man's existential medium as spiritual or that the origin of man is in God. In regard to experimentalism, Smith is particularly critical of Dewey's conception of experience and of the nature of man. In regard to Breed's realism, Bestor and Smith agree that the world exists independent of its being perceived; however, this is a proposition acceptable to many forms of realism. Further investigation disclosed that Bestor and Smith agreed upon Aristotelian principles concerning the nature of man and the theory of values. This finding suggested that the philosophical foundations of the Council might consist of Aristotelian realism. The remainder of this chapter substantiates

this hypothesis.

The Nature of Knowledge

The problem in this section is to discover the position of Arthur E. Bestor and the position of Mortimer Smith concerning the source of knowledge, the character of knowledge, and the nature of truth.

Arthur E. Bestor

Both experience and reason are sources of knowledge in Bestor's epistemology. Experience furnishes the sense perceptions which stimulate man's consciousness; reason coordinates these perceptions into forms of knowledge:

Consider how the disciplines of science and learning came into being. The world enters the consciousness of the individual—and it first entered the consciousness of mankind—as a great tangle of confused perceptions. Before man could deal with it at all he had to differentiate one experience from another and to discover relationships among them: similarity and diversity, cause and effect, and the like. Gradually he discovered that one kind of relationship could best be investigated in one way (by controlled experiment, it may be), and another in another way (by the critical study of written records or of fossil remains, perhaps). Thus the separate disciplines were born, not out of arbitrary invention but out of evolving experience.⁵

Hence, Bestor reasons that man's existential medium is the source of knowledge in furnishing the raw materials through sense perception.

However, this is not to say that he is a thoroughgoing empiricist, since the activity of the mind plays a more important role in the knowing process through discovering the disciplines.

With such limited evidence it would only be pedantic to argue that Bestor is a critical realist or a naive realist. His position is close

⁵Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 34.

to critical monism, a type of epistemological realism which does not postulate sense data, essences, or other media in the knowing process. It is monistic in that the subject apprehends objects directly rather than indirectly, yet critical in the sense that the subject contributes qualities not inherent in the objects perceived.

Bestor makes other statements which tend to confirm his epistemological realism. He says that the disciplines "are the powerful tools and engines by which a man discovers and handles facts."⁶ He states further that the "disciplines were born, not out of arbitrary invention but out of evolving experience."⁷ Again he states that "the disciplines represent ways man has discovered for achieving intellectual mastery. . . ."⁸ Therefore, it follows that there is a knower, apart from the world which is to be known; that the objects of knowledge exist prior to and independent of the knowing process. Thus man does not create knowledge, but discovers what exists objectively. These objects may be material things, laws, or quantitative and qualitative relationships.

The above argument refers to the source of knowledge and the cognitive relationship. It would be a mistake to assume that the character of knowledge is static in Bestor's position. Indeed, he points out that knowledge is not "simply fact . . . a body of established data, stubborn, inert, and unquestioned."⁹ For Bestor, knowledge is the "fruit of original inquiry."¹⁰ Knowledge is the understanding and wisdom gained

⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

⁹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 66.

¹⁰Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 78.

by those "operations of the mind . . . the methods of inquiry by which knowledge is attained."¹¹ He elaborates extensively upon two methods of inquiry: the process of thinking and the process of judging.

The process of thinking, for Bestor, refers to certain distinctive modes of thought characterized by logical order, systematic structure, and intellectual power. He lists the following as fundamental and distinctive: controlled experimentation, mathematical reasoning, historical investigation, philosophical criticism, and linguistic or literary criticism.¹² In the process of solving problems, Bestor states that these intellectual powers play an indispensable role in the culminating acts of thinking, in the integration or synthesis of knowledge when a problem is solved. He outlines four essential steps in the problem-solving process: First, there is a period of confusion. Second, the problem must be analyzed and separated into its elements. Third, an inventory of existing knowledge and intellectual skill must be made "to determine whether these will suffice to deal effectively with the various constituent problems" If the powers already possessed are not sufficient, then additional ones must be acquired. "To a mature man, already trained in a variety of disciplines, this may be merely a matter of a few hours' work. To a young student, however, it may point forward to months or years of study." The fourth and final step is the stage of integration or synthesis when the "array of separate intellectual powers" are brought to bear "in combined fashion upon the original problem."¹³ "In a sense," Bestor says "this is the only step that can

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., pp. 397, 406, and 415.

¹³Ibid., pp. 59-60.

properly be called thinking. But it is not a step that can be taken by itself, for it presupposes all the preceding steps." He adds emphatically that "if a real synthesis of knowledge is to take place, it must take place in the mind of the student."¹⁴

Thus there are two essential phases in problem solving, that of analysis and that of synthesis. It should be pointed out that this method differs in several particulars from the method of solving problems in John Dewey's experimentalism.¹⁵ Bestor seems to presuppose an antecedent reality,¹⁶ whereas Dewey does not believe there is any ultimate reality or certainty. Bestor stresses the role of separate intellectual powers in the solving of problems, whereas Dewey equates the act of thinking with the relieving of problematic situations or perplexities. For Bestor, the solving of problems is a way of discovering knowledge and approaching truth; for Dewey, the solving of problems is the way man creates knowledge and constructs truth by examining the consequences to which ideas lead.¹⁷ This is to say that Bestor's method reflects the philosophy of realism, whereas Dewey's method is that of experimentalism or instrumentalism.

The process of judging as a method of inquiry is that of "weighing and considering." By this, Bestor means the kind of reasoning or reflective inquiry required in the disciplines of history, philosophy, and literature, in which one does not engage in quantitative or exper-

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 62, 65.

¹⁵Cf. John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York, 1929), p. 189; How We Think (New York, 1933), p. 107.

¹⁶Infra, p. 93.

¹⁷Infra, p. 88. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York, 1937), p. 145.

imental procedures. He says:

There are many kinds of knowledge that can be attained only through the continual exercise of judgment, with little help from the laboratory or the computing machine or the book of formal rules. The process of weighing and considering is not going to become obsolete in human affairs.¹⁸

Bestor believes that "one judgment based on careful reasoning may be worth more than a thousand snap judgments collected through questionnaires." He states further that "we deceive ourselves into thinking that valid knowledge must rest upon some procedure more 'scientific' than the exercise of good judgment."¹⁹ Thus, he seems to make a distinction between scientific knowledge and historical and philosophical knowledge. Nevertheless, his method of making historical judgments is similar to the scientific procedure of making inductive generalizations and verifying hypotheses. He states:

I sincerely believe that the historian--when treating the large and inclusive context of an event, or when offering interpretations of broad scope--is primarily engaged in setting forth as accurately as he can the image that he has formed in his own mind of the balance and interconnection of forces, events, and ideas. . . . He is engaged not in analysis but in synthesis. . . . The test of relevance which he really applies to each event and each quotation is its relevance to the conception that he has formulated and tested in his own mind by prior reading and reflection.²⁰

Thus, the process of judging is a method of "careful reasoning" by "weighing and considering." In historical judgment, the method is inductive in nature, yet it does not require that one's hypotheses be put to the test of empirical observation or experiment. Neither does it condone irresponsible speculation. Bestor is simply opposed to the bias of some

¹⁸Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 437.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 436-437.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 440-441.

scientists who insist that all valid knowledge should come under the purview of laboratory techniques or statistical tabulations. That he is not opposed to scientific method per se is evident in the emphasis he gives to this method as a distinctive way of thinking.²¹ However, "careful reasoning" through "weighing and considering" in the disciplines of philosophy and literature would require an analytic and deductive approach. With these disciplines, Bestor says that one "can even transcend facts and deal as a rational man with the great questions of meaning and value,"²² Thus it is evident that he does not affirm scientific method to be the only true and reasonable way to arrive at knowledge.

It has been shown that Bestor's theory of knowledge is amenable to epistemological realism.²³ Although he does not elaborate upon the nature of truth, this indicates that truth refers to the agreement between a thought or judgment and the actual situation. While the following statement has metaphysical implications, it is cited here to indicate that Bestor's view reflects the correspondence theory of truth:

The kinds of knowledge that rest upon judgment (including, of course, historical knowledge) are neither absolute nor, in a final sense, relative. They are what I would describe as approximative. As with a parabola and its asymptote, the curve of historical interpretation never reaches the rectilinear line of actuality, but as the two lines move off toward infinity, they continually approach (and never erratically recede from) each other.²⁴

This implies that there is a truth, and that truth is objective, although knowledge is approximative. He explains further that, although

²¹Supra, p. 52.

²²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 34.

²³Supra, p. 84

²⁴Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 443.

historical, philosophical, and literary judgments do not have the certainty of mathematical demonstrations, "the alternative to absolute certainty is not absolute ignorance."²⁵ Since judgment approximates an "actuality," Bestor's view is in accordance with the correspondence theory of truth which is basic to epistemological realism.

It is evident that there are both empirical and rational elements in Bestor's theory of knowledge. While experience and reason are both sources of knowledge, he exalts the intellect above the sensibilities. Thinking and judging are forms of reasoning in which knowledge is discovered. Thinking consists in applying the intellectual powers implicit in the disciplines, which includes inductive, deductive, experimental, and normative inquiries. Judging, as a method of reasoning independent of empirical elements, is stressed. These are the ways man can discover approximate knowledge of an objective truth and gain understanding and wisdom. Thus, the theoretical foundations of both the curriculum and method espoused by the Council for Basic Education is evident in Bestor's epistemological realism.

Mortimer Smith

Smith makes only a few statements amenable to philosophic analysis, and most of them are concerned with value theory. In a letter to the writer, he stated, "I do not think I hold a consistent philosophical position but would find much to admire in philosophical idealism, in realism, and even in the materialism of a person like Santayana."²⁶

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Letter to the writer from Mortimer Smith, then Executive Secretary of the Council for Basic Education, March 17, 1958.

However, this statement, coupled with the fact that he describes himself as a traditional-humanist aligned with Robert M. Hutchins in opposition to scientism,²⁷ indicates that he finds much to admire in classical realism, both Platonic and Aristotelian. This is evidenced further by his statements concerning knowledge and value.

Smith states that the liberal disciplines form "two roads to knowledge, that of analysis (the sciences) and that of intuition or imagination (the humanities)."²⁸ He believes that science discovers facts which are concerned with what is, and that through the humanities man discovers moral values which are concerned with what ought to be.²⁹ He says that "science . . . means mathematically exact knowledge discovered through induction and experimentation; it is what we acknowledge as truth in the sense of proven facts."³⁰ On the other hand, he writes:

Is it not possible that [man's] passion for religion and art [the humanities], based on the desire for order, meaning, and expression, can be refined to the point where it also is a means for discovering truth?³¹

Thus, although experience and reason are both sources of knowledge, he affirms belief in intuition as a source. He points out that certain values have their source in intuitive insights:

The sense of the dignity and worth of individual man, the values of democracy itself, have their sources in intuitive religious insights. . . . I think that we ought to reject . . . the modern notion that truth is only something that 'works' and that problems are not solved by

²⁷Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 83.

²⁸Supra, p. 37.

²⁹Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 101.

³⁰Ibid., p. 99.

³¹Ibid., p. 101.

reference to principles but by pragmatic testing to determine, not what is right, but what is expedient.³²

While Smith does not elaborate upon the character of knowledge and the nature of truth, he takes a strong stand against pragmatism and positivism, and in so doing, he argues that man may be able to discover some absolute moral principles. He says that contemporary life is characterized by "the widespread belief that all our problems, personal and social, can be solved or at least ameliorated by recourse to the scientific method."³³ He points out that John Dewey was the forerunner of the social scientists "who urge us to abandon our ingrained habits of metaphysical thought and throw ourselves for salvation into the arms of science."³⁴ Moreover, in objecting to the "lack of a value-system" in pragmatism, Smith says "if we deny that there is an absolute truth which sometimes transcends time and fact, if we have no absolute standard of what is good and what bad, how are we to judge what is 'beneficient'?"³⁵

Thus, Smith agrees with Bestor that there is an objective truth apart from man, and that knowledge is discovered rather than created. Furthermore, he agrees with Bestor that experience and reason are both sources of knowledge, although he adds to this a Platonic belief in intuition which is not found in Bestor's position. He differs from Bestor, however, in affirming that man can gain more than approximate knowledge of some absolute principles through intuitive insights. Both agree that scientific method is not the only way to gain knowledge, but

³²Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 9.

³³Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 94.

³⁴Ibid., p. 18.

³⁵Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 81.

Smith stresses this point more adamantly in his objections to pragmatism.

The Nature of Reality

Arthur E. Bestor

As previously pointed out, Bestor is not a philosopher who writes about the nature of the universe, but rather an historian who is deeply involved in the problems of educational philosophy. A presupposition of this study is that a philosophy of education cannot avoid reflecting a basic philosophical view.

If one's conception of the nature of knowledge provides a key to the conception of the nature of reality, then it may be possible to arrive at certain conclusions concerning Bestor's conception of reality, or at least the position that his epistemology reflects. It has been shown in Bestor's theory of knowledge that the world exists prior to man's perception of it, that antecedent conditions are characterized by genuine objectivity and independence.³⁶ He refers more specifically to reality when he states that man "lives in a world of quantity and relationship . . . [in which] he works every day with matter, and he has subdued matter to his purposes by sorting out its various characteristics in his mind" ³⁷ There is no evidence whether he regards matter as an inert substance or an aggregate of atoms characterized by energy. However, he does say that "the complex and changing world" is a "stream of living, changing reality."³⁸ Moreover, the following statement is

³⁶Supra, pp. 83, 84, 88, and 89.

³⁷Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 35.

³⁸Bestor, "The Education Really Needed for a Changing World," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 27 (Winter 1957), pp. 2-3.

close to a metaphysical proposition:

All philosophical pursuits, all cultivation of theoretical and abstract thinking . . . such intellectual efforts are, in the last analysis, quests for elements of stability or regularity or certainty beneath the surface flux of the changing world as we . . . are obliged to know it.³⁹

Hence, it is evident that Bestor is opposed to the pragmatic conception of reality as flux, flow, and change, since change is only the surface appearance. It would, perhaps, be going beyond the evidence to infer that the "quests for elements of stability or regularity or certainty" are quests for essences or forms in the "world as we are obliged to know it;"⁴⁰ or that Bestor's conception of matter is similar to the Aristotelian principle that matter is potentiality. Nevertheless, the postulation of "stability, regularity, and certainty beneath the surface flux of the changing world" does reflect a teleological position. Furthermore, this conclusion is supported by the emphasis he places on the Aristotelian conception of man as a rational being whose highest good is to make the transition from his potentiality to the actuality of his form, his power to reason.⁴¹

It may be concluded that Bestor's position concerning reality is amenable to various interpretations, but only within the historic strand of realistic philosophy. Although the evidence is not conclusive that he is an Aristotelian realist, this interpretation is supported further by his conception of knowledge, the nature of man, and the nature of values.

³⁹Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Infra, pp. 104-105.

Mortimer Smith

Since Smith states that he does not hold a consistent philosophical position,⁴² it may be best not to try to identify the conception of reality reflected in his writings. He is largely concerned with value theory in relation to education. However, he states that he is a "traditionalist-humanist" who believes that "men must be bound together by ties of moral stability."⁴³ Furthermore, he holds that moral truths "might be derived from the religious tradition or humanistic principles of the unchanging nature of man and the universe"⁴⁴ Although he does not elaborate upon the "unchanging nature of the universe," this surely indicates that he is not unsympathetic to Bestor's thesis that there is stability and certainty beneath the surface flux of the changing world. Moreover, the following statement concerning the nature of man implies a teleological view:

Man's ingrained habit of setting up ethical and moral ideals, his belief that his own life must mean something and that the universe should 'make sense'---are certainly 'facts' about the nature of man . . . man is a metaphysical as well as a physical and political animal. Man is also a creative artist who cannot resist recording his visions and imaginings.⁴⁵

That Smith does regard the universe as purposive is substantiated further by his view concerning knowledge and values, both of which are objective and may be discovered by man through reason and intuition.

In objecting to the pragmatism and naturalistic humanism of John

⁴²Supra, p. 89.

⁴³Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 83.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁵Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 101.

Dewey, Smith makes the following comparative statement concerning the pragmatic view of reality:

Dewey maintains that reality is that which is experienced . . . he strongly rejects philosophical idealism with its doctrine that fundamental and ultimate reality is to be found in the mind; with equal positiveness he rejects the position of the realist who maintains that reality exists independently of mental perception. . . . Your pragmatist-instrumentalist . . . will say that the question of [a physical desk's] existence is academic and irrelevant until I have an experience in relation to it; that is, until a practical problem-to-be-solved about the desk arises.⁴⁶

Thus, as a "traditional humanist," Smith is in sympathy with both idealism and realism, which have been concerned with the great metaphysical questions. Although his view of reality is not definitive, as he suggests in a letter to the writer, he does make statements concerning moral values which reflect the view that the universe is stable and purposive. In this respect he is in agreement with Bestor.

The Nature of Values

The purpose of this section is to discover the kinds of value held to be worthy and to discover the nature of the highest good in the works of Bestor and Smith. The term "value" refers to what is esteemed valuable, that is, to what is desired, approved, or cherished. Any philosophy of education must be concerned with values inasmuch as the formulation of the aims of education implies some consideration of values in general, and thus a commitment to some highest good or goods. In chapter two it was shown that the Council publications and the founders of the Council agree that the immediate aims of education are to produce the good individual and the good citizen, which is to be accomplished

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 14-15.

through the intellectual role of the public schools.⁴⁷ It will be shown in this section that these aims have a direct bearing upon the ultimate values cherished by Bestor and Smith.

Arthur E. Bestor

Through the maze of statements concerning educational philosophy, it becomes evident that the highest good for Bestor is the self-realization of man as man, that is, the fullest possible realization and perfection of man's rational nature. Although self-realization is intrinsically the highest good, it also has a social aspect through its effect upon intelligent citizenship and the diffusion of intellectual values with consequent progress in cultural and scientific achievements for society. Bestor argues that

What we really need is a fervent belief in the importance of human life lived on its highest plane. Then we shall know we are fighting for a world in which there is opportunity for the fullest development by every man and woman of his or her capacity for disciplined thought, for artistic creation, and hence for enduring satisfaction.⁴⁸

Bestor states further that "intellectual power . . . is mankind's most precious possession."⁴⁹ And he points out that with this most precious possession:

. . . The American freeman would be in a position to rule himself. And the civilization he built would be a humane and magnificent civilization because it would offer to every man not only equality before the law, not only the right to vote and to work, but, most precious of all, the opportunity to develop . . . his own highest qualities of manhood. Let us never be satisfied with less.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Supra, pp. 16, 17, 21, 24-27.

⁴⁸Bestor, "Liberal Education and a Liberal Nation," American Scholar, Vol. 21 (April 1952), p. 149.

⁴⁹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 35.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 97.

If intellectual power is mankind's "most precious possession," and if the "most precious opportunity" of man is to develop his highest qualities of manhood," then it follows that the highest good for man is his self-realization, the perfection of his rational nature.⁵¹ Bestor explains that "by thinking abstractly, men have learned to think with unimaginable power and precision. . . . Their existence as men, their freedom as men, depend upon it."⁵²

Although the root value is self-realization, Bestor cherishes certain intellectual and cultural values for the individual and for society. He refers to these values as the "most exalted and complex realms of human life, those of the mind and spirit."⁵³ Intellectual and cultural values for the individual consist of "knowledge, cultural appreciation, and disciplined intellectual power." These values become evident, Bestor points out, when "the masses of the people . . . are reading mature books and handling complex ideas and revealing a profound comprehension of history and science and the arts."⁵⁴ He explains that "society needs thoughtful citizens and cultivated men, whether by profession they be butchers or television announcers or civil engineers." And he adds that "a citizen today needs . . . wisdom . . . and understanding of the general problems of government."⁵⁵ In the "intellectual life of the nation," he says that these values become evident in "its scientific and techno-

⁵¹Cf. *Infra*, p. 104.

⁵²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 422.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

logical progress [and] professional skills [and] cultural activities."⁵⁶

In addition to the intellectual and cultural, Bestor cherishes certain spiritual values: freedom, self-reliance, honesty, and equality. He argues that since man is a rational being, freedom must be achieved through a liberal education.⁵⁷ With expanded knowledge and disciplined thought, man can thus rise above environmental circumstances and make choices based upon his reflective nature. Besides freedom of choice, he is concerned particularly with freedom of thought. He states:

There is, after all, a distinction between ideas and overt acts. In practice the line is sometimes hard to draw, but the principle is clear. Men, of course, are always responsible before the law for their conduct. . . . But it is the act and not the idea for which they are punished.⁵⁸

His point is well summarized in quoting Jefferson: "Error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."⁵⁹ Self-reliance, for Bestor, means "resourcefulness, imagination, and independence of mind," which man exhibits in using his "general intelligence to solve particular problems."⁶⁰ He believes that the greatness of the nation is based upon self-reliance. He stresses intellectual honesty as a moral value with which education is concerned, since dishonesty "contributes to the debasement of all ideals," particularly the intellectual.⁶¹ In cherishing equality, Bestor has reference to the self-

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 221.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁸Bestor, et al., Three Presidents and Their Books (Urbana, 1955), p. 12.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 13.

⁶⁰Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 79.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 30.

realization of the masses, "the right of every citizen to develop his intellectual powers to the fullest extent possible." He says that "democracy . . . assumes that intellectual ability is independent of the accidents of wealth and social position."⁶²

Bestor believes that these values can be realized only through the agency of the public school in a democracy. He points out that:

The American public school was created to build a new social order, a social order in which intellectual training would be offered without discrimination to every citizen, in which respect for the highest cultural values would be universal, in which every man would be expected to bring trained intelligence to bear on personal and public problems, and in which scientific and scholarly effort would be so valued that assaults upon intellectual freedom would be impossible. Only the school can build this kind of social order. This is its great task in a democracy.⁶³

I see no reason why the American educational system cannot raise the intellectual and cultural level of the entire nation to as great a height as any people have been able to reach.⁶⁴

Here, then, is the rationale for his educational commitments. The basic idea of what constitutes the good life is derived from his conception of values and his conception of the nature of man.⁶⁵ Man's highest good is his self-realization, the perfection of his rational nature. This, in turn, is good for society through its bearing upon citizenship.

Mortimer Smith

Smith is more concerned with pointing out what he considers to be the unwholesome effects of pragmatism and positivism than he is with a value theory as such. He associates himself and the founders of the

⁶²Ibid., p. 85.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 95-96.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 93.

⁶⁵Infra, pp. 103-105.

Council with the position of Robert Hutchins, and in doing this, he reveals his own conception of what is good, and what should be cherished.

In a letter to the writer, Smith states:

I think it may be somewhat difficult to find a common vein of philosophical thought uniting the founders of the Council for Basic Education. It would be simpler to describe them as a group of humanists who are anxious to do something to stem the rising tide of what Robert Hutchins has called the four cults--skepticism, presentism, scientism, anti-intellectualism.⁶⁶

Hutchins says that "the cults of skepticism, presentism, scientism, and anti-intellectualism will lead us to despair, not merely of education, but also of society."⁶⁷ By the cult of "skepticism," Hutchins means "the crucial error . . . of holding that nothing is any more important than anything else, that there can be no order of goods and no order in the intellectual realm."⁶⁸ By "presentism," he refers to the tendency to repudiate the past and give attention to the immediate environment.⁶⁹ By the cult of "scientism," he refers to "those who misconceive the nature of the role of science."⁷⁰ He believes that science is concerned with matters of fact, and not with values. He asserts that questions of the good life and the good society "are not susceptible of scientific investigation."⁷¹ By the cult of "anti-intellectualism," he refers to those who depreciate intellectual and cultural values, while promoting

⁶⁶Letter to the writer from Mortimer Smith, then Executive Secretary of the Council for Basic Education, March 17, 1958.

⁶⁷Robert M. Hutchins, Education for Freedom (Baton Rouge, 1946), p. 38.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 33.

⁷¹Hutchins, The Conflict in Education (New York, 1953), p. 79.

material success and adjustment to immediate needs.⁷²

In agreeing with Hutchins, Smith points out that society is "sunk deep" in these four cults, and is on the brink of moral disaster by "divorcing science from spiritual wisdom."⁷³ He points out that "the whole intellectual and emotional atmosphere of our times" is characterized by certain ideas: a materialistic idea of progress; emphasis upon immediate experience; the stressing of means and refusal to set up ends; thinking of man as a sociological specimen instead of the individual; and a reluctance to accept any ultimate values.⁷⁴

In esteeming the worth of individual man, Smith asserts that "we should try individual responsibility, individual initiative, individual action." And he adds that "not until individual man rebels against mediocrity, spiritual illiteracy, and group subservience will our unique experiment of universal education become once again a bright hope and promise in American life."⁷⁵

With regard to values, Hutchins states directly what he considers to be the highest good:

In order to believe in democracy . . . we must see that the moral and intellectual powers of men are the powers which make them men and that their end on earth is the fullest development of these powers. . . . We want to achieve the limit of our moral, intellectual, and spiritual powers. This personal, human good is the highest of all the goods we seek.⁷⁶

⁷²Ibid., pp. 26, 47.

⁷³Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 130.

⁷⁴Smith, "Liberal Education and Its Relation to the Schools," College and University, Vol. 32 (Spring, 1957), p. 305.

⁷⁵Smith, The Diminished Mind, p. 141.

⁷⁶Hutchins, Education for freedom, pp. 86-87.

In the above propositions, Hutchins is not referring to education per se, but to values as such. Smith seems to agree with Hutchins in asserting that "education is concerned with developing the highest capabilities of the individual as an individual . . . with self-realization."⁷⁷ Although he does not affirm self-realization to be the highest good, this conclusion is suggested by the fact that he refers to himself as a humanist, that he agrees with Hutchins in opposing modern pragmatism and positivism, and that he affirms the importance of intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers in the individual.⁷⁸

If the above inference is valid, then Smith agrees with Bestor that the self-realization of man is the highest good. He differs, however, by including moral and spiritual powers as well as intellectual. Thus, Bestor's emphasis upon intellectual powers and Smith's emphasis upon the moral and spiritual are both reflected in the Council's statement that "the purpose of education is the harmonious development of the mind, the will, and the conscience of each individual"⁷⁹

Smith also agrees with Bestor in cherishing the values of freedom and self-reliance. In opposing the determinism of the "cult of scientism," he states:

[The social scientist] will tell us that we are predictable because what we do is not a matter of free choice: we do it because we can't help ourselves; our actions are determined by forces outside conscious choice, the state of our glands, or the dictates of our subconscious. The same determinism, he will tell us, also dooms social groups.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 91.

⁷⁸Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁹Supra, p. 15.

⁸⁰Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 100.

Smith argues that "the perversion of science into idolatry of the scientific method, and the dethroning of man as individual" has hindered man's full realization as an individual.⁸¹ He maintains that "intellectualism and individualism . . . call for qualities that are inimical to herd ideals: Such qualities as independence, personal responsibility, personal conviction, and moral judgment."⁸²

The Nature of Man

An interpretation of man is at the heart of any philosophy of education. The purpose of this section is to discover the nature of man in the positions of Bestor and Smith.

Arthur E. Bestor

It has been shown in the sections on the aims of education and the educative process that Bestor conceives of man as a being who has a mind.⁸³ He also states that "the Greek mind [was] for many later years the model of the disciplined mind that liberal education should strive to produce."⁸⁴ Although he does not describe the mind in any metaphysical sense, he makes numerous references to the powers of the mind which give one a basis to infer what the mind is.

Bestor holds that the mind is characterized by capacity, function, or power. These powers are evident in the ability of reflective thinking,

⁸¹Smith, The Diminished Mind, pp. 136-137.

⁸²Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 82.

⁸³Supra, pp. 17, 18, and 50.

⁸⁴Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 458.

abstract thought, and the forming of generalizations.⁸⁵ He states that the opportunity of man to develop his mind is "the most precious of all," since this is the development of "his own highest qualities of manhood."⁸⁶ If intellectual power is the highest quality of man, it follows that the essential nature of man is his rationality, intelligence, or power to think. In this respect, Bestor follows the Aristotelian tradition which conceives of man as a rational animal.

This conclusion is substantiated further by a comparison of Bestor's analysis of reasoning with Aristotle's definition of mind. It has been shown that Bestor holds that reasoning consists of thinking and judging.⁸⁷ Aristotle states that "by mind I mean that whereby the soul thinks and judges."⁸⁸ Moreover, it is evident that Bestor accepts the Aristotelian view that human nature is the same everywhere, that intellectual differences in man are quantitative rather than qualitative. Bestor asserts that it is "contrary to every principle of democratic society" to hold that:

. . . some insurmountable barrier separates persons of different intellectual caliber from one another, that they differ so fundamentally in the quality of their thinking as almost to constitute distinctive species⁸⁹

He argues further that a person of low intelligence does not learn differently, and is not completely incapable of certain kinds of thinking.⁹⁰

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 37.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁸⁷Supra, p. 85-86.

⁸⁸Aristotle, "On the Soul," The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941), p. 590.

⁸⁹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 293.

⁹⁰Ibid.

He states that it is "totally false to infer that the variations measured by intelligence tests are variations in the quality of intelligence . . .

." And he concludes that intelligence tests "measure the quantum of intellectual skill possessed by an individual at a given age, not, in any precise and definitive fashion, the quality of his thinking."⁹¹ Thus, his argument rests upon the conviction that intellectual differences among men are quantitative differences of degree, rather than qualitative differences of kind. And this is pure Aristotelianism.

Mortimer Smith

It has been shown that, although Smith does not profess to hold a consistent philosophical position, he is sympathetic to classical realism, both Platonic and Aristotelian. Moreover, he stresses intuition as a source of value judgments apart from scientific analysis, which he believes is concerned with facts.⁹² These views are also reflected in his conception of man. He holds that man is a rational being, but he also expresses belief in the Hebraic-Christian conception of man. He states that "traditional education had its faults, but it was based on a clear concept of man as a rational being" ⁹³ And he adds:

I think it is not too great a generalization to say that the larger part of conscious social thought in nineteenth-century America, based on general principles arising from the Judaic-Graeco-Christian conception of the nature of man, felt that the good society was evolved from the association of free men making conscious moral choices . . . in the light of general principles.⁹⁴

⁹¹Ibid., p. 295.

⁹²Supra, pp. 90-91.

⁹³Smith, "The Failure of American Education," The Freeman, Vol. 1 (December 1951), p. 137.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 138.

Thus, while Smith agrees with Bestor that man is a rational being, he also accepts the Judaic-Christian conception of man as a moral and spiritual being of great worth who has both freedom and responsibility.

This view is consistent with his opposition to naturalistic humanism, which rejects the belief that man has a soul, and scientism which stresses determinism. In emphasizing man's power of free will, Smith argues:

The scientists can tell us some pretty exact truths about man as a physical animal, for in the animal realm human beings share uniform characteristics and react to the stimulus of the environment in uniform ways. In the realm of behavior, however, man is less predictable, and the moment you have established some seemingly invariable laws governing his conduct he will, in the most ornery fashion, fly off in another direction.⁹⁵

It may be concluded that both Smith and Bestor agree that man is unique in relation to other forms of life. While Bestor stresses the Aristotelian view of man as a rational being, Smith adds to this the Hebraic-Christian conception of man as a moral and spiritual being in a meaningful and purposeful universe.

These two conceptions of the nature of man are reflected in the Council's original declaration of purpose:

The purpose of education is the harmonious development of the mind, the will, and the conscience of each individual so that he may use to the full his intrinsic powers and shoulder the responsibilities of citizenship.⁹⁶

No doubt Mortimer Smith was among those in the founding group who insisted upon including the "will and the conscience" in this statement.

⁹⁵Smith, And Madly Teach, p. 100.

⁹⁶Supra, p. 15.

Summary

The study of philosophical foundations is limited to an analysis of the works of Bestor and Smith, since these men provide the intellectual leadership for the Council. Smith states that the founders should be described as "humanists," and he classifies himself as a traditional humanist. However, the term "humanist" is claimed by several philosophers who hold conflicting positions; for example, the Thomist, Jacques Maritain; the pragmatist, John Dewey; the Platonist, Paul Elmer Moore; and the naturalist, Corliss Lamont. Hence, if one uses the term to describe the founders of the Council, as Mortimer Smith suggests, then it becomes necessary to define the sense in which the term is used. The results of this study indicate that Bestor and Smith are humanists in the sense that they hold the Aristotelian view of the nature of man and the self-realization theory of the good life. Humanism in this sense seeks to perfect the highest capacities of man as man, and these capacities are the intellectual and moral powers which differentiate man from lower animals.

It has been shown that Bestor's basic philosophy is consistent with Aristotelian realism. It has been shown further that Smith is admittedly a follower of Robert Hutchins, who is widely known to be an Aristotelian. Moreover, a definitive publication sponsored by the Council for Basic Education acknowledges its Aristotelian foundations.⁹⁷

Although Bestor and Smith make different emphases, they seem to be more in agreement than disagreement. Both agree that there is a public

⁹⁷Koerner, ed., The Case for Basic Education (Boston, 1959), pp. 3-14.

or objective truth apart from man, and that man discovers knowledge through experience and reason. However, Smith holds a belief in intuition which is not shared by Bestor. What Bestor and Smith oppose is the claim of finality in the scientific world view dogmatically asserted by pragmatism and positivism. Both agree that any way of knowing is based upon assumptions; that is, based upon certain underlying postulates concerning what would constitute verifiable data. Bestor's way of saying this is that questions of qualitative judgment cannot be settled by statistics, questionnaires, and slide-rules. Smith's way of saying it is to reassert the possibility of gaining intuitive insight and wisdom from the cultural heritage. It seems that both fear that the present is a period of cultural regression which may be deepened by an over-emphasis upon material abundance and a life of adjustment to the "nutritive and sensitive" levels of existence.

While no metaphysical propositions are clearly discernible, both agree that the universe is characterized by stability and certainty, which implies a purposive view and lays the foundation for values. The highest good for man is his self-realization, the fulfillment of his highest capacities. Smith stresses the moral and spiritual powers of man, while Bestor stresses the intellectual. What constitutes a good life, then, is found in activities guided by reason and moral reflection, in the intellectual and cultural values. This is a standard of goodness which is teleological in nature, since it refers to the fulfillment of the highest capacities of man. For Bestor, the essence of man is his rational nature; for Smith, it is moral and spiritual as well as rational. Man thus has a universal quality. Although man shares sentient and vegetative functions with other forms of life, he is unique in possessing the

ability to think and judge, the power of reasoning. Thus, herein lies the philosophic support for the educational commitments of the Council for Basic Education.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE OF MENTAL DISCIPLINE IN THE POSITION OF THE COUNCIL FOR BASIC EDUCATION

In chapter two it was shown that intellectual or mental discipline in the educative process is a crucial argument supporting the position of the Council. In chapter four it was shown that Bestor and Smith hold the Aristotelian conception of the nature of man. Moreover, it was shown in chapter one that Bestor's conception of mental discipline has been criticized as a "stale promise of mental training," and ridiculed with the label of "faculty" psychology.¹ Although some experts in the field of education² make no distinction between formal discipline based upon faculty psychology and mental discipline based upon the Aristotelian theory of mind, the evidence indicates that a distinction should be made if the Council's position is to be properly represented. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to clarify the conception of mental discipline in the Council's position and in the philosophy of Aristotle. It will be shown that the Council's conception of mental discipline is based upon the Aristotelian conception of the mind.

The theory of formal discipline supported by faculty psychology

¹Supra, p.5.

²See, for example, Carter V. Good, ed., Dictionary of Education (New York, 1945), p. 134. Also, Arthur P. Coladarci, ed., Educational Psychology, (New York, 1955) p. 16.

has had a long history, but was expressed in modern form by the German philosopher Christian Wolff in 1734 and by the Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid in 1785.³ According to the formal discipline theory, education consists in strengthening or developing the powers of the mind by exercising them on difficult, abstract material such as Latin, Greek and mathematics. For disciplinary purposes, the form of the subject is considered to be more efficacious in strengthening the faculties of the mind, while the content is of secondary importance.⁴ The relationship between formal discipline and faculty psychology is explained by Kolesnik:

Underlying this theory [formal discipline] is the assumption that the mind is a substantive reality having a number of powers or faculties such as memory, attention, observation, reasoning and will, and that these may be improved individually--as muscles are improved--through exercise. Just as it does not matter much what a man exercises his biceps on, so long as he exercises them, it does not matter a great deal what sort of material his mental faculties are exercised on. The important thing is the amount and vigor and consistency of the exercise, especially during the formative years.⁵

According to formal discipline, transfer of training takes place from the strengthening of a particular power or powers. The study of Latin, for example, would improve one's powers of attention, observation, or retention so well that he would attend, observe or remember better in any other situation.⁶

Formal discipline with its reliance upon faculty psychology was the dominant motive in American education during the latter half of the

³J. M. Stephens, Educational Psychology (New York, 1956), p. 240. Also, Edwin G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology (New York, 1950), p. 55.

⁴Stephens, Educational Psychology, p. 240.

⁵Walter B. Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Modern Education (Madison, 1958), p. 6.

⁶Ibid.

nineteenth century.⁷ However, the experimental work of William James and Edward L. Thorndike, and the educational theories of the Herbartians and the followers of John Dewey cast doubt on the idea that any particular subjects could develop a learner's "innate faculties," and the theory of formal discipline was generally discredited during the first half of the twentieth century. Kolesnik points out, however, that "those responsible for modern education could scarcely make a more serious error than to believe that mental discipline is a dead issue." He concludes that "mental discipline is still very much alive in current educational thinking."⁸

The Council for Basic Education promotes a type of mental discipline that should be distinguished from the earlier theories of formal discipline. It was shown in chapter two that mental discipline, for the Council, refers to the skills and methods of learning and thinking which are required by the structure of logically organized subject matter.⁹ Though the Council does not postulate separate "faculties" of the mind, such as memory, imagination, perception, or acuteness, which might be sharpened by abrasive material, the skills and methods of learning and thinking are referred to as "intellectual powers."¹⁰ In employing these skills and methods one becomes disciplined mentally and develops intellectual power by the type of thinking and reasoning engaged in by confronting the order and structure inherent in logically organized subject matter. The Council states that "history stresses the need for

⁷Stuart Noble, A History of American Education (New York, 1955), p. 339.

⁸Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Modern Education, p. 179.

⁹Supra, pp. 44-47.

¹⁰Koerner, ed., The Case for Basic Education (Boston, 1959), pp. 4, 47, 85, and 145.

objectivity in formulating judgments, the careful weighing of evidence, and the necessity for searching analysis before a final decision is reached."¹¹ Biology, chemistry, and physics "give the student the experience of obtaining objective evidence, of clear and accurate thinking about experimental methods, and of interpreting observations."¹² The Council points out that "mathematics is a tool, a language, and a logical structure" which is primarily deductive.¹³ The methods of the sciences are considered to be both inductive and deductive.¹⁴

Bestor agrees with the Council's argument in stating that "the schools exist to teach . . . the power to think."¹⁵ By the "power to think," Bestor does not mean structured entities in the mind of man, but the way man functions as a rational being in employing the skills and methods inherent in organized subject matter.¹⁶ He argues that "the basic scientific and scholarly disciplines must be presented, not as mere repositories of information, but as systematic ways of thinking, each with an organized structure and methodology of its own."¹⁷ He considers the following methods of inquiry as distinctive: controlled experimentation, deductive mathematical reasoning, inductive historical investigation, philosophical criticism, and literary criticism.¹⁸ Bestor maintains

¹¹Ibid., p. 29.

¹²Ibid., p. 185.

¹³Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁵Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 110.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 397, 406, and 415.

that "facts and formulas may be necessary parts [of a liberal education] but actually a student will remember a great many facts without special effort if he has really entered into the process of investigation which produced them."¹⁹ And he states further that "if he [a teacher] does not know what constitutes disciplined thinking in the field, he may be teaching the most arrant nonsense."²⁰

Although Bestor does not discuss "transfer of training" with the terminology of a psychologist, it is evident that he believes that transfer occurs through building generalizations or principles in one activity and applying them in another. He says that "the ability of the man of disciplined mind to direct this power [of disciplined thought] effectively upon problems for which he has not been specifically trained is proved by instances without number."²¹ He argues further that "liberal education seeks to develop the powers of thought that can be most readily generalized--that is, applied to the widest possible range of problems."²² His statements imply that the transfer of learning through applying generalizations is more important than transfer through learning identical elements: "Generalizations have a more enduring life. And certain abilities, such as applying the principles learned to new situations, may actually increase even without further instruction."²³

¹⁹Ibid., p. 364.

²⁰Ibid., p. 415.

²¹Ibid., p. 56.

²²Ibid., p. 243.

²³Ibid., p. 337. Bestor cites the following study to substantiate his conclusion: James E. Wert, "Twin Examination Assumptions," Journal of Higher Education, VIII, 139, (March 1937).

A conception of mental discipline and transfer of training similar to that held by the Council for Basic Education is expressed in a current text on educational psychology:

Mental discipline refers to good training in skills and methods of learning and thinking. . . . A well-disciplined mind, then, is one which through training and experience has become effective in thinking. It can reason clearly and find the solutions to problems. Such a mind is equipped with knowledge and insights and has the ability to differentiate the major ideas from the minor, the sound for the unsound, and the power to organize facts and ideas into useful patterns. . . . The old idea of formal discipline is not being espoused--not at all. . . . Actually, mental discipline is at the heart of education in the sense that we try to equip students with knowledge and skills and also to train them in using these skills and knowledge effectively. Accordingly the most efficient learning and thinking processes constitute mental discipline. We attempt to guide students in practicing good methods of learning, in reasoning soundly, and in attacking problems intelligently. Education aims to equip students with the best skills and develop in them the best habits. Such training and education may be thought of as discipline, and good parents and the teachers of all and every subject try to achieve it.²⁴

Sorenson points out, however, that "there is no mental training and discipline that will make any material change in a student's mental capacity." He says that "all good education will do is to make the best use of the powers and capacities which he possesses."²⁵

Sorenson further states that "a person learns through transfer to the extent that the abilities acquired in one situation help in another."²⁶ He describes two theories commonly advanced to explain transfer of training, those of identical elements and of generalization:

The principle of identical elements involves specificity and perception. The transfer depends on the extent to which specific elements exist common to each situation and the degree to which they are perceived. The principle of generalization, on the other hand, is conceptual in nature. Transfer depends on possessing a concept or idea and being able to apply

²⁴Herbert Sorenson, Psychology in Education (New York, 1954), p. 491.

²⁵Ibid., p. 469.

²⁶Ibid., p. 468.

it in another situation. In some respects, it may be difficult to distinguish the two theories. The theory of identical elements pertains to recognizing common elements in situations. Generalization is the application of principles and concepts to situations through perceiving their relationships.²⁷

Deese defines transfer of training as "that training or performance on one task which has influenced performance on another task."²⁸ He takes the position that training in thinking with an organized subject will transfer as general reflective thinking:

It is generally accepted that a formal academic discipline like high school geometry provides some transfer to reflective thinking in general. In some circles this is regarded as a holdover from the notion of formal discipline, but, of course, such transfer does occur.²⁹

Blair, Jones, and Simpson state that "transfer of learning exists whenever a previous learning has influence upon the learning or performance of new responses."³⁰ They add that "transfer may be general, in that a given learning such as a principle, a set, or method has influence upon any number of later learning situations."³¹ They maintain that transfer through applying generalizations is important:

What are the implications of this kind of transfer for teachers? Clearly a general principle has much broader possibilities for use than detailed facts. . . . These kinds of learning are more enduring. It would seem then that a major emphasis of schooling should be upon principles and their use in a number of situations.³²

Stephens takes a similar position with regard to transfer since he states that "the generalization theory holds that transfer is due to

²⁷Ibid., p. 479.

²⁸James Deese, The Psychology of Learning (New York, 1958), p. 213.

²⁹Ibid., p. 232.

³⁰Glenn M. Blair, R. S. Jones, and Ray H. Simpson, Educational Psychology (New York, 1956), p. 242.

³¹Ibid., p. 261.

³²Ibid., p. 251.

generalizations or to general principles built up in one activity and utilized in the other."³³ He writes that "experiments on the transfer of training in reasoning have shown conflicting results." However, he says that "it is encouraging to note that such a subject as geometry, when deliberately taught to bring about transfer, will bring about a definite improvement in reasoning ability in other subjects."³⁴ Also he points out that when deliberately taught for transfer, "it seems safe to say that Latin can be made to increase ability to read and spell English words and to help in the mastery of some other languages."³⁵

Thus, it seems that the conception of mental discipline and transfer of learning held by the Council for Basic Education is a tenable theory in the literature of modern educational psychology. In chapter four of this study it was shown that the Council relies upon Aristotelian principles as a philosophic support for their educational commitments.³⁶ Indeed the Council states that "the case for basic education rests on an unchanging philosophic faith or view of human nature."³⁷ The Council maintains that man is primarily a "rational soul," instead of an adaptive animal, and that the purpose of schooling is "to educate the rational soul."³⁸ Since Aristotle is commonly thought to be a

³³Stephens, Educational Psychology, p. 443.

³⁴Ibid., p. 437.

³⁵Ibid., p. 438.

³⁶Supra, pp.107-108.

³⁷Koerner, ed., The Case for Basic Education (Boston, 1959), p. 8.

³⁸Ibid.

faculty psychologist who advocated formal discipline,³⁹ this raises the question as to whether the philosophic support of the Council is rooted in a conception of faculty psychology.

Regardless of interpretations to the contrary, Aristotle is neither a "faculty" psychologist nor a dualist with respect to the "rational soul" and consequently with respect to the mind. In fact, Aristotle's philosophy provides the foundation for a functional conception of mind which has been emphasized by contemporary psychologists. In view of his metaphysical presuppositions concerning the relationship between form and matter, Aristotle's theory of the mind-body relationship is monistic. For Aristotle, the good of anything is relative to the function it performs. Accordingly, he defines the soul as the essence, the form, or the actuality of the body. He states:

If, then, we have to give a general formula applicable to all kinds of soul, we must describe it as the first grade of actuality of a natural organized body. That is why we can wholly dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one: it is as meaningless as to ask whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one⁴⁰

In explaining further the nature of the soul, Aristotle says that if "the eye were an animal--sight would have been its soul . . . from this it indubitably follows that the soul is inseparable from its body" ⁴¹

Consistently with his functional conception of soul, Aristotle analyzes the capacities of living things and classifies them according to certain psychic powers: the nutritive, the appetitive, the sensory, the loco-

³⁹See, for example: James Mulhern, A History of Education (New York 1959), p. 167.

⁴⁰Aristotle, "On the Soul," The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941), p. 555.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 556.

tive, and the power of thinking.⁴² Sometimes he uses the term "faculty" in referring to these powers, but in its original meaning, facultas, implying the ability to do. There is no evidence that he attempts to reify these powers into entities which may be disciplined in the manner proposed by faculty psychologists. Indeed, Aristotle does not consider as very important the question of whether the soul has "parts" or "faculties." On this point, he writes:

. . . One element in the soul is irrational and one has a rational principle. Whether these are separated as the parts of the body or of anything divisible are, or are distinct by definition but by nature inseparable, like convex and concave in the circumference of a circle, does not affect the present question.⁴³

In analyzing the nature of man, Aristotle reasons that man shares the irrational powers of nutrition and sensation with lower forms of life, but is qualitatively different in possessing a mind, the power of reasoning, which he also refers to as the "rational soul." In defining the mind, he says, "thus that in the soul which is called mind (by mind I mean that whereby the soul thinks and judges) is, before it thinks, not actually any real thing."⁴⁴

Since Aristotle holds that the good of anything is relative to the highest function it can perform, and since the rational nature of man is his distinctive function, it follows that man can perfect his nature and reach his highest fulfillment only through his intellectual powers in seeking wisdom and understanding. And Aristotle concludes that "for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since

⁴²Ibid., p. 559.

⁴³Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 950.

⁴⁴Aristotle, "On the Soul," The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 590.

reason more than anything else is man."⁴⁵ However, he never makes a definitive analysis of how man's intellectual powers may be trained or disciplined nor how transfer of learning may occur. On this point, the Aristotelian scholar, John Burnet, says:

As to the education of the mind, which he emphatically declared to be the crown of the whole process, we have not a single word in the Politics as it has come down to us. We can only infer that it would be in biology, history, physics, and finally metaphysics.⁴⁶

In his Posterior Analytics, however, Aristotle points out that the process of thinking should be empirical as well as rational, that two types of procedures are involved in the process of discovering knowledge, the one inductive and the other deductive. Only after universals (generalizations) have been established inductively, by moving from the particular to the universal, did he think it possible to employ the deductive method in the syllogism:

. . . Scientific knowledge through demonstration is impossible unless a man knows the primary immediate premisses. . . . We conclude that these states of knowledge are neither innate in a determinate form, nor developed from other higher states of knowledge, but from sense-perception. . . . Thus it is clear that we must get to know the primary premisses by induction; for the method by which even sense-perception implants the universal is inductive.⁴⁷

It may be concluded that Aristotle is not an advocate of formal discipline based upon faculty psychology since he does not postulate ready-made powers waiting to be exercised and enlarged. However, the interpretation of mental discipline may be inferred in the sense that one disciplines his mind through the inductive-deductive processes of thinking and judging in the liberal arts and sciences. And this is the

⁴⁵Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 1105.

⁴⁶John Burnet, ed., Aristotle on Education, (London 1905), p. 134.

⁴⁷Aristotle, "Posterior Analytics," The Basic Works of Aristotle, pp. 185-186.

kind of mental discipline that the Council advocates in the educative process.

Thus, mental discipline, for the Council, means that the rational human processes can and should be developed through instruction based on organized subject matter. These processes, referred to as the "power" of thinking by the Council, are the inductive methods of reaching scientific conclusions and the deductive methods of logical analysis. Following the Aristotelian premise that man's happiness--that is, his final end or greatest good--consists essentially in intellectual activity, the Council for Basic Education stresses the processes of thinking.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The problem of this dissertation was: what are the educational commitments and philosophical foundations of the Council for Basic Education? In order to discover the educational commitments, the study made to solve the problem was limited to an analysis of the documents published by the Council for Basic Education and the publications of four members of the founding group: Arthur E. Bestor, Mortimer Smith, Harold L. Clapp, and Harry J. Fuller. The part of the study concerned with philosophical foundations was limited to the publications of Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith, since these individuals provided the intellectual leadership for the Council and provided the only publications of philosophic import.

The method of the study was philosophic rather than scientific in that it consisted of an analysis and interpretation of ideas instead of the manipulation of quantitative variables. It was partly inductive in that some conclusions were derived from the analysis of particular issues and positions; it was partly deductive in that the logical consequences implicit in certain premises were made explicit. Hence, this was a comprehensive and interpretive study not amenable to the precision of quantitative measurements.

It was discovered that the founders of the Council for Basic

Education agreed among themselves and with the Council publications that the general aim of education should be intellectual training. However, this aim was expressed as having a twofold reference; it is a good for both the individual and society. It is good for the individual since it provides for the development of the highest qualities of man: first and more directly, the development of his rational nature; secondly and less directly, the development of his moral nature. It is good for society in its bearing upon citizenship, since a democratic society, more than any other kind, needs intelligent citizens for its self perpetuation.

In order to carry out these aims, the Council argues that a curriculum consisting of basic education, conceived as comprising the liberal arts and sciences, should be upheld in public education. The argument rests upon two premises: first, basic education liberates the mind from the bonds of ignorance through the acquisition of understanding the cultural heritage; and second, basic education trains the mind to think through confrontation with the logical order and structure of the several disciplines. Thus, to learn the basic disciplines means more than the acquisition of knowledge and understandings; it means to develop intellectual power through thinking and reasoning.

The most general conception of method was found to be that of mental discipline. However, it was argued that in the elementary school more emphasis should be placed upon transmitting facts and symbols foundational to the process of mental discipline proper to be stressed in the secondary school. The teacher assists in the process by concentrating attention upon the thinking, judging, and reasoning implicit in the logical order of the intellectual disciplines. Little attention was given to procedures as such, the assumption seeming to be that the process of mental discipline

could be carried out in the lecture, discussion, or problem method. The educative process, however, is represented consistently as comprising the particular forms of thinking, reasoning, and judging represented in the structure of the curriculum content. Though interest, as a form of motivation, was considered valuable, more attention was given to effort as an inspiring ideal in the educative process. Interest and effort were represented as ideally culminating in self discipline, so that the student may be prepared to shoulder the personal responsibilities of citizenship.

The analyses of educational commitments in chapter one were embedded within the context of criticisms of public education and certain professional groups in public education. In order to clarify the educational commitments, it was necessary to analyze the criticisms. The major criticism is that the public schools have assumed too many responsibilities which are functions of other institutions of society. The Council makes a distinction between indiscriminate learning, which occurs at all times in life, and the specific learning that should occur in the school as an institution of society. The Council holds that unless the school limits its responsibility, it cannot perform any responsibility effectively. In criticizing certain groups in professional education the Council concludes that professional educators have exerted a "bureaucratic" influence on public education and have directed the goals of public education toward vocationalism and Life Adjustment. The Council affirms that the Life Adjustment movement fosters anti-intellectualism and threatens the quality of basic education in the public school. Also, the Council opposes emphasis upon narrowly conceived vocational education, which is said to deprive future citizens of the intellectual training they should receive. While not wanting to abolish certain vocational programs, the

Council holds that the intellectual disciplines should receive priority. The Council objected particularly to what it considered to be too much emphasis on professional education in the preparation of teachers. In an avowed effort to become a focus for those who are discontented with public education and to reorient public school theory and practice, many of the criticisms of the Council were caustic in nature. However, a rather conciliatory attitude toward professional education is suggested by the fact that members of the Council have attended meetings of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards and have participated in discussions aimed at some type of reconciliation.

One member of the founding group, Mortimer Smith, believes that the philosophical basis of contemporary anti-intellectualism is the pragmatism of John Dewey and the reconstructionism of Theodore Brameld. He points out that these philosophies promote the relativity of values and an undue emphasis upon the group to the exclusion of the individual. To him, both of these philosophies are detrimental to basic education, since basic education strives to uphold objective intellectual values as a principle of public education instead of the expediency of adjustment to immediate "real life" experiences. In criticizing harshly some programs represented in public education the Council is insisting that educational opportunities for individual excellence should be broadened in a democratic society. Moreover, the Council holds that this objective is not only more compatible with democracy than "Life Adjustment," but is actually necessary for the perpetuation of a truly democratic society.

Since it was found that Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith provide the intellectual leadership for the Council, the study of philosophical foundations was limited to an analysis of their works. It was shown

that Bestor's basic philosophy is consistent with Aristotelian realism. There are both empirical and rational elements in Bestor's theory of knowledge. Though experience and reason are both sources of knowledge, Bestor exalts the intellect above the senses. He regards thinking and judging as forms of reasoning in which knowledge is discovered. Thinking, he conceives as the application of intellectual powers implicit in the disciplines, which includes inductive, deductive, experimental, and normative types of inquiries. Judging, as a method of reasoning independent of empirical elements, is also stressed. For Bestor, these are the ways man can discover approximate knowledge of an objective truth and gain understanding and wisdom.

Mortimer Smith agrees with Bestor that there is an objective truth apart from man and that knowledge is discovered rather than created. But though he believes that experience and reason are both sources of knowledge, he holds with Plato that intuition is a source of arriving at some moral truths. Thus, he differs from Bestor in affirming that man can gain more than approximate knowledge through intuitive insight. Both agree that the scientific method is not the only way to gain knowledge, but Smith stresses this point more strongly in his objections to pragmatism and positivism.

No definitive statements concerning the nature of reality were discernible. However, it was found that both agree upon the proposition that the universe is characterized by stability, regularity, and certainty rather than by chaos and instability. This metaphysical tenet forms the basis for their belief in absolute values and ultimate truths which transcend the apparent change in the universe. This implies a purposive view and lays the foundation for values.

It was discovered that the highest value is self realization, i.e., the fulfillment of the highest capacity of man. Though Bestor stresses the intellectual powers, Smith stresses the moral and spiritual powers of man. In both, the good life is thought to consist in activities guided by reason and moral reflection and in intellectual and cultural values. Self realization is considered good for society as well as for the individual, since the good society is the society made up of good men. This is a standard of goodness which is teleological in nature, since it refers to the fulfillment of the highest capacity of man as man.

It was found that the essence of man is the characteristics which distinguish him from other forms of life. For Bestor, the essence of man is his rational nature; for Smith it is moral and spiritual as well as rational. This is to say that Bestor embraces the Aristotelian conception of man, whereas Smith is more of a Platonist or perhaps a representative of the traditional Christian conception of man. He seems to hold to a conception of personal immortality. Both Bestor and Smith agree that man has a universal quality, that man is distinctive in kind from other forms of life. Thus, although man shares his sentient and vegetative functions with animals, he is unique in possessing the ability to think and judge and reason.

Since mental discipline was found to be a crucial argument supporting the position of the Council, an analysis of this conception and its relation to formal discipline and faculty psychology was indicated. It was found that Bestor and the Council, unlike the formal disciplinarians and faculty psychologists, do not postulate separate entities or faculties of the mind, such as memory, perception, observation, or acuteness, which may be sharpened by almost any kind of abrasive material. Instead, mental

discipline, to Bestor and the Council, refers to the power of thinking in specific ways which is characteristic of specific disciplines such as language, history, mathematics, and science. While content is considered important, it is the logical order and structure of the disciplines which impels thinking and enables one to form generalizations. Bestor and the Council hold that transfer of learning occurs when one applies these enduring generalizations to new situations. It was shown that there is much experimental evidence which substantiates transfer of learning in this manner. Moreover, it was shown that there is no basis in fact for classifying Aristotle as a faculty psychologist. However, one may infer that Aristotle held the conception of mental discipline in the sense that one disciplines his mind through the process of thinking and judging in the liberal arts. And this is precisely what the founders of the Council uphold as Aristotelians.

Conclusions

In chapter one certain documents critical of the Council for Basic Education were cited in which it was stated (1) that the Council's position is not rooted in a democratic philosophy, but is rooted in a movement that seeks to foster an "elite" concept in public education, (2) that the Council offers a "stale promise of mental training" based upon faculty psychology and "dilapidated theories" of transfer of learning, and (3) that the Council is attempting "to shake the confidence" of the public in its schools. However, the findings of this study indicate (1) that the Council is opposed to mediocrity in education and attempts to reconcile the ideal of universal education with quality, (2) that the theories and practices of the Council do not appear to be based upon faculty

psychology, but upon a conception of mental discipline and transfer of training which is substantiated in the current literature of educational psychology, and (3) that, although the Council resorts to satirical publications and uses caustic terms to criticize public education, it is seeking to promote public confidence in the ideal of qualitative excellence for all students.

The findings of this study indicate further that the educational commitments and philosophical foundations of the Council for Basic Education may be identified. The founders of the Council agree among themselves and with the Council publications that the aim of public education should be intellectual training. This aim is considered to be an intrinsic good for the individual and the best form of preparation for citizenship in a democratic society. The Council uses the term "basic education" to refer to the curriculum which is conceived as comprising the liberal arts and sciences. Basic education is the means whereby the process of mental discipline can be provided. Mental discipline refers to the particular forms of thinking, judging, and reasoning represented in the structure of the curriculum content.

The philosophical foundations of the Council for Basic Education are consistent with Aristotelian realism. Arthur E. Bestor and Mortimer Smith agree that experience and reason are sources of knowledge, yet they exalt the intellect above the senses. Both agree that truth is objective and that knowledge is discovered rather than created; however, Smith also holds with Plato that intuition is the source of some moral truths. Agreement was also expressed upon the proposition that man and the universe are characterized by stability and purpose rather than instability and chaos. The highest value is self realization, the fulfillment of man's

highest capacity. For Bestor man's highest capacity is his rational nature, for Smith it is moral as well as rational. Both agree that man is distinctive in kind from other forms of life and is unique in possessing the ability to reason. Thus, the fundamental idea of what constitutes the good life is derived from the conception of values and the conception of the nature of man. This is essentially an Aristotelian view. Since Aristotle holds that the good of anything is relative to the highest function it can perform and since the rational nature of man is his distinctive function, it follows that man can perfect his nature and reach his highest fulfillment only through his intellectual powers.

If one accepts the judgment of Mortimer Smith that the founders of the Council are "humanists," then a final clarification must be made. It is evident that they are not naturalistic humanists in the pragmatic tradition. Neither do they urge a return to the "glories" of ancient Greece and Rome via the classics in the manner advocated by Renaissance humanists. It may be concluded, however, that the founders are rational humanists.¹ "Rational" in the sense that they accept certain ancient Greek insights into the nature of man and values; "humanists" in the sense that they emphasize the worth of the individual and hold that the good life consists in perfecting the highest capacity latent in man. Man's humanity thus lies in his rationality. Through the freedom of self determination and the realization of the potentialities of human nature, they have faith that the common good of society will become maximized. The good society thus arises through the creativity of man,

¹The term "classical humanists" would also be appropriate, except the word "classical" carries certain connotations concerning the curriculum which would be misleading.

which is dependent upon his intellectual power and freedom, and these values are dependent upon commitments to basic education. Thus, as rational humanists, the founders of the Council for Basic Education believe that life should have a significance that transcends utilitarian concerns, and that education as an institution should seek to improve the quality of human life in both the individual and society.

Recommendations for Further Study

A study of this nature inevitably raises many questions which, though not within the scope of the study, would be worthy of investigation. Since the findings suggest a similarity to the educational philosophy of Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, it is recommended that a study be made to discover the similarities and differences, if any, among the positions of these Aristotelians and that of the Council for Basic Education. Moreover, it is recommended that the position of the Council be compared with the educational commitments of the recent literary humanists, Irving Babbitt and Norman Foerster.

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