

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

IDEOLOGICAL LITERATURE: THE IDEOLOGICAL BIASES OF COMMONLY
TAUGHT WORKS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS VIS-À-VIS THE SCHOOL
SYSTEM

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2016

IDEOLOGICAL LITERATURE: THE IDEOLOGICAL BIASES OF COMMONLY
TAUGHT WORKS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS VIS-À-VIS THE SCHOOL
SYSTEM

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC
CURRICULUM

BY

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Acknowledgments

Most acknowledgment sections seem to dissolve into a torrent of gratitude: “I want to thank my mom, dad, sister, grandparents, Dolly Parton, Jesus, parole officer...” I understand the compulsion to name everyone. No one succeeds entirely alone; we depend upon the assistance and support of others. Consequently, we feel obligated to thank anyone who has played even a marginal role in our success.

I must balance my immense gratitude with my innate inclination toward practicality. This page has space neither for me to thank everyone nor to thank them as effusively as I’d like. I will therefore keep this section brief, straightforward, and devoid of flowery, maudlin sentiment. Dolly Parton and my parole officer will find some way to cope.

I shall forever be indebted to Dr. Crag Hill, whose guidance and patience have shaped this project. He has seen me in my petulant, capricious glory yet still works with me willingly. Time and time again, he has overcome my histrionics with cool logic and insight. Because of his comments and suggestions, this thesis feels far sounder and better formed than it has any right to be. I appreciate his dedication to helping the intellectually less fortunate.

To Dr. Lawrence Baines and Dr. Priscilla Griffith I offer my sincerest thanks for serving on my committee. They could easily have said no – had every right *to* say no – but they said yes. Their service and assistance flatter me greatly.

Lastly, I must thank my family, who share my commitment to brevity and wouldn’t want to clog an entire page. I know they love me. They know I know. They’ll thank the parole officer for me.

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Summary of Literary Works' Ideological Spread

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Abstract

Michael Schiro posits the existence of four “curricular ideologies,” conflicting viewpoints about education’s purpose. This thesis attempts to link those ideologies – scholar academic, social efficiency, learner centered, and social reconstruction – to commonly taught works of literature. It operates on the idea that literature, a human product replete with statements about life, serves as the ideal tool to disseminate certain messages or promulgate particular ideologies. The thesis first examines sources linking literature and curricular materials to social objectives, establishing a rationale for the project. Then, it analyzes fifteen literary works – their plots, characters, themes, figurative language – and connects them to Schiro’s ideological categories. These ideological slants are used to draw inferences about the school system’s goals. What does the ideological spread say about school’s purpose and objectives? Finally, the thesis ends with a call for teachers to become more cognizant of literature’s biases – to become aware and purposeful about the messages they convey to students.

Chapter 1: Introduction

No phrase has more deeply penetrated American popular discourse than “Think of the children!” According to histrionic parents and self-appointed moral watchdogs, modern culture teems with debauchery, sin, abject filth – all intended to lure young minds into hedonistic irresponsibility. These parents-cum-crusaders employ sensationalistic reasoning: frank depictions of sex might glamorize such wanton pursuits as teen pregnancy; certain programs might encourage what the unenlightened dub “alternate lifestyles”; intellectually stimulating content might erode such enduring values as hard work, provincialism, and unabashed ignorance. Within every book, television show, or movie lurks an ulterior motive or nugget of sinful propaganda. No form of popular media can function as entertainment for entertainment’s sake. Rather, it must – simply *must*, given this country’s pervasive immorality – have a message it wishes to propagate. Ergo, children’s minds, heretofore unpolluted, must be guarded like Scheherazade in the sultan’s palace.

Amid this hysteria, however, lies a kernel of truth – namely, the ability of popular media to influence public opinion and behavior. For example, Steuter and Wills (2009, p. 8) observed that the phrase “War on Drugs,” coined in the 1980s, had “reduce[d] an imposingly large ... problem to a well-defined, simplified, ultimately manageable entity.” The phrase “drug problem” might have seemed nebulous and unsolvable, but the word “war” connoted a finite, winnable scenario in which a problem would eventually yield to force. It gave the public hope that an issue might be decisively conquered rather than tentatively approached. Similarly, Kellner (2004) noted that American coverage of the Iraq War “tended to present a sanitized version of the war” defined by “promilitary

patriotism” (p. 334). American media outlets purposely avoided disturbing images (e.g., torture, funerals) to ensure the public’s continued support for the war effort. These examples convey the bias and the propagandist potential of media. Everything has a message – sometimes benign, sometimes malignant; sometimes uplifting, sometimes discouraging – and if that message appears often enough or arrives via a trusted source, the public might eventually come to believe it. “Conventional wisdom” becomes little more than the messages that have been most frequently repeated, the habits and beliefs that have been subliminally “taught” over time.

Like television broadcasts and news reporting, literature often proves a potent tool for shaping individuals’ knowledge and opinions. In many senses, literature acts as a reflection of the world. Literary works offer unique perspectives on reality and frequently hint at the broader social and emotional contexts that led to their production. T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland* (1922), for instance, might allude to the “archduke” whose assassination precipitated World War I (l. 13), while Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1982) portrays the misogyny and inequality experienced by black women. Such works function not only as self-contained stories but also as reflections of society, and they demonstrate how literature obtains its content from the wider world and its people. To use a trite metaphor, literature can be a looking glass into myriad places and times. It informs an audience who may be decades removed from certain events, and it assists its readers in empathizing with individuals from different backgrounds. In many ways, it serves a wholesome, educative purpose by dispensing information and broadening perspectives.

However, literature can also be used to disseminate propaganda or to sanction certain beliefs and behaviors. The Bible’s book of Leviticus, for instance, contains a

litany of proscriptions and guidelines, while the Koran dictates daily life in numerous Islamic societies. These holy books provide direct instruction and they offer material that leaders can use to set social expectations. The tomes' veracity matters little; their potential as propaganda tools and instruments of control matters greatly. Their enduring influence shows that literature can have lasting effects on social practices. Manifold nations have fallen and risen, but certain literary works have survived, shaping societal landscapes and provoking conflicts between ideologically opposed groups. Their messages have been propagated so effectively as to become either inviolable law or abiding mores. Individuals may read these works and worship in private, but governments and religious institutions (virtually identical, in the case of theocracies) use them as tools to impose restrictions and control the populace.

Though they may lack the widespread influence of religious texts, many secular works also establish and/or perpetuate ideas about "proper" conduct. Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), for example, follows Alex, a juvenile delinquent forced to endure painful rehabilitation. The novel tacitly informs readers that socially maladjusted behavior carries consequences, and it touts a virtuous life – one in which a person has "groweth up" and behaves appropriately – as the means to avoid punishment (p. 141). Likewise, Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1998) uses Blanche DuBois to convey the misery wrought by immoral behavior. Single, vain, and promiscuous, she descends into insanity, financial ruin, and alcoholism. The play thus subtly reveals society's rigid expectations, its inherent sexism, and its contempt for women who deviate from a narrow script. Though dissimilar, both works clearly present messages about society and individuals' places in it.

Such commentary pervades literary works. A preceding paragraph claimed that literature draws from and depicts the larger world, and this statement holds true. However, a literary work also advances a point of view; it delivers, or even whispers, opinions about individuals, society, social movements, political ideologies, etc. Humans form opinions on every imaginable topic. Logic thus dictates that literature, a product by and for humans, should always have a viewpoint, no matter how loudly or quietly communicated. Consequently, every piece of literature has an implicit message, perhaps a vision of how society *should* be, perhaps a warning about future perils, perhaps some commentary on relationships. From this perspective, literature certainly draws from the world, but it also attempts to exert pressure upon the world and upon readers. Scholars encourage literary critics to ignore authors' intentions, which are often "neither available nor desirable in judging the success of a work" (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946, p. 468), but the intentions of the final product prove tremendously relevant. A literary work communicates its own viewpoints independent of its author, even though the two may have identical views. Between its lines, within its structures and characters, lie its messages, criticisms, and exhortations about life – all of which ultimately reach the reader. To make a finer point, each work acts as its own instruction manual, stressing specific beliefs and viewpoints.

This ability to influence personal beliefs raises several questions vis-à-vis the school system and the literature students encounter. In their daily lives, students select what they read, and teachers may even afford them this privilege at certain times. More frequently, though, students read works deemed acceptable for the curriculum and assigned by teachers. This lack of choice renders students especially susceptible to

whatever messages the books promote. Suppose, hypothetically, that a curriculum contains books similar to *A Clockwork Orange* – books in which errant teenage protagonists conform or face painful consequences. Such books would inculcate not curiosity and exploration but fear and obedience; they would serve as cautionary tales intended to “keep students in line.” The literature itself would act as a conduit for this particular message. Though extreme in its supposition, this example underscores the relationship between literature and curriculum, and it offers a scenario in which literature could be used to promote a social agenda.

Granted, *A Clockwork Orange* may not be typical classroom fodder, rendering the example merely hypothetical, but what about those works that seem to be mainstays of the curriculum, classroom, and students’ educational lives? What messages do these commonly taught works send to students? Are books with certain kinds of ideologies and messages (e.g., children should behave or act in a certain manner) more prevalent than others? What do the books’ ideologies say about the ideology and goals of the school system? In English classes, educational materials often serve a utilitarian purpose by teaching students *how* to perform or assisting in performing some task: students should be able to analyze an example text to learn figurative language; students should be able to cite textual evidence in composing an essay, etc. The above questions, meanwhile, hinge upon the possibility that some texts continue to be chosen for an ulterior reason. Perhaps commonly taught texts persist not solely because of literary merit but also because of their emphasis on accepted cultural norms. Perhaps these texts dispense subliminal directives regarding life, morality, personal conduct – values that educational

authorities wish to instill in students. Perhaps education, like the books it requires students to read, has its own subtext.

This thesis attempts to address those questions. It begins with a literature review exploring the link between the school system and social indoctrination. Specifically, this literature review cites and examines critical articles that detail the school system's history of using educational materials to instill particular thoughts and behaviors. These articles also address the sociological and political factors that influence education and educational propaganda. Though the articles focus on various times and cultures, they work to show how propaganda transcends geographic and temporal barriers. Furthermore, several articles pay especial attention to cases involving English classes and literature, and they create a foundation for the remainder of the thesis, which will analyze the ideologies of commonly taught texts.

Those analyses draw upon Schiro's (2007) four educational ideologies: scholar academic, social efficiency, learner-centered, and social reconstruction. Each of these ideologies identifies a broad "objective," an idea of what education should accomplish or prioritize. This thesis contends that educational ideology influences choice of educational materials. More specifically, it argues that commonly taught works correspond to – or "map onto" – the four ideologies, and repeatedly teaching these texts represents an attempt to instill certain ideas and values in students. The texts themselves may have diverse plots or characters, but their general themes typically reflect and can be interpreted to promote one of the ideologies. Over time, using such texts perpetuates particular values and ideas and ensures that future generations receive the same "messages." In other words, educational authorities use specific works of literature to

impress their ideologies upon students. Exposing the connection between literature and ideology, text and propaganda, reveals broader truths about the school system.

In short, this thesis' purpose calls to mind the title, if not the content, of Emily Dickinson's poem "Tell the truth but tell it slant." Humanity and objective truth at times seem incompatible; in fact, the latter seems almost a fantasy rather than a reality. We filter every event through our prism of consciousness, distorting and reshaping to fit our views, restructuring people and places and words to match our experiences and opinions. A family quarrel can end with all parties' being confident in their respective versions of events; a political debate can conclude with all participants' being convinced of each other's ignorance. Human interaction can thus be reduced to a simple formula or blueprint: motivated by ego, we assert and attempt to promulgate our own views. Only by persuading others – by seeing our views and opinions reflected in and expressed by others – can we be certain of ourselves and our minds. Every human product, from movies to books to art, represents a distillation of that maxim. These media act as the vehicles through which information and propaganda travel, and their broad appeal and large audiences make them invaluable tools in socialization and conditioning. This thesis merely attempts to relate this theoretical concept to the school system – to show how materials can be used to promote knowledge *and* an institution or curriculum's social agenda.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Section 1: Hidden Messages and Agendas of the School System

Jane Roland Martin (1992) chronicled Maria Montessori's schools in the slums of Rome. Montessori's schools sought to emulate the domestic environment. In these schools children and teachers created the atmosphere of the home, engaging in such activities as housework, cooking, and crafts (loc. 120). This school recognized that children may not always have stable home lives, and it attempted to provide the warmth and nurturing that would produce sensitive citizens. The school's curriculum hinged on individualization, with children "pursu[ing] different activities ... at [their] own [respective] pace[s]," receiving assistance only if needed or requested (loc. 181). According to Montessori, this educational structure created a family dynamic in which students felt kinship and community. Montessori's schools emphasized a human curriculum of sorts, and they viewed education as a means to instill compassion and devotion to humanity.

This vision represents an ideal model, a school focused completely on students' needs. Students cannot be standardized. Although they belong to larger groups, they still have thoroughly individual beliefs, learning styles, and interests. Schools present a vivid mosaic of American life, a veritable web of cultures whose intricate knots symbolize the complex interconnection among its members. No two students arrive with the same knowledge or perspectives. Rather, they bring unique (outlooks colored by their upbringings; they have personalities and dispositions that shape their learning and interpretations. The ideal school recognizes students' differences *and* their need for

community. It allows them to display individual talents and opinions but uses individuality to foster collective respect.

Modern American schools seem not to have embraced this model. Where Montessori advocated individualization, modern schools “[organize themselves] around testing” and “mandate annual high-stakes tests for every local schoolhouse.” Where she acknowledged the importance of home and domesticity, they seem concerned with “formal literacy activities ... to improve test scores” (Meier, 2002, p. 1). To say that these modern schools serve students would be to engage in disingenuousness. Students certainly attend school and benefit from its lessons, but this benefit comes only if they conform to the school system – if they attempt to squeeze themselves into a standardized mold – not vice versa. The system claims to help students yet disregards almost completely the conception of school as a home.

How, then, can school, an environment ostensibly designed for students, be so preoccupied with standardization? If not to meet students’ individual needs, what purpose does school serve? The following literature review offers numerous answers, all of which share a common theme: namely, they present school as an institution of social conditioning. Such conditioning assumes many forms – economic, cultural, political – but ultimately reflects the reality of public schooling. Schools exist not merely to educate students. Rather, they act as agents of a government concerned with maintaining social order and harmony. Explicit education, facts and figures and writing skills, constitute one component of this goal. But school equally as often involves implicit education, subtle messages transmitted to students regarding society and their place in it. The following subsections address these unstated motives and hidden functions – hidden

functions that can influence the curriculum and, more specifically, selection of curricular materials.

The Economic Divider

While Montessori's schools strove to give impoverished youth feelings of home and love, American schools have always sought to maintain class divisions and "track" students onto specific paths that maintain economic segregation. Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb (1944) characterize the education system as a "sorting agency" that "sift[s] out the people with the best brains" and "help[s] them rise to the top" (p. 50). This exercise involves "serv[ing] the children of different classes in different ways" and "training [a minority of students] for social mobility" (p. 57). These quotations portray schools less as edifying institutions and more as stratifying ones, and they suggest that schools tailor the quality of education to a student's socioeconomic status. Affluent and middle-class students receive an education that will enable them to ascend social ranks, while less privileged children "[learn] a way of life which ... help[s] adjust them to the rank in which they were born" (p. 61). This education seems focused on creating citizens who "know their place," who accept the futures deemed appropriate for them.

Anyon's (1980) seminal "hidden curriculum" article, which reinforces the assertions about education's connection with socioeconomic status, echoes Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb's (1944) findings. Anyon visited several schools, each of which catered to a specific socioeconomic group. Working-class schools, for example, emphasized "docility and obedience," and they frequently engaged students in tasks requiring "rote behavior and very little decision making or choice" (p. 67, 73). Upper-class schools, by contrast, permitted students to use "individual thought and

expressiveness, expansion and illustration of ideas” (p. 79). Unlike their working-class peers, these students received abundant autonomy; they had “relatively few rules” regarding their work and its products (p. 80). Again, the children’s backgrounds largely determined their educational treatment, as they learned skills befitting their respective “stations” in life.. The educational system approached them with prejudices fueled by socioeconomic bias. It provided instruction to ensure that they remained within their class’s boundaries.

Contemporary research shows that socioeconomic categorization still plagues schools. Collins (2012), for instance, noted that “migrant status” affects school performance and “tends to reproduce” social hierarchy (p. 198). Children of immigrants, unversed in their new country’s language and perceived as “racial others,” struggle to acclimate to the school system. Consequently, their lives often follow the same “lower-status working-class” path as their parents’ (p. 199). Though it focuses more specifically on the intersections of class, race, and education, Collins’ writing affirms the broad conclusions drawn in Warner et al. (1944) and Anyon’s (1980) – namely, that schools seek to perpetuate class divisions and stratifications. Certain statuses (e.g., whiteness, affluence) ensure greater opportunity, while other statuses (e.g., being poor or a member of a minority) limit students’ economic futures. The span of this research suggests that, despite societal shifts, the school’s purpose has remained constant.

Why do schools perpetuate these social divisions? What purpose does this practice serve? Apple (2006) links socioeconomic categorization to economic policy, writing, “[N]eoliberalism transforms our very idea of democracy, making it only an economic concept, not a political one” (p. 15). This neoliberal system, championed by

“marketizers and privatizers,” prioritizes profit above all else, and to achieve this end it relies upon a “division of labor,” or certain roles for certain workers (p. 16). The term “marketization of social life” implies that society – and presumably its institutions, such as schools – exists to serve this demand for stratified labor, this insatiable lust for profit (p. 17). These conclusions gel nicely with Apple and King’s (1977) earlier claim that schools preserve a “complex and stratified social and economic order” (p. 341). By emphasizing “behavioral consensus,” or obedience, and “institutional rather than personal goals,” schools prepare certain students to be toilers for the market (p. 341). Together, Apple (2006) and Apple and King (1977) suggest that schools take directives from an impersonal economic policy that has come to dominate political discourse and influence pupil education.

Other sources suggest that schools’ curricula directly mimic economic and market trends. Anyon (2006, p. 37), in an update to her “hidden curriculum” article, delivers the following assessment:

...[W]e [must] rethink the hypothesis that schooling produces social class position. In an era when economic growth no longer increases middle-income opportunities, but rather creates a plethora of low- and a relative few high-income jobs, an unequal distribution of knowledge and work dispositions in schools could be said not merely to reproduce social inequality, but to exacerbate it by supporting a bifurcation of incomes and class structure.

This quotation posits a causal connection between the economy and curricular structure.

Anyon’s original article (1980) arrived at a time of relative middle-class prosperity and affluence (Mishel, Gould, & Bivens, 2015). She argues that the 1980 school system reflected these characteristics: though the hidden curriculum tracked students onto different paths, each path promised a decent living. Subsequent decades have seen numerous financial crises, culminating in the Great Recession (2007-2009) in the United

States, a global financial downturn that dramatically increased unemployment (Grusky, Western, & Wimer, 2011, p. 3). As Anyon notes, the ensuing recovery has produced only very low- and high-wage jobs, yielding a polarized economy. Moreover, companies have increased “education credentialing,” requiring college degrees for jobs that previously required only high-school diplomas (p. 43). In response, schools now operate on the principle of “All kids college-ready,” affirming the necessity of higher education in the modern economy (Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2006, p. 186). Together, these sources show that schools alter their messages to suit the economic climate.

The Acculturation Center

Other researchers argue that schools have cultural, not only economic, motives. Specifically, schools endeavor to maintain a cultural illusion, a false image of a unified country. According to Galloway and Edwards (2013, p. 26), many schools adopt an “assimilationist” philosophy, initiating children into the “cultural traditions and history” of the country – or, in other words, the beliefs and viewpoints of the dominant culture. This mindset leads schools to be wary of multicultural education, which they fear will “weaken the thread of national identity, unity, and loyalty” (Feinberg, 2000, p. 2). . If schools exist to perpetuate existing social structure, this emphasis on cultural unity, real or imagined, seems understandable. In theory, unity begets harmony. If people subscribe to the same cultural beliefs, what reason will they have to quarrel? Schools, tasked with preparing the next generation of workers, would seem to have a vested interest in preaching cultural unity, as unity would promote cooperation and smooth economic functioning. To achieve this goal, cultural unity need not be real. Students only need to believe in its existence. Schools, with their access to the young, can create and maintain

this cultural illusion; they can promote or assimilate students into whatever cultural image deemed appropriate by society's leaders. The veracity of that image matters comparatively little, but schools' ability to shape and inculcate cultural beliefs matters comparatively much.

Kumara (2005) approaches culture from a different perspective, showing how schools can serve as instruments of cultural oppression. Her writing largely focuses on the British Raj, during which time the British sought to create "colonial citizens" (p. 25). The British perceived their colonial subjects as uncivilized masses and set about "[piercing] India's ignorance with the light of western science" (p. 36). Education stemmed not from a sincere desire to help the Indians but from a desire to create citizens loyal to and shaped by the empire (p. 36). Kumara thus addresses the social power of education on a wider scale by showing how education can be an invader's most effective tool. Schooling imparts not only knowledge but also cultural customs and practices; it teaches individuals how to live and even what to believe. The British used the school system to inculcate certain beliefs (e.g., Christianity), hoping that their practices and philosophies would supplant the Indians' indigenous social order (p. 38). Such lessons often prove successful over time, as successive generations internalize the oppressor's lessons and forget their forebears' culture. This colonial example demonstrates education's history of cultural oppression and indoctrination.

The (A)political Machine

Still other researchers view school as a vehicle to stress political agendas or beliefs. Spring (2010) characterizes schools as political battlegrounds over which political parties fight for dominance and influence over students. Democrats' educational

agendas make “passing mentions” of citizenship and similar values, but in general they focus on instilling economic readiness (p. 7). Republicans, conversely, see schools as the primary sites of “culture wars” (p. 92). They believe that schools should teach “patriotism, a positive view of American history, a traditional religious-based morality, and a unified American culture” (p. 89), and they criticize “multiculturalism,” bilingual education and “the undermining of traditional American values” (p. 93). These differing agendas provide political fodder during elections. Students’ needs and preferences become secondary or even tertiary concerns, as politicians use schools, teachers, and students as pawns to earn votes and persuade donors. This politicization of education reinforces schools’ ability to send hidden messages – in this case, ones that satisfy leaders’ vision of society.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004), meanwhile, say that schools preserve the status quo by keeping students politically ignorant. The researchers note a “precipitous decline in voting rates, with the biggest declines among young people” (p. 241), and they propose inadequate education as one explanation of this problem. Specifically, they note that schools seldom teach “social movements, social transformation, and systemic change,” instead opting for “volunteerism and charity” (p. 243). The researchers’ implications seem clear. A political education might motivate students to scrutinize society and to “[analyze] ... the causes of social problems” (p. 243). Ergo, schools attempt to render students apolitical, to remove the means for change even if they cannot remove the desire. They maintain the social order by limiting discussion about the social order, especially its political ramifications. Politics hinges on participation. If sufficient citizens and their representatives vote for a transformative measure, it will pass. By eschewing political

education, schools and society make students less likely to mount iconoclastic movements. Schools thus use politics – or, rather, the deliberate absence of it – to stifle future opposition.

Section 2: The Use of Curriculum and Curricular Materials as Propaganda

If schools and society have messages to transmit and students serve as the recipients of these messages, curriculum functions as a bridge between the two parties. Lessons and curricular materials present and translate information, helping students grasp content and acquire new skills. The curriculum under which lessons and materials operate acts as a framework of sorts: it dictates *what* students learn or read, *when* they learn or read it, *how* they display understanding, and *how* they approach the material. As Schiro (2007) notes, curriculum proves indispensable in transmitting information *and* ideology to students. His four ideological categories – scholar academic, social efficiency, learner-centered, and social reconstruction – suggest four ways that educators might tailor curriculum to propagate certain messages. A social reconstructionist approach might try to stimulate students' awareness of social issues, teaching the importance of activism. A learner-centered approach might acknowledge students' interests, affording them autonomy and acknowledging the individuality of education. Like any human endeavor, curriculum has biases, and these biases influence all facets of the classroom, from the teacher's attitude to the framing of lessons and instruction. Furthermore, its content and scope determine what messages students receive, the vision of society shown to them.

Curriculum determines the messages to be taught, but curricular materials actually convey the information. Any tradesperson chooses tools appropriate to the job: a

screwdriver to remove a screw, a wrench to repair a sink, oil to grease a squeaky wheel. The same principle applies to education, curriculum, and ideology. As Chen (2005) notes, "...[T]hrough explicit [i.e., materials actually used and taught] and implicit curriculum, schools participate in shaping students' cultural identity" (p.12). If educational leaders and teachers want to communicate certain messages, they will likely select materials that contain those messages. This maxim reflects the sociological nature of education. A public institution, school aims to preserve the dominant culture and make students contributors to it. Educational materials prove invaluable in society's attempts to impose its ideologies upon students.

How, then, does this grandiose statement apply to the everyday classroom, to the quotidian affairs of reading assignments and lesson planning? The answer lies in the providers of education: teachers and administrators employ certain materials to create the kind of students they wish to see. Suppose that a teacher wants to highlight racial injustice and elicit students' empathy. Which work is that teacher likelier to choose – *A Raisin in the Sun* or *Romeo and Juliet*? Suppose that a teacher wishes to foster independent thought and critical, student-centered thinking. Which assessment is that teacher likelier to use – a staid multiple-choice exam or a multifaceted, creative project? The answers to both questions appear self-evident. This section thus aims to (1) show how curricular materials have been used to mold, control, and proselytize to students; and (2) examine how educational materials have been chosen especially for their ability to influence students.

Here I should note that purposeful selection of educational materials is not always synonymous with "propaganda" or "indoctrination." Those words carry negative connotations; they suggest that educators use materials to "brainwash" students. In many

cases, teachers choose educational materials to instill positive habits and practices rather than ideologies and beliefs. Many science educators, for example, strive to create materials that prompt “[investigation into] the everyday world and ... deep understanding” (Singer, Marx, Krajcik, & Chambers, 2000, p. 165). This example depicts not propaganda but carefully planned education designed to expand students’ analytical faculties.

Even the most well-intentioned education, however, involves some subliminal messaging and goals. No facet of education occurs in a vacuum. Educational leaders, motivated by ideology, tailor the school system to yield certain results. In this quest they choose materials likely to effect the desired outcomes. Singer et al. (2000) provide an admirable example of this concept – teachers creating materials meant to sharpen students’ abilities – but they establish the basic connection between materials and unstated goals. However, they also show that ideology, the promotion of a certain belief, need not be the driving factor in instruction. Terms such as “critical thinking” and “analytical capabilities” imply no ideological leanings, no particular worldview; they merely represent strategies to *analyze* the world in greater depth. A teacher who stresses these concepts will not necessarily be an ideologue, but every teacher underlays his or her curriculum with a set of unstated goals, unspoken principles that reflect their efforts to guide and help students.

Unlike Singer et al. (2001), however, many educational leaders infuse education with subliminal ideological or behavioral directives, attempting to guide students toward some behavioral or intellectual ideal. Many educators subscribe to the “character education” movement. Poveda (2004), for instance, suggested ways that kindergarten

teachers might use literature as a socialization tool. He cites an example in which students, who have never seen a particular play, respond to the actors' prompts from the stage, and he speculates that literature has been used to teach students the proper procedure (p. 233). His example identifies a link between curriculum and acceptable social behavior. Leming (2000), O'Sullivan (2004), and Freeman (2014) also focus on character education, using curriculum variously to combat bullying, to instill desirable character traits, and to prepare students for responsible adulthood. Certainly these objectives represent noble goals, but they also prove that even well-intentioned education requires manipulation. It involves a system trying to shape students to society's liking. In this case, the manipulation strives to produce positive results and behaviors.

History abounds with examples of educational materials' being used to inculcate negative or discriminatory beliefs. Dyhouse's (1978) work, for example, examines the sexist curriculum that dominated England's schools in the nineteenth century. In the Victorian era, societies and educators alike "claimed that lessons in domestic economy and needlework constituted the most vital part of a girl's education" (p. 300). They assumed that working-class girls, inclined to be more "wasteful than the wealthier," particularly needed lessons in domestic efficiency (p. 300). These girls received schooling not tailored to their needs but to the prejudices of society; their fates, their consignment to the home, had been decided before they crossed the classroom threshold. More recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2012) observed, "Many studies show that girls and boys are treated differently in class and that the activities set for pupils ... contribute to such differentiation [in math and science performance]" (p. 40). Girls receive a qualitatively different education that

undermines their competence vis-à-vis mathematics. Consequently, they underperform their male peers. Like the Victorian girls in Dyhouse's work, these modern girls receive implicit, discouraging messages from curricula – messages that seek to limit their capabilities in certain areas. These examples demonstrate how education often seeks to circumscribe rather than edify students.

Occasionally, though, curriculum has been used to criticize history and to illuminate the lives of oppressed groups. Brown (1993), for example, shows how modern curricula have recast eighteenth-century literature and its depiction of oppressed groups. She centers her analysis on Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, a novella about a wealthy woman and her Caribbean slave. The text, long an "important account" of slavery, has in recent years been used to teach the "necessary connections of race and gender, a model for the mutual interaction of the positions of the oppressed" (p. 27). In other words, past curricula included the text only for its feminist value and strong female narrator. More recent curricula, meanwhile, emphasize the text's intersection between race and gender, its portrayal of how oppression affects different groups. According to Brown, this pedagogical shift reflects literary critics' (and presumably society's) increased awareness of slavery and its implications. Again, Brown's example shows a curricular material's being deliberately chosen to send certain messages, to stress an ideology of respect and recognition, but she demonstrates that these messages need not always be harmful or negative, that ideology can be intended for positive purposes.

Section 3: English Literature as a Means to Propagate Ideological Biases

Any curricular material or lesson could promote certain messages, but literature seems especially potent in this regard. Just as CDs may be pre-loaded with music,

literature can be pre-loaded with ideology and tacit exhortations. Many works reflect and comment upon some facet of the world. Often, their plots and themes correspond nicely to educational leaders' goals, reiterating and reinforcing the directives of the hidden curriculum. The leaders, cognizant of these messages, choose these works to accomplish specific educational agendas. Though not written expressly for educational purposes, the works become teaching and indoctrination tools. This section thus chronicles the history of English literature's status as educational ideologues' most valuable tool.

Indeed, research indicates that certain works continue to be taught due to their ability to perpetuate ingrained cultural messages. Martin (1992), for example, links several "classics" and their enduring presence to society's disdain for domesticity and femininity. She writes, "Rip, Huck, Hawkeye, and Ishmael all manage to shed relationships as easily as they slip out of their clothes" (loc. 2053). The aforementioned protagonists embark upon individual journeys, shunning the home – a world thought to be the domain of women – and seeking masculine solitude and fulfillment. According to Martin, this common plot structure reflects "a celebration of the individual [that is] bound up in our cultural heritage with an antipathy toward home" (loc. 2041). These works' status in the literary canon suggests a certain degree of cultural approval. Men, who largely control curriculum, wish to maintain the image of "home as that which a boy or man must leave behind" (loc. 1698). The works to which Martin alludes – *Huckleberry Finn*, *Moby Dick*, etc. – thus serve to transmit and preserve that cultural ideal, perhaps explaining their continuing influence on curriculum.

Jehlen (1986) echoes these assertions by focusing on the canon's enshrinement of American political and sociological values. Contrasting European and American works,

Jehlen claims, “[T]he former takes the internal organization of society as its ‘problem’ and the latter, accepting the *status quo* as simply natural, focuses instead on the difficulties of individual conformity” (p. 134). America accepts the basic social structure. A country founded by and in revolution, it believes it “need never revolve again,” and it sees its societal developments as “the unfolding realization of its inherent form and meaning” (p. 127, 128). In other words, Americans perceive their circumstances as the inexorable consequences of their country’s political origins and philosophies. Any alterations or deviations would have yielded another country entirely. Ergo, the social order gains acceptance as an integral feature of American life, a vital component of national identity.

Literature thus becomes a tool to reconcile the individual with the prevailing social structure and helps to promulgate the notion that “[despite] the lure of total freedom ... [a person’s] mortal state requires that he [or she] still be social, even sociable” (p. 137). Like Martin, Jehlen names such works as *Moby Dick*, but unlike Martin, she views these works not from a feminist perspective but a sociological one: these protagonists flee society but eventually learn “the dangers of isolation and solipsism” (p. 125); they see that they must rejoin their fellows in respectable, interconnected life. To be blunter, many novels depict “individualist[s] who [bow] to necessity” (p. 130). These works thus stress a certain lifestyle, a certain moral relation to society. Individuals may temporarily deviate or venture away from social expectations and obligations. However, they invariably assume the mantle – or, indeed, the *yoke* – of prescribed behavior. Suddenly, these novels and characters transcend the world of fiction. They convey the implicit directives of a society focused on achieving harmony, a society that expects people to conform and

uphold social order, a society that ultimately expects individuality to be discarded. Their pages simultaneously contain and can be used to inculcate society's values.

The preceding two sources reaffirm the notion that literature frequently – and perhaps unavoidably – has ideological biases. No work of literature emerges from a vacuum. It reflects its author's perspective, or perhaps the perspective its author has chosen to adopt, and it derives its plot, its characters, its themes from the society that surrounds it. The product of human hands, it reflects human thoughts, human foibles, and human tendencies – in this case, the tendency to broadcast and champion particular beliefs.

How, then, does this principle relate to curriculum, education, and society as a whole? Books can certainly impress their ideologies upon readers, but that statement sounds overly vague. Thankfully, many sources detail this process on local and global, grand and minute, scales, and they show how educational leaders can use literature to accomplish a variety of social purposes – some positive, some negative.

Slotkin (1986), for instance, examines curriculum on a grand scale, identifying literature's ability to aid in mythmaking, the process of "assign[ing] ideological meanings to ... history" (p. 70). He characterizes the "myths" of a society – its collection of conventional wisdom, its body of supposedly irrefutable traditions – as ideology writ large. An ideology or belief system represents society's views at a particular time, but that ideology will ascend to the level of myth if it enjoys continued legitimacy. Literature provides the vehicle through which ideology attains and maintains such legitimacy. Slotkin writes, "The function of imaginative fiction ... is to ... play out more fully than life usually permits the consequences of the value system on which our mythic fantasies

are based” (p. 75). In other words, literature creates a fictional arena in which a given ideology can go unchallenged. If sufficient literary works stress a particular ideology – if they “prove” the ideology repeatedly – the ideology will become mythology. Its premises and tenets will morph into conventional wisdom. Literature thus has the power to “reify” ideologies so thoroughly as to make them cultural practices or “palpable aspects of material reality” (p. 73). This process presents literature as a tool of cultural construction; it concerns a social curriculum, not merely an educational one.

This source indicates literature’s ability to establish traditions and uphold certain ideologies. However, Arac (1986) claims that literature can challenge and even overturn certain values. Focusing his analysis on *The Scarlet Letter*, he writes, “[The novel] does, however, consider an alternative status for the letter, for its embroidery manifest Hester’s will and not only that of the public” (p. 260). This quotation indicates a reappraisal or reevaluation of a classic novel. The scarlet “A,” commonly a symbol of opprobrium, can instead represent Hester’s bravery and honesty. She becomes not a wanton transgressor but a woman willing to endure society’s judgment with integrity and grace; once condemned, she comes to symbolize strength and dignity rather than sin and shame. Such reappraisals can arise because of the “indeterminacy” with which Hawthorne imbues the novel, because of the novel’s “[openness] in its refusal to make ... absolute claims for Hester’s transcendence of the contradiction between passion and principle” (p. 262-3). In other words, Hawthorne structures the novel to be ideologically ambiguous rather than categorically condemnatory of Hester. This ambiguity represents an ideological position in itself and tacitly urges readers to question the character’s treatment and society’s mores. In other words, literary works, like individuals, can have and communicate a

variety of ideologies and beliefs, which in turn can shape readers' perceptions and opinions.

Section 4: Conclusion

These sources and their findings justify the purposes of this thesis. Schools operate not as educational institutions but as socializing ones, and their curricula and materials work to foster certain ideologies and behaviors in students. Numerous authors have speculated as to the nature of this ideological education: is it meant to teach cultural lessons? Economic ones? Literature, a human product replete with ideological leanings, provides a means to answer these questions. Certain works persist in the English curriculum. Ergo, their messages, their implicit ideological directives, also persist. Determining these messages – uncovering the ideologies within and/or surrounding each work – can reveal much about the intentions of the school system. Using this review as a guide, the remainder of the thesis will analyze and discuss the ideologies that permeate the English curriculum and in turn expose the deep connection between literature and culture.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Selection and List of Literary Works

The sample includes the fifteen most commonly taught literary works in high-school classrooms. This thesis aims to link literary themes and curricular ideology, and it strives to show how educational ideologues might use literature to promote their views. These ideologues could conceivably select any book to further their cause, as any number of titles could be used to represent a particular ideology. However, certain works have persisted in classrooms. Decades after their original publication, they continue to be taught and studied; they have ascended to the pantheon of literature known as “the classics.” Generations of students have examined these works’ themes, grappled with their prose, and become familiar with their characters. In many instances, these titles have transcended the literary world to become pop-culture staples. Hamlet’s famous “To be or not to be” soliloquy, for example, has reappeared in various songs and movies, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*’s Atticus Finch has become a paragon of rectitude. These works and their characters live almost permanently in public consciousness, shaping innumerable readers’ views on life and people.

Therein lies the relevance to this thesis: these commonly taught works hold the greatest potential to shape readers’ views. Any message grows stronger with repeated exposure; it insinuates itself in the receiver’s mind and subtly exercises its influence. A television viewer, for example, might initially resist an advertisement’s insistence that he should purchase life insurance. However, if he sees the commercial repeatedly, he might come to believe it. The same principle applies to these literary works. Many of these works have become integral components of public English education. After all, who can

imagine a ninth-grade experience devoid of *Romeo and Juliet*? Consequently, they have had ample opportunity to influence – or to be used *to* influence – countless readers. These works’ ubiquity makes them ideal vehicles for reaching students and disseminating messages, as most students will encounter all or at least several of these titles. Selecting and analyzing these particular works thus reveals what messages have been transmitted to students, and their individual and collective ideological slants offer insight into the objectives of the school system.

Surprisingly, or perhaps unsurprisingly, these commonly taught works have remained fairly static over time. Applebee (1989) compiled lists of the most commonly taught works in public, Catholic, and independent high schools. His public-school list – the one most relevant to this thesis – listed such authors as William Shakespeare, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mark Twain, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Notably, Applebee’s list featured one female author, Harper Lee, and no authors of racial or ethnic minorities. Applebee (1992, p.28) later stated that despite “changes in emphasis on specific titles,” the list of commonly taught works had remained virtually unchanged since at least the 1960s. Stallworth, Gibbons, and Fauber (2006) confirmed these assertions when they compiled similar lists for the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years. Their lists, which drew from interviews with teachers, contained largely the same titles, though some “multicultural” titles such as *A Raisin in the Sun* had begun to appear. Together, these lists suggest an ossified literary curriculum whose upper echelons only occasionally admit new members.

The constancy among these lists represents what Skerrett (2008) might call the “predominantly Eurocentric official curriculum” (p. 1815) and what Kollin and Hancock (2005) might describe as “manifestations of a sexist, racist, or repressive culture” (p. 22).

The literary canon and curriculum reflect the overwhelming masculinity and whiteness of their designers. Because certain groups hold disproportionate power in society, their literature naturally enjoys elevated status and enduring privilege. As Stallworth and company (2006) observe, more diverse titles – ones written by or depicting the lives of minorities – may infiltrate the curriculum, but these additions frequently elicit criticism. Sandra Stotsky (2002), for example, has claimed that multicultural curricula impede students’ learning by diminishing academic and linguistic rigor. Even Applebee (1992) acknowledges many teachers’ reservations regarding diverse literary works. Ergo, the literary curriculum stays largely frozen, rooted in the culture and mindset of yesteryear.

For this thesis, the literary curriculum’s “traditional stability” proves helpful because it provides a stable sample of literature (Stallworth, Gibbons, & Fauber, 2006, p. 482). This term may very well be a euphemism for ethnocentrism and cultural exclusion; it may connote unwillingness or hesitancy toward works outside the canon. This thesis, though mindful of broader cultural considerations, merely aims to examine the ideological leanings and applications of commonly taught literary works, and in this endeavor stability, monocultural or otherwise, ensures structural integrity. The canon’s content, while tangentially relevant, must be discussed elsewhere.

The list of commonly taught works comprises the following titles:

Harper Lee	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
“	<i>Julius Caesar</i>

“	<i>Macbeth</i>
“	<i>Hamlet</i>
John Steinbeck	<i>Of Mice and Men</i>
William Golding	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>
Mark Twain	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>The Crucible</i>
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
John Knowles	<i>A Separate Peace</i>
George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm</i>
Emily Bronte	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>

This list encompasses neither all works regarded as “classics” nor all books taught in schools. Rather, it attempts to synthesize the lists offered by the researchers, and it offers a reasonable inference vis-à-vis the most commonly taught works. Though the researchers focus on a narrow range of years (i.e., 1991 and ca. 2002-2004), the similarity between the lists and the concept of “traditional stability” suggest these titles have remained somewhat constant. This constancy also creates an ideological stability of sorts. It provides assurance that the books’ messages, whatever they may be, have persisted and been frequently repeated. These works’ continued presence and their boundless opportunity to influence students make them ideal for analyzing schools’ ideological underpinnings.

Overview of Ideologies

The analysis section relies heavily on Schiro’s (2007) four curricular ideologies: scholar academic, social efficiency, learner-centered, and social reconstruction. Schiro

has mostly used these labels to describe teachers' and curriculum planners' mindsets; he applies them to the *goals* of education rather than to the materials. Cotti and Schiro (2004) once studied how teachers' ideologies shaped use of children's literature, but again, the study focused on teacher beliefs rather than the material's ideological leanings. This thesis, conversely, posits that literary works correspond roughly to – or, in many cases, have much in common with – Schiro's four ideologies. In other words, it aims to show that materials often have ideological biases, which might lead educational ideologues to select these materials. Since the ideologies feature so prominently in the analysis, this section offers a brief overview and description of each.

The **scholar academic** ideology emphasizes the study and expansion of accumulated cultural knowledge. Over millennia, humanity has discovered and revised innumerable tomes of information. Every scientific finding, every novel written, every artifact unearthed symbolizes an incremental furthering of our collective understanding. Informed citizens, scholar academics argue, must be cognizant of this shared knowledge, and they must be aware of the past if they wish to contribute to the present and future. Academia and scholarship serve as the means to these goals. Each academic discipline houses a segment of cultural knowledge and acts as “one component of a literate culture” (Schiro, 2007, p. 19). Scholars, armed with their predecessors' work, engage in constant inquiry meant to fill the coffers of knowledge. Though individual disciplines have disparate rules and customs, they all strive to broaden humanity's outlook.

In this model, schools serve as acculturation centers and students as scholars-in-training. Scholar academics see cultural knowledge – awareness of the past and its intellectual implications – as vital to acculturation. Ergo, they believe that schools should

acquaint students with humanity's achievements; it should initiate them into the world that their forebears have created. This opinion shapes scholar academics' views about curricula. As Schiro says, they perceive the subject matter as "the essence of the academic disciplines, [the] central concern while creating curricula" (p. 22). School may fulfill many purposes, but its primary objective lies in producing informed citizens who will seek new knowledge. Instruction thus strives to prepare students to assume this role. Curricula should not merely involve recitations of knowledge. Rather, they should "[embody] a portion of the discipline ... in such a way that students ... will be exposed to the essence of the disciplines" (p. 21). Lessons should place students in the context of a particular discipline: they should learn not only *what* a chemist knows but *how* a chemist approaches his or her work; they should experience the particular way in which a chemist constructs knowledge. All facets of school work to convey the established knowledge of specific subjects and produce future scholars and discoverers.

The **social efficiency** ideology sees school as a means to promote an orderly, efficient society. Schools serve not only as dispensaries of knowledge but as breeding grounds for citizenship; they must not only teach but also prepare students to function and contribute. To be blunter, schools in effect "[train] youth ... in the skills and procedures ... that they will need in the workplace and home in order to lead productive lives" (Cotti & Schiro, 2004, p. 337). This ideology presents education as a tool for socialization and social conditioning. Schools represent a microcosm of the larger society; within their halls students learn to collaborate with peers, settle disputes, practice self-restraint – behaviors necessary for prosocial acclimation. Moreover, education endows them with skills (e.g., writing, mathematical, mechanical) they can use to secure

jobs. Overall, social efficiency focuses less on content and more on eliciting desirable behaviors (Schiro, 2007, p. 58), and it tacitly asserts that schools exist to promote social order and to inculcate behaviors conducive to a stable society.

This ideology positions students as future workers shaped by a concerted behaviorist experiment. Schiro's description invokes terms associated with behaviorism such as "stimuli," the correct responses to which earn students "reinforcements," or rewards (p. 61). His mentioning this particular social science conveys the true objective of the ideology. Social efficiency focuses not only on enhancing knowledge but also on modifying students' behaviors. Like behaviorism, it equates performance with mastery. Students may memorize the steps to composing an essay, but they have not comprehended this material until they can *use* specific writing strategies. Such curricula seek to satisfy the omnipotent "consumer market," society's demand for certain skills. An educated student represents a "finished product," a worker armed with skills deemed necessary for particular jobs (p. 66). This vaguely mechanistic term conjures images of robots – *not* living, breathing humans – being programmed to maintain the cogs that keep society spinning. The ideology thus stresses collective good rather than individual fulfillment; it envisions a school system that attempts to transform students into competent workers who will ensure social stability.

The **learner-centered** ideology focuses on developing each learner's potential and catering to his or her interests. Once called "progressive education," this ideology shifts attention from the "academic subjects" to the students themselves (Schiro, 2007, p. 105). It acknowledges that every student has different interests and abilities, and it aims to create curricula that address every student's desires and inclinations. Schiro cites an

example in which a teacher creates an outdoor laboratory comprising multiple stations. Students choose which station they visit and which facet of nature they study. Some may opt to examine the plants in the area, while others may be interested in the insects that roam the landscape. In this example, the teacher has constructed a learning environment that aims to impart certain knowledge (i.e., the features of the environment), but students can control the knowledge they pursue and decide what intrigues them. The ideology asserts that “it is important for children to make choices about what they will learn and ... direct their own learning” (p. 101). It advocates tailoring curricula to students rather than vice versa.

Unlike scholar academics and social-efficiency ideologues, the learner-centered ideology centers on students’ unique attitudes toward learning. The former two ideologies certainly strive to produce educated students, but their goals and curricula treat the students’ preferences and individuality as secondary considerations. Scholar academics encourage students to choose an academic discipline... only so that they can further study and expand that discipline in the future. Social-efficiency educators teach students skills to integrate into and contribute to society... only so that they can perpetuate the current social system. Learner-centered ideologues, conversely, place sole emphasis on students and their learning idiosyncrasies. No two students learn in the same fashion, and no two have exactly the same interests. A rigidly standardized curriculum ignores students’ interests, the paces at which they learn, the styles in which they learn. With individualization comes greater student engagement and inclusivity – in other words, a way for all students to access the material. The learner-centered ideology grounds itself in this student-centric mindset.

The **social reconstruction** ideology claims that schools should instill activism and a desire to redress social ills. According to Schiro, social reconstructionists see a society plagued by systemic issues: poverty, sexism, racism, religious intolerance, violence, etc. They concern themselves not with perpetuating the status quo but with reforming it; they seize upon any opportunity to correct injustice or empower marginalized groups. In this endeavor they have identified schools' potential to foster social awareness. Schiro (2007, p. 152) provides a summary of reconstructionists' views regarding education:

Social Reconstructionists assume that education ... has the power to educate people to analyze and understand social problems, envision a world in which those problems, and act so as to bring that vision into existence. Thus, education of individuals in appropriately revitalized schools can lead to social transformation. From this perspective, school becomes a forum in which students discuss and formulate solutions to prominent issues. Reconstructionist curricula base their activities on heightening students' social awareness and conscience. For example, a lesson might ask students to "compare world wealth distribution to continental population" or "analyze police data for racial profiling" (p. 156). These activities reflect the reconstructionist mission to stir empathy among students. Often, children – not to mention people in general – live in comfortable ignorance; they have little interaction with people different from themselves. The social reconstructionist ideology attempts to rectify that ignorance. It uses education to show students the harsh inequities of the world and to convey the plights of numerous peoples, minorities, and even the environment.

This ideology asserts that education should exert its influence to make students into future reformers and iconoclasts. Schiro interviews a teacher who claims that education can never be "neutral" (p. 160). Word problems, for example, may contain

implicit directives or messages. Asking students to determine the cost of a candy bar tacitly encourages consumerism and unhealthy habits, while calculating mileage subtly promotes motor vehicles, many of which emit greenhouse gases (p. 160). Social reconstructionists recognize the influence education holds, and they propose to use it to society's advantage. If students will receive messages anyway, why should not these messages be ones that spur action or dedication to social improvement? Students, if exposed to assignments and readings that detail social ills, might adopt a spirit of reform and public service. They need only have teachers committed to empathetic education and schools willing to acknowledge social inequities – schools willing to challenge the status quo rather than maintain it. Like the scholar academic and social efficiency ideologies, social reconstruction perceives education as a utility. In this case, however, its usefulness rests in its potential to fix social problems.

Creation of Analytical Categories

As I studied the ideologies, I began to wonder how they might be applied to literature – not just to teachers' beliefs but to the material teachers teach and to the books students read. Each ideology presents a firm viewpoint, a vision of what education should be and how classrooms should be run. As Schiro notes, the ideologies have long battled for dominance, inciting conflict among educators (p. 1). This vehemence raises concerns about how ideology affects curriculum. Often, ardent ideologues feel compelled to propagate their beliefs, and they employ whatever means they have to effect this goal. A political ideologue might deliver impassioned speeches on television, or a religious ideologue might leap atop the pulpit to assert a particular view of life. How, then, would a teacher-ideologue promote his or her views? The question produces a logical,

predictable answer: by using curricula, lessons, and educational materials. Their ideologies may never be communicated explicitly, as regular classroom routine allows little time for discussion of such topics. However, their ideologies might permeate their classrooms, dictating their management, presentation of materials, and even selection of materials. Specifically, English teachers and curriculum planners might choose books that represent or propagate certain messages – messages that roughly correspond to the curricular ideologies. Schiro may have never applied his ideologies to novels, but educational ideologues may *have* taken that initiative.

This thesis attempts to (1) establish this link between literature and curricular ideology and (2) show what messages the preponderance – or lack thereof – of certain ideologies among the novels reveals about the school system. Is one ideology overrepresented or underrepresented among the commonly taught novels? How does the ideological spread, so to speak, relate to writings and criticisms about the school system? To answer these questions, I had to create a system to place the novels into ideological categories. Analyzing Schiro’s work, I determined what attributes novels of each ideology might contain or evince. In other words, I tried to connect the characteristics of each ideology to characteristics of literary works – characters, plot developments, figurative language, etc. My efforts yielded the following literary and ideological taxonomy:

- The *scholar academic work* has a heavily didactic mindset. All literature could be said to “teach” the audience, but scholar academic-oriented works prioritize conveyance of facts – the “knowledge of a discipline” – over ambiguity and symbolism. These works likely rely greatly on exposition and explicit detail.

Robert Graves' *I, Claudius* (1935) symbolizes the quintessential scholar-academic novel. Its dramatic intrigue and soap-opera antics merely serve as vehicles to accomplish its true purpose: to educate readers on the players and events of Ancient Rome. It provides dates, chronologies, even a family tree; it supplements the catty dialogue with lengthy passages detailing the events' historical context. The term "historical fiction" seems incredibly apt, as the novel merely adds fictional touches to a scholarly account. Not all scholar-academic novels have a historical basis, but they likely share *I, Claudius*' penchant for dispensing abundant information in a clear, unambiguous manner. Such methods work well in introducing readers to a certain discipline or course of study.

- The *social efficiency work* shows the consequences of some socially maladaptive behavior(s). The ideology itself emphasizes the importance of "perpetuat[ing] the functioning of society" (Schiro, 2007, p. 69), but harmonious, properly functioning societies make for boring stories. Consequently, social efficiency-oriented novels promote the ideology by depicting socially *inefficient* behavior. They feature characters who defy social convention and ultimately receive some punishment. The characters' fates tacitly convey society's expectations and harsh of view of aberration. Consider, for example, Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). The novel's protagonists, juvenile delinquents, speak in strange code; they break laws and mores alike, disrupting social order and disturbing public peace. Ultimately, however, they submit to society's expectations: the main character undergoes therapy and emerges a productive citizen who has "like groweth up" (p. 141). This conclusion suggests that all individuals, no matter

how rebellious, will eventually conform. Social efficiency-minded novels show what occurs when individuals deviate from prescribed behaviors, and they suggest that only adherence to social norms, observation of appropriate behavior, yields a copacetic result. At times they may be grand in their messages, at other times subtle, but they all depict some punishment of bad behavior and some exhortation to follow social guidelines.

- The *learner-centered work* deals in ambiguity, allowing readers to form their own inferences and interpretations. A true learner-centered work would seemingly be any a student chooses. After all, the ideology encourages students to pursue subjects they deem interesting, and they could conceivably choose a novel of any type and by any author. However, I argue that certain works display a learner-centered mindset; their plots, simultaneously rich and ambiguous, invite readers to create their own subtext and delve deeply into the fictional world. They often raise moral questions or challenge conventional ideas, leaving readers to be the ultimate judges. Perhaps the quintessential example comes in the form of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (2005). The epic poem casts Satan as the protagonist, subverting typical conceptions of good and evil. How can the "bad" guy be the hero of the story? Satan's ruminations further attack normal perceptions of right and wrong, such as when he states, "Better to reign in Hell, then [*sic*] serve in Heav'n" (Book 1, l. 263). This statement contradicts conventional morality in which Heaven represents salvation and hell damnation. Why should people seek salvation if salvation is synonymous with subservience? The poem thus displays a learner-centered mentality, posing questions that readers must ultimately form

the answers. Unlike scholar-academic or social-efficiency works, it seeks not to dispense information or inculcate certain behaviors; it eschews such blatant efforts to sway readers. Rather, it and works like it feature deliberate ambiguity or lofty questions that force readers to make inferences or judgments.

- The *social reconstruction work* identifies, examines, and may even offer solutions to social inequities. While all works could be construed to have a “moral,” social reconstruction works make explicit their desire for social justice. Often, they feature characters belonging to disadvantaged or marginalized groups (e.g., racial, sexual, socioeconomic), and they emphasize the difficulties and injustices these groups suffer, in the process criticizing social institutions that permit such injustices. Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* (1970) exemplifies the social-reconstructionist mentality. It details the struggles of black women who grapple with domestic abuse, economic insecurity, and Eurocentric beauty ideals. The characters’ interactions with white people, the ruling majority, further demonstrate the difficulties of their lives. One character, for example, must neglect her own children to care for her white employer’s daughter. The characters’ obstacles, though fictional, indicate wider societal problems; they offer a glimpse into the racism and hardship that affect real individuals’ lives. Moreover, the novel implicitly criticizes the social and economic institutions that have yielded these unequal conditions. These depictions of social injustices and calls for reform characterize social reconstruction-oriented works and their commitment to raising awareness.

Analytical Process

Using these categories, I classified each work through a holistic analysis. Any work could possibly display qualities of multiple ideologies. A social-efficiency work might show how discrimination disrupts the social order, incorporating elements of social reconstruction, or a social-reconstruction work might attempt to dispense historical information about a certain group, thus employing a scholar-academic approach. Therefore, I examined each novel in its entirety and placed it into the category it most closely fit. I compared the components of the novels – dialogue, plot development, figurative language – to Schiro’s descriptions of the four ideologies, and I attempted to show how each novel lent itself well to a particular ideology through its similarity to Schiro’s descriptions. In several instances, a work appeared to straddle the boundary between two ideologies. This taxonomic ambiguity required a certain degree of subjectivity to resolve; though I supported my statements with quotations from literary works and scholarly sources, I ultimately had to decide which ideology a particular work most strongly espoused. To compensate, I noted whenever a work contained elements of multiple ideologies. When applicable, I linked the novel to real-life events and philosophies that might further reinforce its ideological bent. I used the ideologies as lenses to determine the message of each book, the societal directives it might send – in other words, the subtext students would encounter in reading it.

I then wrote a discussion that relates the results of the analysis to the literature review. Specifically, I examined the ideological spread – the number of books that lent themselves to each ideology – and I used that number to draw inferences about the books’ purposes vis-à-vis the school system. Was one ideology more prevalent than the others?

Did the prevalence of this ideology support the literature review's findings about the school system's goals? The ideological bent of the materials, which serve as the foundation of lessons and education, enabled me to make inferences about the school system as a whole.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

Overview and Purpose

This section demonstrates this thesis' relevance to English classrooms and instruction. The preceding chapters prove definitively that curriculum and schooling seek to influence students' beliefs, and they identify curricular materials as the vehicles through which social conditioning occurs. This chapter relates those concepts to the modern English classroom. The following works appear in English classrooms more frequently than any other titles; they have had decades of opportunity to shape students' beliefs, to dispense tacit messages, to be tools in educational ideologues' arsenals. Using Schiro's (2007) four educational ideologies – scholar academic, social efficiency, learner-centered, and social reconstruction – this chapter will examine how each title serves as an apt representative for a particular ideology (or, in some cases, ideologies), and it will link these works and their messages to the sociological goals of the school system. I hope the ideological spread will illuminate the ulterior motives behind choosing these works.

Social Efficiency-Oriented Works

Macbeth's equivocal attitude toward morality suggests a departure from social convention and acceptable behavior. In the opening scene, the Weird Sisters famously incant, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair; / Hover through the fog and filthy air" (Shakespeare, 2008, 1.1.10-11). These lines imply a disintegration of moral boundaries. If fair and foul, good and evil, cannot be separated, what happens to conventional morality? They become so indistinguishable as to be worthless, or perhaps they no longer carry the same heft or influence. The imagery reaffirms this idea of blurred or uncertain morality. "Fog" causes poor visibility; under its weight, distinct objects, or perhaps distinct concepts,

become hazy. The juxtaposition of this fog with “filthy air” also proves telling. “Filthy,” of course, can connote many negative qualities: poor hygiene, crude speech, and even immorality or obscenity. If the fog symbolizes moral haziness, the associated term “filthy air” indicates a moral pollution of sorts, and it foreshadows that only negative consequences will arise from this ambiguous conception of right and wrong.

Indeed, throughout the play characters display and incur great punishment for deviant or socially maladjusted behavior. Consider, for example, Lady Macbeth’s characterization and her flouting of gender norms. Lady Macbeth implores the “murd’ring ministers” to “Come to my woman’s breasts, / And take my milk for gall” (1.5.45-6). Milk symbolizes motherhood and nurturing, while gall symbolizes poison, acrimony, the antithesis of kindness and warmth. Lady Macbeth seeks to divest herself of feminine softness, and in the process, she defies society’s prescribed role for women. Though Macbeth agrees to the murder plot, Lady Macbeth ultimately commits the heinous deed. Interestingly, she uses a knife, a phallic symbol, suggesting that she has taken the assertive, dominant, “penetrative” role in the endeavor. By the play’s end, she finds herself plagued by debilitating guilt; she sees illusory blood, “damned spot[s],” that symbolize her inability to cope with her crime. Her ultimate suicide might represent a punishment. She has ignored society’s directives for women and eschewed appropriate behavior, and she has blurred the boundaries, the standards of behavior, between the genders. Her death thus sends a message that implicitly warns women against aggressive, manly conduct.

Similarly, Macbeth’s seizure of power and eventual demise convey the consequences of breaking social order. Monarchies operate on a strict line of succession.

Upon Duncan's untimely death – a breach of social order in itself – his elder son should assume the throne. However, Macbeth corrupts the order of succession, driving the king's sons away and seizing power for himself. As Hecate says, Macbeth's overconfidence leads him to “spurn fate, scorn death, and bear / His hopes ‘bove wisdom, grace, and fear” – in other words, to abandon all normal restraints and proper behaviors (3.5.30-1). These actions symbolize a blatant disregard for social structure and custom; they throw the kingdom into veritable disarray. Macbeth's fate, in turn, represents punishment for these misdeeds. The wrongful king, he must be overthrown to restore social balance.

These events and outcomes make *Macbeth* an ideal exemplar for the social efficiency ideology. As Schiro (2007) notes, the social efficiency ideology claims that education should teach students to “function appropriately and effectively in society,” and it perceives school as “the guardian of the system of values and institutions that the society has already evolved” (p. 70). *Macbeth's* characters, conversely, seem to dismiss entrenched social values, demolishing the discrete division between good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, even male and female. Rather than guard values, they express indifference toward them. This aberrant mindset makes the play an apt representative for social efficiency. Remember that social efficiency-minded works often use *inefficient* behavior to impart their lessons; the consequences of bad behavior illustrate the importance of good behavior. *Macbeth's* ending uses the titular couple as an example, an exhortation to maintain proper conduct, a directive to avoid power for power's sake.

Hamlet implicitly supports social efficiency by showing how aberrance can quickly spread, producing a domino effect and weakening the state. Early in the play,

Marcellus notices “Something rotten in the state of Denmark,” and this sentiment, as well as the social unrest and disorder it implies, pervades the play (1.4.67). The origin of this trouble, the text suggests, lies in the alleged assassination of King Hamlet, whose ghost says:

‘Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forgèd process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father’s life
Now wears his crown. (1.5.35-40)

This passage’s allusions to the Garden of Eden (e.g., an “orchard,” or garden; the presence of a serpent that commits a misdeed) indicate a corruption of social morality and values. Claudius, the serpent of this tale, has disturbed the “paradise” of the kingdom by killing his brother, and he has used a “forgèd process,” or series of lies, to deceive the public. Ergo, he rules neither by divine right nor public mandate. Rather, his reign derives its dubious legitimacy from lies, subterfuge, and the regicide of his brother – a woefully inefficient combination if ever one existed. The phrase “the serpent ... Now wears his crown” encapsulates the moral subversion that has occurred, as the devious serpent has adorned himself with the diadem of virtue, the symbol of righteous rule. This bastardization of the monarchy and deceit of the public creates an atmosphere of social inefficiency by undermining social institutions.

The play uses the characters’ behavior to convey the consequences of inefficient behavior. Hamlet’s affectation of madness, for example, hampers communication and inhibits normal social functioning. He addresses Polonius as a “fishmonger,” briefly plunging the latter into confusion, and he responds to statements by parroting the speaker’s words to maintain the illusion of lunacy (2.2.175; 2.2.373). Consequently, the

other characters describe him as having undergone a “transformation ... Since not th’ exterior nor the inward man / Resembles that it was” (2.2.5-7). The effects of his ruse demonstrate the consequences of social inefficiency. Smooth social functioning requires consistency and clarity. Individuals must communicate clearly, using language others can understand; act predictably, proving themselves reliable and trustworthy; and perform their designated roles, doing work necessary to maintain the social structure. In other words, they must endeavor to lead “meaningful adult [lives]” – this “meaning” being defined by social custom and expectations (Schiro, 2007, p. 69). By feigning madness and acting peculiarly, Hamlet shuns all notions of social propriety. He purposely obfuscates, deliberately misleads, and knowingly muddles; he throws his social circle into disarray, derailing normal activities. In a state plagued by inefficiency, Hamlet’s feigned madness only exacerbates the dysfunction.

Gertrude’s conduct, specifically her marriage to Claudius, also damages normal social relations and breeds moral inefficiency. The Ghost exhorts Hamlet to “Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damnèd incest ... Leave [your mother] to heaven” (1.5.82-6). The word “incest” connotes extreme social deviance. Many societies strictly forbid incestuous relationships and marriages, claiming that these unions often produce children afflicted with birth defects. That concept can also be seen figuratively, as a metaphor for the state. Gertrude and Claudius, already related by marriage, have married each other. Just as biological incest weakens gene pools, their royal incest weakens the kingdom by perverting accepted conventions and institutions. In other words, Gertrude has been complicit in Denmark’s social and moral deterioration. The social efficiency ideology mandates that people “function in the desired way” by

upholding and perpetuating social values (Schiro, 2007, p. 70). Gertrude, however, displays contempt for social values, thereby wounding the moral fiber of the kingdom.

Hamlet seems the ideal work for showing the ramifications of social inefficiency. It depicts deviant behavior and its consequences on multiple levels – societal, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and even regal. A leader’s sins, for example, can erode the morals of a kingdom; a lack of clarity, purposeful or accidental, can prevent effective communication. The play’s disheveled Denmark, rife with betrayal and deceit, advises readers against committing such sins. It tacitly stresses the notion that transgressions breed disaster and damage all facets of society. Such a message, such a *warning*, shows the desirability of social efficiency, of defined roles and obedience of custom.

Ostensibly *Julius Caesar* seems to correspond to the scholar academic ideology. One of Shakespeare’s history plays, it chronicles the assassination of the titular emperor. This basis in real-world events and focus on identifiable cultural figures would seem to align the play with the scholar academic viewpoint. This ideology seeks to convey accumulated cultural knowledge, “[initiating] children into an academic discipline at the level at which it is being taught” (Schiro, 2007, p. 20). *Julius Caesar*, taught in high schools, initially seems as though it might be useful for introducing students to the discipline of history: recognizing past leaders and empires, linking historical events via cause and effect, determining the influence of the past on the present, etc. Though only a snapshot of Roman history, the play provides ample fodder for connection and discussion.

However, I contend that this narrow view of Roman history prevents the play from being a scholar academic-oriented work. It presupposes the audience’s knowledge,

providing precious few details regarding the historical conflicts preceding the plot's events. In the opening scene, for example, a cobbler "make[s] holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his / triumph," and Marullus refers to the formerly "great Pompey" whom Caesar has bested (1.1.34-5, 47). The original text contains no annotations, no explanation of these events that have occurred prior to the play. (Granted, anthologies and modern editions may add footnotes to the original text.) Rather, the play relies on the audience to have learned this information. Such an assumption seems anathema to the discipline of history and to the scholar-academic mindset. History hinges upon context, a complete view of past, present, future, and the relationships among them, and it regards facts as indispensable. From a historical perspective, this play begins not *ab ovo* but *in media res*, launching into events without thoroughly detailing their precedents and causalities. In short, the play depicts historical material, but it fails to adhere to the tenets of the historical discipline, rendering it unsuitable as a scholar academic work.

Rather, the play transmits social efficiency-themed messages by showing the unrest caused by political upheaval. The play begins during the Roman Republic, and several characters express republican sentiments. Cassius, for example, says to Brutus, "I was born free as Caesar; so were you; / We both have fed as well, and we can both / Endure the winter's cold as well as he" (1.2.105-7). The men have heretofore lived in a society that rewards merit rather than status and consider themselves equal to Caesar despite his inflated reputation. However, they perceive those longstanding values to be endangered, with Brutus worrying that "Crowning [Caesar]" will make him a tyrant (2.1.16). These statements represent a deterioration of social efficiency engendered by political uncertainty. According to Schiro (2007), social efficiency depends upon

“perpetuating society” and its institutions. Though society may be improved, these improvements must presumably increase efficiency and productivity (p. 69, 70). Cassius and company wish to perpetuate the republic, and they fear that Caesar will institute an empire, eroding egalitarian principles. These differing political aims plunge the entire society into disarray, culminating with an assassination – an act certain to cause instability. This conflict, this departure from amicable relations and debate, yields behaviors inimical to peaceable, efficient existence.

The plot promotes social efficiency by tacitly encouraging compromise and consensus. *Julius Caesar*’s bloodshed arises from a potent cocktail of personal grievances and political schisms. Its characters feel unsatisfied with social developments, resentful at being overlooked. In Caesar’s case, one character seemingly seems content to hoard power and inflate his status. All of the men thus deviate from their “duties,” so to speak; they forget their commitments to their fellow citizens and society at large, fretting only about their respective statuses. Social efficiency holds that “People are first members of society and second individuals,” so all parties have faltered in their loyalty to society (Schiro, 2007, p. 68). Their fates – death, dishonor, guilt – imply the consequences for exhibiting such aberrant behavior. Moreover, they stress to readers (and students) the importance of maintaining harmony, of prioritizing others over self, of following the status quo to maintain peace. *Julius Caesar*, through its depiction of a fractured society, encourages readers to strive for a cooperative one.

A Separate Peace’s focus on inexorable social developments, on life’s “script,” aligns it with the social efficiency ideology. Upon his return to the Devon School, Gene notices a tree’s worn and denuded state, remarking, “So the more things remain the same,

the more they change after all ... Nothing endures, not a tree, not love, not even a death by violence” (Knowles, 2014, p. 8). This paradoxical statement, this co-existence of stability and inevitable change, can be read as a commentary on society. Human lives unfold in a series of biological, personal, and social stages. The body decays over time, just as this tree has decayed; mental faculties and motor skills diminish even in healthy individuals. Children grow, attend school, secure employment, contribute to society, and in many cases produce children who repeat the process. At each stage people evolve, just as the tree’s foliage and branches morph over time. Though they perceive themselves as individuals, their stories differ little from the generations who have preceded them. In other words, the social and biological cycles recur. This concept corresponds to the social efficiency ideology’s emphasis on “perpetuating” society and “existing social functions” (Schiro, 2007, p. 69, 67). Such terms imply that particular events and institutions must invariably repeat; they suggest that social functioning require successive generations to uphold the established order. Gene’s observations thus convey the essence of the ideology, its idea of predictable changes in an orderly social cycle.

The characters’ lives, maturations, and career paths illustrate these maxims in more concrete terms. Musing about his time at Devon, Gene remembers, “I think we reminded them of what peace was like, we boys of sixteen. We were registered with no draft board ... Trick knees and punctured eardrums were ... not yet disabilities” (p. 21). These statements hint at the fate some of the boys will encounter. Like many men before them, they will enlist in the army, sacrificing health and safety in the process. Indeed, Gene’s reminiscences chronicle the boys’ schooldays during World War II, when many men enlisted and fought in “Central Europe” (p. 25). The contrast between “we boys of

sixteen” and these unnamed military men underscores the imminent approach of adult life. Enconced in school, the boys live relatively carefree lives, but they will soon be required to enter a world replete with emotional and physical hardship. These halcyon days represent but a brief period in their development. Gene’s nostalgia thus contains a note of resignation – the realization that he and his friends, despite their youthful joy, could not avoid their entry into the adult world. This stark depiction of social inexorability stresses social efficiency’s core tenets. The cycles of growth and loss repeat endlessly.

This idea manifests itself on an even smaller level, in the characters’ personalities. Gene contemplates the nature of human memory and experience: “Everyone has a moment in history which belongs particularly to him ... [W]hen you say to this person ‘the world today’ or ‘life’ or ‘reality’ he will assume you mean this moment, even if it is fifty years past” (p. 43). Here Gene acknowledges the immense power of nostalgia. In every life, certain moments linger indelibly in the memory. Even “fifty years past,” a person will long for and wish to repeat those experiences. Social efficiency depends on perpetuating systems, on preserving social order and institutions. Likewise, Gene’s thoughts show that individuals may mentally perpetuate their desired state of affairs; they may find shelter in the familiar thoughts and experiences of their glory days. Gene speaks only for himself, but his statements could be construed as a comment on individuals’ tendency to uphold certain values – in other words, to engage in social efficiency

Lord of the Flies extends social dysfunction to extreme lengths in its glorification of social efficiency. Initially, the stranded boys manage to form some semblance of functional society. They adhere to the “northern European tradition of work, play, and

food,” and they establish a system of social ranks and routines (Golding, 1959, p. 63-4). Eventually, Ralph, the boys’ chief, contends with insurrection and social collapse, with Jack asking him, “Why should choosing [Ralph as chief] make any difference?” and accusing him of “Just giving orders that don’t make any sense” (p. 103). The island subsequently descends into abject chaos as the boys find “liberation into savagery” (p. 204). This complete disintegration serves as a veritable advertisement for social efficiency. Marooned, separated from their normal lives and conventions, the boys hastily assemble their own ersatz society. They make no effort to perpetuate the social values and customs of their homeland (presumably England), adopting new ones that promptly fail and engender disorder. Such an outcome implies that the boys should have striven to emulate “civilized” society, and it suggests that deviation from prescribed behaviors and institutions will invariably fail. This message reflects the values and worldview of the social efficiency ideology. The ideology believes that children should learn to “act in the desired way,” but the children of *Lord of the Flies* forsake the desired way and incur tragic consequences (Schiro, 2007, p. 70). Their self-inflicted social ills thus remind readers to observe social rules, to adhere to proven practices and customs.

The novel also implies the inherent inefficiency of boys and the necessity of adult guidance and discipline. Golding’s phrase “liberation into savagery” suggests that unattended children inevitably succumb to baser, animalistic instincts. This description of behavior echoes numerous writers who view boys as obstreperous, barely contained brutes. Grossman (2004) notes the stereotypes associated with boyhood behavior, among them “aggression,” “loquacity,” “competitive[ness],” and “self-assertive” behavior (p. 215). Society assumes that boys will be difficult, rambunctious, disorderly; it ascribes to

them a mild form of savagery seldom imputed to girls. *Lord of the Flies* exaggerates these stereotypes, depicting boys who disregard all propriety and embrace incivility. The message implicit in the novel's plot – that boys will descend into savagery without supervision – reads as a veritable billboard for social efficiency. The ideology derives its tenets from behaviorism, maintaining that children must be taught “observable skills” that contribute to society (Schiro, 2007, p. 58). Golding's boys have no teachers, no adults to monitor or tame them. Ergo, they and their ersatz society collapse. Their disastrous departure from social efficiency seemingly validates the ideology, especially as it pertains to boys.

Overall, the novel discourages radical reformation and encourages the continuation of “proven,” civilized society. Schiro says that the social efficiency strives to improve society, but, again, its ultimate goal lies in “perpetuat[ing] existing social functions” (p. 68). This statement recalls the adage “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.” Though society may evolve, changes should not hamper efficiency or productivity. The boys' changes, the society they erect, achieve neither harmony nor productivity. Their story shows that change for change's sake may prove harmful, and it suggests that people may be safer by adhering to standard practices. The novel's events and its support of civilized behavior and established conventions establish a clear affinity with social efficiency.

Social Efficiency/Social Reconstruction-Oriented Works

Romeo and Juliet displays characteristics of social efficiency and social reconstruction. Its titular characters' defiance of social custom – and subsequent punishment for this defiance – suggests alignment with social efficiency. Juliet displays inefficient behavior by rejecting “so worthy a gentleman [Paris] to be [her] bride”

(3.5.150). Her father, unsurprisingly, reacts with rancor, vowing to disown Juliet: "...I'll ne'er acknowledge thee, / Nor what is mine shall ever do thee good" (205). Juliet's refusal represents a marked flouting of socially efficient behavior and convention. The play depicts a time when marriages served less as love matches and more as business arrangements. Fathers in particular strove to betroth daughters to titled men and thus bolster the family's status. Such arrangements, though archaic by modern standards, constituted a smoothly functioning society. In this context, Juliet's repudiation of her role also represents an unwillingness to perpetuate social order – a key tenet of social efficiency (Schiro, 2007, p. 69). She rebels not only against her parents but also against the practices of the world she inhabits.

Romeo's immaturity and dismissal of adult counsel indicates further spurning of social efficiency. Friar Lawrence, upon learning of Romeo's newfound passion, remarks, "Is Rosaline, that though didst love so dear, / So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes" (2.3.70-2). His statements imply the inconstancy, superficiality, and caprice of teenage love. In these lines lies tacit advice: he urges Romeo to stop "doting," to develop true love rather than mere infatuation (87). Romeo's quip that "And [thou] bad'st me bury love" proves prescient and significant (88). Eventually, Romeo and Juliet will be buried, or killed, by their love, by their unwillingness to heed advice. Indeed, Romeo's statement shows that he has willfully ignored the friar's guidance on past occasions, that he has shunned the wisdom dispensed to him. Though he has received instruction on how to be a "constructive, active [member] of society" – a functioning adult rather than a fickle, lovesick boy – he continues to act inefficiently (Schiro, 2007, p. 69).

Though the children bear responsibility for their disobedience, their deaths indicate issues with society at large and implicitly urge social reform. In the final scene, the Prince says, “Capulet, Montague, / See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love” (5.3.301-3). The juxtaposition of the words “kill” and “love” proves telling. Love should theoretically lead to satisfaction and happiness. In *Romeo and Juliet*’s case, their love, forbidden by the society they inhabit, has contributed to their deaths. This result contradicts expectations and suggests that society has somehow strayed, has become afflicted with a moral illness. How else could love, an emotion associated with fervent passion, lead to the cold embrace of death? Therein lies the connection with social reconstruction. The Prince implies that if the families had comported themselves more harmoniously – if they had created a climate more hospitable to their children’s wishes – *Romeo and Juliet* would be alive. *Romeo and Juliet* shirked social custom, certainly, but their parents and society summarily dismissed their wishes and prompted their reckless actions. As Schiro (2007) notes, the social reconstruction ideology identifies and attempts to redress societal problems, and *Romeo and Juliet* uses its characters’ deaths to convey the need for social reform, the abolition of rigid institutions. Consequently, the play fits into both the social efficiency and social reconstruction categories.

Wuthering Heights quickly conveys its orientation toward social efficiency and societal participation. Near the novel’s beginning, Mr. Lockwood muses, “I, who had determined to hold myself independent of all social intercourse ... was finally compelled to strike my colours ... [and] desired [to talk to] Mrs. Dean” (Bronte, 2011, p. 21). This quotation communicates the futility of isolation, the impossibility of rejecting society

completely. Mr. Lockwood acknowledges his preference for solitude, but he realizes also that only by engaging in “gossip,” or social discourse, can he learn about the manor’s history and inhabitants. His experience reinforces the notion that humans rely on each other in various ways but especially for information. To be fully informed means to seek enlightenment and education from one’s fellows, and understanding of society arises only from participation in it. If Mr. Lockwood indulged unremittingly his penchant for solitude he would deny himself knowledge and, by extension, social inclusion. Though brief, this passage communicates a profound message, implying that intellectual satisfaction stems from embracing “existing social functions” (Schiro, 2007, p. 67).

Other portions offer criticism of social institutions and circumscriptions, displaying characteristics of the social reconstruction ideology. Heathcliff longs to marry Catherine, who says, “It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him” (p. 51). Her statement highlights the contemporary social structure: the affluent seems a logical betrothed, while Heathcliff, an orphan, has no material wealth or social status. Catherine and Edgar’s inability to marry might be read as a call for social reconstruction. Why should they be bound by these social customs that inhibit their union? *Wuthering Heights* contains no explicit directives for improving society; Catherine marries Edgar, elevating her social status, while Heathcliff remains a lowly orphan. They accept, if somewhat reluctantly, the prevailing social structure. However, their plight exposes a societal inequity – namely, how money and status often erect barriers between individuals. Their mutual longing and unrealized love convey the effects of such austere mores, tacitly questioning the validity and humanity of these customs. Though the characters ultimately follow “existing social functions,” the novel

engages in subtle social reconstruction by examining, pondering, and interrogating those functions.

The Scarlet Letter, with its focus on public modesty and decency, contains strong elements of social efficiency. Hester contravenes the mores of the “Utopia of human virtue and happiness” to which her fellow citizens aspire (Hawthorne, 2012, p. 28). Consequently, she and her illegitimate child incur widespread condemnation; and she must don a tangible symbol of opprobrium. Schiro writes that the social efficiency ideology aims to inculcate desirable behavior, and according to Gagne to teach individuals to live lives that “[contribute] to the goals of [their] society” (as quoted in Schiro, 2007, p. 69). The “goals of a society” can vary by time and location, but Hester’s Puritan town evidently defines desirable behavior as chastity and adherence to a constrictive sexual code. Her conduct disappoints the townspeople, who say, “This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die” (p. 31). Hester has thus failed in her particular social context, deviated from acceptable behavior, and provoked society’s ire. Despite her beauty and dignified bearing, she at first seems to stand as a monument to socially inefficient behavior.

However, the novel soon reveals social-reconstruction sentiments, portraying Hester’s moral strength and questioning society’s harsh judgments. Hester’s first appearance refers to her “ladylike” manner, her “serene deportment” (p. 31-3). These virtuous qualities contradict the citizens’ unflattering descriptions, suggesting grace and poise diametrically opposed to the figure of a wanton adulteress. This sympathetic lens the narrative places on Hester, accomplishes a major part of social reconstruction: “taking a value stance” (Schiro, 2007, p. 159). The narrative certainly acknowledges Hester’s

sin; in fact, the sin provides the basis for the plot itself. Even so, it offers kindness rather than censure; it underscores Hester's upright behavior and repentant demeanor. The narrative's positive value judgment contradicts the other characters' evaluations, perhaps telling the audience that Hester has been judged too harshly. This call for mercy, this unspoken desire for society to soften its stance, displays reconstructionist attitudes.

The novel also examines the problem of gender inequality, especially as it pertains to sexual relations. According to Wood and Fixmer-Oraiz (2016), women "who have sex with different partners [or, in Hester's case, commit adultery]" receive far more scorn than men who commit similar acts (p. 194). Reverend Dimmesdale's presence and conduct confirm this assertion. Pearl's father and Hester's lover, he can nevertheless feign innocence because of his sex. Unlike Hester, he exhibits none of the conspicuous consequences of intercourse and continues his life unaltered. Irony manifests itself sharply when he commands Hester to "speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner" (p. 39). Here the man stands, perhaps inwardly tormented but outwardly unexposed, while the woman's behavior and sexual activity have been tried in the court of public opinion. This situation underscores the differing punishments that men and women receive for the same sin. Social reconstructionists look at "hidden aspects of the curriculum that invisibly shape human behavior" (Schiro, 2007, p. 162). This scene likewise examines critically those hidden dynamics and biases that govern relations between the sexes. Social efficiency and social reconstruction interlock to produce a novel that acknowledges and preserves the social structure but also questions it.

Social Reconstruction-Oriented Works

Of Mice and Men engages in social reconstruction by depicting the plight of individuals afflicted with mental disabilities. Lennie, a grown man, lacks coping skills, becoming distraught over a mouse's death (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 8). Compared to George, Lennie seems – nay, *is* – naïve, emotionally and mentally helpless despite his physical bulk. After Lennie kills Curley's wife, George says, "We can't let 'im get away. Why, the poor bastard'd starve ... Maybe they'll lock 'im up and an' be nice to 'im" (p. 88). These statements, which seem alternately to condemn and sympathize with Lennie, tacitly acknowledge a social problem. George knows that Lennie never meant to kill the wife, but he knows also that the law will perceive Lennie as it would any other murderer, offering him no leniency. The novella thus shows society's lack of understanding vis-à-vis mental disabilities, its unwillingness *to* understand individuals with these disabilities. Justice, as the saying goes, should be swift and fair. Never should a crime be excused, as George demonstrates by not "let[ting] 'im get away," but the law should recognize mitigating circumstances and adjudicate accordingly. George's fears indicate the unlikelihood of this outcome, showing readers the lack of justice in the situation and thus accomplishing a key goal of social reconstruction.

The men's broader predicament works to inform readers about the effects of Great Depression. George refers to "work cards and bus tickets" and recounts his and Lennie's "shovin' all over the country all the time" (p. 3, 9). This dialogue alludes to the desperate economic conditions that prevailed during the 1930s. During that time, the country's unemployment rate exceeded twenty-five percent, and displaced agricultural workers fled to California (Frank & Bernanke, 2007, p. 98; Gregory, 1989, p. 10; cf. Steinbeck's *The*

Grapes of Wrath). According to Gregory (1989), contemporary historians compared these migrants to “refugees” who had embarked upon a “flight from privation” (p. 10). Though George and Lennie’s exact origins remain unclear, the novella itself takes place in California (p. 1). that they have encountered the same hardships the researchers describe. Such geographic, economic, and cultural verisimilitude moves the work toward the realm of historical fiction. Indeed, by explicitly setting the novella in this time period, Steinbeck informs readers about the deplorable conditions – the economic insecurity, the fear of unemployment and starvation, the lack social welfare – of the era.

Of Mice and Men, with its portrayal of interpersonal and societal inequities, accomplishes nearly all the objectives of social reconstruction. According to Schiro (2007), social reconstructionists first attempt to identify a problem (p. 151), and *Of Mice and Men* addresses many: poverty, misunderstanding of individuals with mental disabilities, difficulties of settling into a new community, etc. Its references to history only make these problems more poignant, as readers realize that thousands of people shared George and Lennie’s plight. Moreover, the novella envisions resolutions to these problems, the improved society that Schiro mentions (p. 151). At one point George says, “If I was bright ... I’d have my own little place, I’d be bringin’ in my own crops” (p. 37). This statement reflects not only George’s personal desires but also a vision for society. George, like many men of this time, longs for comfort, security, and self-sufficiency, and he envisions a country whose economic climate proves conducive to this goal. The social reconstruction mindset, an emphasis on identification and rectification of social ills, suffuses the novella’s pages.

A Raisin in the Sun advocates social reconstruction through its examination of African-Americans' economic plight. On many occasions, the Youngers openly address their straitened circumstances. Ruth, for example, considers obtaining an abortion because the family cannot support another child, while Walter Lee laments, "...and all I got to give [my son] is stories about how rich white people live" (Hansberry, 1959, p. 75, 34). The family's economic frustrations reflect fully the hardships of African Americans in the 1950s. . Schiele (2011) notes that "Unemployment rates soared for African American men in the 1950s and became even more established by the 1980s" (p. 32). The Youngers' story draws from reality, allowing the play to transcend its pages to become a piece of social commentary; it serves not merely to entertain but to highlight actual injustice. This relation of fiction to actual social ills and inequities fits comfortably into the social-reconstruction ethos.

The characters' proposed solutions also symbolize the social-reconstructionist commitment to redressing social ills. Ruth recalls Walter Lee's claim that "colored people ain't never going to start getting ahead till they start gambling on some different kind of things in the world – investments and things" (p. 42). This statement indicates that the traditional economic arrangement – wages paid by an employer – has proved insufficient to bolster African Americans' fortunes. Instead, African Americans should take economic initiative. The Youngers live in a society that impedes such actions, and Walter Lee sees these obstacles and considers ways to circumvent them. He displays a reconstructionist mindset by "forming a group vision [in this case, an African-American vision] ... of what a more just world might look like" (Schiro, 2007, p. 159). Walter Lee knows that the current system will oppress him, that he will continue to languish in

mediocrity, so he dreams of changing it as a means to attain more equitable conditions. His commitment to improving his and others' lives more firmly establishes the play's reconstructionist *bona fides*.

Asagai's solution approaches reconstruction from a different angle, advocating separatism as means to achieve a better society. He announces his intention to return to Africa, saying, "...or perhaps I shall live to be a very old man, respected and esteemed in my new nation" (p. 135). Unlike Walter Lee, he has little desire to work within the current system. Rather, he wants to abandon it entirely and find a place where he need not grovel for respect. Furthermore, he has adopted an African name, subtly announcing his renunciation of "American" society and nomenclature. Asagai views social justice not only as a matter of values but also of geography: sometimes creating a better life might entail creating a home elsewhere. Social reconstruction provides the broad goal of "making the world a better place" (Schiro, 2007, p. 159), and Asagai's solution represents an extreme, idiosyncratic interpretation of that objective. Social reconstructionists "attempt to build a new society out of the existing one," but the ideology makes no claims about individuals being chained to a particular society (p. 163). Asagai could recognize the futility of trying to improve America, move elsewhere, and attempt to optimize that society. Though radical in his thinking, he proposes some solution to social ills and exhibits reconstructionist thinking.

Altogether, the play's sustained focus on social issues and intersections conveys this ideological underpinning. It portrays a black family's lingering economic and social hardships, and it shows how race relates to such issues as gender and nationality. Ruth, a poor black woman, must make a harrowing reproductive choice – one with which an

affluent white woman might not be faced. Because of his race, Asagai feels alienated from his country and yearns to leave it. Walter Lee faces daily emasculation and servitude that would likely not plague a white man. Within every page, every character, lives an unspoken commentary on some aspect of society, the scars of innumerable injustices. Not merely entertainment, *A Raisin in the Sun* offers a complex, subtle glance at the deleterious effects of discrimination, and through this process it asks, or perhaps pleads, for change. A work fueled simultaneously by cynicism and idealism, it embodies social reconstruction.

The Great Gatsby engages in social reconstruction through its criticisms of social exclusion and discriminations. Specifically, the disparity between Jay Gatsby's persona and his origins indicates the rigidity of the American class system. Gatsby portrays himself as a man of unfettered opulence, throwing lavish balls and dressing in elegant clothes. After Gatsby's death, Nick meets Gatsby's father Mr. Gatz, who reveals his son's humble beginnings, aspirations to wealth, and original name (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 200, 203). These ending scenes demonstrate how Gatsby effectively reinvented himself and infiltrated the rarefied world he longed to join, but other characters' reactions to and perceptions of Gatsby – Daisy's ignoring his death (p. 205), a party guest's "sneering most bitterly" (p. 197) – suggest that his efforts proved in vain, that the rich always dismissed him as a *nouveau riche* poseur. This class consciousness implicitly addresses social problems endemic to the 1920s. According to Savran (2009), the 1920s focused heavily on class habitus, the "internalized form of class condition and of the conditioning it entails" (p. 121). In other words, individuals' behaviors served as cultural shibboleths. Their habitus, their pattern of reactions and values, would betray their true origins despite

their wealth. Jay Gatsby functions as a fictional victim of this class obsession, as an outsider despite his outward prosperity. The novella promotes social reconstruction, by presenting the harmful, even lethal effects of class discrimination.

Elsewhere, the novella criticizes the latitude afforded the upper classes. Nick muses, “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed into things and creatures [i.e., Myrtle] and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness ... and let other people clean up the mess they had made” (p. 210). He notes the *carte blanche* society bestows upon the rich. The Buchanans and their ilk enjoy privilege and freedom unknown to most. Even worse, they realize that their money can solve any problem, silence any dissent, buy any favors. Myrtle’s death simultaneously exemplifies and symbolizes this concept. The wife of an auto mechanic, she has little value to Tom or Daisy, who see her death as an inconvenience to be handled and then promptly forgotten. Here Nick’s perspective proves invaluable. An outsider, he recognizes and feels repulsion for the Buchanans’ moneyed indifference; the narrator, he leads the reader to share these feelings and criticisms. Tom and Daisy, shielded by their wealth, likely see no need for change, but Nick and Gatsby, respectively observers and victims of the rich’s decadence, envision a different society. Social reconstructionists attempt to rectify the “crisis” in society (Schiro, 2007, p. 161), and Nick perceives the crisis as one of morality being subjugated by money. His commentary and its implicit criticism of social values adhere to the social reconstruction ideology.

The novella’s underlying message about the corruption of the wealthy cements its social reconstruction leanings. *The Great Gatsby* focuses on a rarefied realm: the playground of the rich, the beautiful, the privileged. However, it employs outsider

characters who languish in that realm. Gatsby's insecurities contradict the ingrained belief that money brings happiness, and Nick casts a sober Midwestern eye on the eastern elites' nonchalant morals and conduct. Together, they tacitly condemn the "deep social structures that shape and determine" this group's behavior (Schiro, 2007, p. 162). Nick expresses disdain for this world, and his departure – his return to more respectable surroundings – indicates his refusal to tolerate its coldness any longer. His physical and emotional distance reads as a condemnation of Jazz Age society's heartless, sybaritic atmosphere. This exposé and rejection of the upper class and its carelessness roots the novella in social reconstruction principles.

To Kill a Mockingbird's focus on racial injustice and its child protagonist position it within the social reconstruction ideology. Numerous passages chronicle Scout's becoming aware of prejudice. Jem, for example, describes mixed-race children to her: "They don't belong anywhere ... [W]hite folks won't have 'em 'cause they're colored" (Lee, 1962, p. 214). Jim alludes to the "one-drop rule," the idea that "[one] drop of Negro blood ... makes you all black" (p. 216). Though related from a child's perspective, his explanation accurately addresses a longstanding prejudice. Historically, mixed-race individuals *have* encountered hate and ostracism from black and white communities. Moreover, the "one-drop rule" once served as an excuse to deny mixed-race individuals freedoms and social status. According to Hickman (1997), "mulattoes with a minimum amount of 'Black blood' were ... presumed also to be slaves" (p. 1179). Jem's speech only hints at this deeper cultural context, but it succinctly identifies a prejudice that had persisted into the novel's time. This description of prejudice – as well as Scout's bemused reaction to it – seems characteristic of the social reconstruction ideology, which aims to

“educate people to analyze and understand social problems” (Schiro, 2007, p. 152). Scout, an educable youth, has become aware of a problem, exposing her to society’s ills and setting her on the path to reconstruction.

Tom Robinson’s plight, meanwhile, educates readers about racial prejudice in the legal system. The townspeople presume Mr. Robinson, a black man, guilty of raping a white woman. This situation mirrors the predicaments of many real-life black men. According to Dorr (2005), many white southerners believed in a “rape myth,” an erroneous “[acceptance of] all white women’s accounts of rape when they accused black men” (n.p.). Such a situation occurs in the novel when the townspeople ignore evidence that would exonerate Mr. Robinson. Mr. Robinson’s being shot rather than tried fairly reflects a disregard for black men’s legal rights. The novel again serves as a semi-fictional counterpart to real-life events. Mr. Robinson could be any of the innumerable black men who have endured accusations and suffered brutality, and his mistreatment conveys the legal and social challenges that have long plagued him and men like him. This intimate glimpse into institutionalized racism raises awareness and fulfils a social reconstruction objective.

The novel’s use of a child protagonist to document these events further indicates its social reconstruction ethos. Children begin life free of prejudices, bigotry, and preconceived notions. Unable to comprehend fully discrimination and antipathy, they question such behaviors and wonder why adults act so acrimoniously. Throughout the novel, Scout displays this inability to comprehend human ugliness. When she expresses her ignorance of the term “nigger-lover,” Atticus tells her, “[It] is just one of those terms that doesn’t mean anything – like snot-nose ... [I]gnorant, trashy people use it” (p. 144).

He explains by using childish terms with which Scout might be familiar, and in the process he implicitly asserts the immaturity of racial epithets. His acknowledgement of Scout's age and naïveté reaffirm the conception of bigotry as a pestilence spread by adults. This exchange would lack the same heft with two adults. Scout as protagonist enables the narrative to approach and highlight inequities from an inherently innocent perspective.

All of these factors make *To Kill a Mockingbird* a paragon of social reconstruction. The novel examines fully the realities and inequalities of its historical setting. Scout and her brother live fairly privileged lives, but they encounter others, not least of all Mr. Robinson, who have suffered under the same society. Rather than dismiss this suffering – rather than trivialize it as part of southern life – the novel addresses and explains it. Moreover, it delivers its judgments through a child's eyes, enabling readers to feel as flummoxed and discomfited as Scout herself. It commits itself to critiquing society and showing how individuals can notice and protest hatred – a quintessential element of social reconstruction.

The Crucible criticizes the use of religion as a tool of condemnation and social manipulation. The unseen narrator questions the Christian perception of Hell and damnation: “[U]ntil the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area” (Miller, 1976, Loc. 609). Miller's play suggests that previous religions had no strict dichotomy of heaven and hell and no moral distinctions between them. Only under Christian teachings did Hell become the obverse of Heaven, a pit of eternal torment. The play attributes this Christian characterization of Hell to political motives: “[T]he Devil may become evident as a weapon ... to whip men into a surrender to a particular church

or church-state” (Loc. 609). Threatened with eternal suffering, the faithful could be made to obey the church’s orders, to relinquish their tithes, to accept ill treatment. This passage subtly accuses Christianity of bastardizing religious principles. Herein lies the play’s “understanding a problem” (Schiro, 2007, p. 159) that establishes it as a reconstructionist piece.

The plot itself provides practical examples to support these theoretical criticisms. It centers on Salem, Massachusetts, a town plagued by accusations of witchcraft, but the text shows that these accusations as ploys to further the accusers’ ends. Mr. Putnam, for example, wishes to buy the executed persons’ land and bolster his social status, so “it is not surprising to find that so many accusations against people are in [his] handwriting” (Loc. 296). Similarly, Abigail, the most prolific accuser and the origin of the furor, seeks revenge against her lover’s wife (Loc. 450). These characters hold no true religious convictions. They offer “pretense,” not true accounts of demonic activity (Loc. 1524). They distort religion to satisfy their selfish desires and profit from suffering. The narrator and the other characters adopt a sharply critical tone toward the accusers, showing how scurrilous lies have damaged reputations and livelihoods. The accusers provide human faces to the narrator’s criticism of Christianity – or, rather, individuals’ co-opting of Christianity to achieve nefarious ends – and they show how this obsession with damnation, judgment, and sanctimony infects the morale of a society. By illustrating its claims with human interactions, the play addresses a social problem on concrete terms.

Though fictional, the play serves as an allegory and criticism of the Red Scare of the 1950s. The narrator writes, “[I]n America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red [Communist] hell” (Loc. 621). During the

Red Scare, Senator Joseph McCarthy and his ilk practiced targeted and persecuted individuals who had any link, no matter how tangential, with “subversive organizations” (Cole, 2003, p. 6). These individuals faced the wrath of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), designed to expose these “subversive” influences. By explicitly mentioning this event, the play draws parallels between the Red Scare’s victims and the witch hunt’s victims. Both groups faced unsubstantiated accusations, suffered blows to their reputations, and even died literally or figuratively. The play’s term “Red hell” links the themes of McCarthyism to the themes of religious persecution. Specifically, it implies that McCarthy and the accusers of the play strove to destroy lives and benefit from others’ pain. An allegory, the play criticizes government and religion, two prominent social institutions, and it implicitly calls for a religious and public reformation that emphasizes empathy and investigation over demonization and quick judgment. These critical messages link it definitively to the social reconstruction ideology.

Scholar Academic/ Social Reconstruction-Oriented Works

Animal Farm’s status as a political, historical allegory establishes it as a scholar academic work. The animals’ dialogue and actions mirror those of real-life leaders and philosophers. Major Pig, for example, declaims, “Let us face it, our lives are miserable, laborious and short ... [We are] forced to work to the last atom of our strength ... and [finally] slaughtered with hideous cruelty” (Orwell, 2016, Loc. 244). The Major’s claims echo the sentiments and objectives of Marxist ideology. He casts the animals as the proletariat who enrich the capitalists, or farmers. Moreover, his exhortation to “get rid of Man, and the produce of our labor would be our own” (Loc. 270) reflects the class conflict

envisaged by Marx: like the real-life proles, these creatures should overthrow their oppressors. Many works derive inspiration from real-life events, certainly, but *Animal Farm* thoroughly summarizes, elucidates, and repackages these events, passing them through a literary and metaphorical filter. In other words, the fable not only draws from history but delves deeply into it. This emphasis on providing scholarly, if figurative, analysis of history suggests an affinity with the scholar academic ideology.

Of course, a mere penchant for facts and history may not necessarily align a work with the scholar academic ideology if the work ignores context and causality. *Animal Farm*, a work replete with scholar-academic characteristics, commits itself to “[initiating] children into an academic discipline at the level at which it is being taught” (Schiro, 2007, p. 20). In any discipline understanding comes not in one piece but in various stages. One must attain a novice’s knowledge and ability before progressing to higher tiers, and to that end one must consult writings and resources that facilitate entry into and basic comprehension of the discipline. *Animal Farm* accomplishes this goal by functioning as a veritable primer on political theory, Marxist and Communist ideology, and the context of the Russian Revolution. Its extended metaphor – animals as exploited proles, Napoleon’s tyranny as evidence of Communism’s innate unviability, etc. – familiarize these concepts, couching them in terms more easily understood by readers. It may not offer an exhaustive examination of these ideas as a history book would, but it imparts the fundamentals and encourages further study. This unspoken goal of initiating readers into political and social analysis solidifies the connection to the scholar academic ideology.

The fable also contains an undercurrent of social reconstructionist sentiment, albeit one minimized by the failure of the animals’ utopia. Social reconstruction involves

envisioning a better, more equitable society, and the animals' striving for equitable distribution of resources certainly reflects that mindset. Unfortunately, the animals' vision remains a fantasy due to Napoleon's betraying them and fraternizing with humans. This outcome shows the flaws inherent in the animals' plan; it conveys the notion that greed, human or animal, precludes the formation of a classless society. In other words, the animal's utopia quickly reverts to its former state. Given the fable's historical and political context, the intermingling of these two ideologies seems appropriate. Often, intrepid citizens mount a revolution only to flounder, but their failures become advice and warnings for subsequent generations. The fable lends itself to the scholar-academic ideology by allegorically communicate the era's political turmoil, but it also embraces social reconstruction by showing societally transformative efforts and the labor involved in them. Together, these ideologies yield a work equally intent on transmitting cultural information and planting germs of revolution.

Learner Centered-Oriented Works

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, with its protagonist who flouts social norms and seeks individual fulfillment, stands as a testament to the learner-centered ideology. Huck recounts Miss Watson's efforts to instill manners in him, resenting her orders not to "put your feet up there" or "scrunch up like that" or "gap and stretch like that" (Twain, 2015, p. 8). Miss Watson's directions symbolize an attempt to civilize Huck. His resistance further symbolizes a dilemma faced by any individualist: though he must live in society, he longs to be free of its strictures; the ceaseless instructions and the limitations render him "tired and lonesome." Huck has no desire to reform society. Rather, he simply wishes to abandon society's rules entirely, to explore and discover on

his own. Like Schiro's theoretical learner-centered students, Huck longs to learn through "self-expression," and he spurns Miss Watson, who seems to regard him as a "future adult" rather than a child with unique interests (Schiro, 2007, p. 116). Huck's rejection of conformist education and inclination toward individuality convey the novel's learner-centered mentality.

Huck's eventual freedom confirms this learner-centered orientation. Free of his father, Huck triumphantly proclaims, "... I went exploring down through the island. I was boss of it; it all belonged to me, so to say, and I wanted to know all about it; but mainly I wanted to put in the time" (p. 30). In this statement lies the essence of the learner-centered ideology and its practitioners. Schiro's ideology perceives learners as "agents who must actualize their own growth," and it defines "beneficial" learning as learning that "come[s] out naturally" (p. 115). Huck's solitude and autonomy on the island reflect these principles. He lacks a structured curriculum but displays great curiosity about his surroundings and their minutiae. Moreover, as "the boss of it," he can dictate the focus and pace of his learning and study what he deems relevant. His knowledge will be gleaned "naturally" as a result of his learning organically, with no set schedule. This equation of freedom with learning, this appreciation for a child's preferences and inclinations, expresses learner-centered sentiments.

Strangely, the novel's sexist undertones actually help to prove its learner-centered orientation. Roland Martin (1992) claims that novels such as *Huckleberry Finn* show society's distaste for domesticity, the realm of women. Protagonists such as Huck and *Moby Dick's* Ishmael flee home and "shed relationships," and these works' "celebration of the individual" reflects our "cultural heritage and [its] ... antipathy toward home" (Loc.

2053, 2041). These novels promulgate the notion that men should be able to live unencumbered, “learner-centered” lives, while women should be relegated to the restrictive domestic sphere. *Huckleberry Finn* reaffirms these sexist stereotypes: Huck, a young boy, achieves freedom and autonomy, and in the process, he leaves behind a rigid, regimented, mannered world ruled largely by women. He thus has the opportunity to be an “individual” in the educational and social sense. By implicitly upholding this cultural dichotomy, *Huckleberry Finn* indirectly supports the tenets of the learner-centered ideology... if in an unequal fashion.

Discussion

Curricular Ideology	Number of Representative Works
Social Efficiency	5 (<i>Macbeth, Hamlet, A Separate Peace, Julius Caesar, Lord of the Flies</i>)
Social Efficiency/Social Reconstruction	3 (<i>Romeo and Juliet, Wuthering Heights, The Scarlet Letter</i>)
Social Reconstruction	5 (<i>Of Mice and Men, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Crucible, The Great Gatsby, A Raisin in the Sun</i>)
Scholar Academic/ Soc. Reconstruction	1 (<i>Animal Farm</i>)
Learner Centered	1 (<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>)

The ideological analysis yields a plurality of works rooted at least partially in the social efficiency ideology. This result – and this high number of selections that call for the preservation of society and its institutions – echoes the researchers’ claims about the purpose of public schooling. Though the social efficiency-oriented works address

different facets of culture, all evince the same mindset that emphasizes perpetuation of current values and ideals. Indeed, the actions and values advocated in the works correspond to writings about the goals of the school system in general.

For example, Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb (1944) note that schools “[train a minority of students] for social mobility” (p. 57). This same emphasis on class distinctions appears in *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine cannot marry Heathcliff because of his lowly status, but her family eagerly accepts a marriage to wealthy Edgar Linton. Catherine and Edgar have received this training for mobility by virtue of their birth; Heathcliff, by virtue (or vice) of his, has not. The novel thus mirrors the school system that researchers describe – a system in which a minority of students receives advantages and support. Moreover, the novel’s end finds this system virtually unchanged. The work thus transmits the tacit message that the class system is immovable, and it perhaps even encourages the acceptance and continuance of it.

Similarly, Westheimer and Kane (2004) observe that schools preserve the status quo by training students to be passive rather than active, political members of society. Many of the social efficiency-oriented works share this negative attitude toward youth advocacy or action. *Romeo and Juliet* serves as the quintessential example of this claim. The titular teenagers rebel against their families’ wishes and the prescribed social order. By the play’s end, the two have died, felled by their rejection of sensible adult advice. This ending implies the brutal consequences of youth advocacy. Similarly, *Lord of the Flies* takes youth advocacy and its consequences to perilous extremes. The boys’ ersatz civilization, devoid of adult guidance and instruction, collapses. Again, this work

implicitly tells students to defer to adult expertise. These works nicely complement schools' focus on political inaction by dissuading youth involvement.

According to other researchers, schools also operate with cultural goals in mind. According to Galloway and Edwards (2013, p. 26), schools teach students to live in the dominant culture. This objective and the dangers of contravening it can be seen in the social efficiency works. *Macbeth*, for instance, features a protagonist who circumvents custom by killing the king and withholding the throne from the rightful heir. He ignores society's rules in his lust for the crown. His death warns that social deviance brings disaster. *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*, too, follows characters who buck social order for political and personal expediency. These characters' untimely ends serve as cautionary tales, telling readers to behave appropriately and obey accepted norms and values. These works thus assimilate students into to the culture by illustrating the perils of contradicting it.

This message arrives in more benign forms, too. *A Separate Peace* features no bloody coups or gruesome deaths. Rather, it simply seeks to depict and normalize American culture. It focuses on young boys who, after their idyllic school days, follow life's script: careers, military service, etc. In the novel's view, these events seem healthy and eventual; they touch all lives without exception. Though innocent and nostalgic, the narrator's musings reinforce social efficiency by emphasizing a specific "script" for life.

While a plurality of the works adheres to social efficiency, a sizable number of the works have affinity with the social reconstruction ideology. Many of these works criticize the dominant culture by highlighting the injustices experienced by an oppressed group. *A Raisin in the Sun*, for instance, shows how American society denies black

individuals economic parity and social respect, while *The Great Gatsby* examines the deleterious effects of America's class system and the decadence of the rich. Others focus on historical inequities, the failings of the culture at a particular time. *Of Mice and Men* depicts the economic hardship that predominated during the Great Depression, *To Kill a Mockingbird* shows racism in the context of the Jim Crow south, and *The Crucible* equates the Salem witch hysteria to the Communist witch hunts of the 1950s. The novels differ in setting and characters, but they all criticize and provide solutions – implicit and explicit – for redressing social ills. Whereas the social efficiency novels assimilate students into to a culture, these novels prompt them to view the culture objectively and to notice its faults.

What, then, can explain the relatively equal number of social efficiency- and social reconstruction-oriented works? Do not these two ideologies have some conflicting goals? What do these ideological results indicate about the objectives of the school system?

These results might indicate warring factions within the school system – specifically, conflicts between policymakers (legislators, school administrators) and teachers. Anyon (1980) used the term “hidden curriculum” to refer to schools’ unstated goals and use of socioeconomic tracking, but full understanding of this term requires knowledge of curricular creation and dissemination. According to Gordon (1984), legislators perceive a public education as a “[medium] for transmitting the values, beliefs, and ideology of their community” (p. 524). The final curriculum, the material actually taught to students, bears influence from individuals bent on preserving certain “values.” Ergo, these individuals would likely advocate a curriculum replete with social efficiency

– a curriculum whose materials tell students how to behave and what to believe. This idea might work to explain the abundance of social efficiency-minded literary works, as the individuals in power tailor the curriculum to suit current society’s needs.

The appreciable number of social reconstruction works, conversely, might indicate rebellion against such values inculcation – rebellion mounted by teachers. Yoon, Simpson, and Haag (2010) write that teachers embrace “multicultural literature” to “[help] students critically analyze their cultural, social, and political worlds” and to “challenge the existing [monocultural] canon” (p. 110). Teachers recognize the exclusionary nature of the traditional canon, and they attempt to use new works to broaden students’ perspectives. To be blunter, they use literature to fight the cultural and social edicts that plague the curriculum. This conflict manifests itself in the literature that reaches the classroom: the people above (i.e., legislators) insist upon works that stress social efficiency, while the people beneath (i.e., teachers) favor works that support social reconstruction. One group wishes to keep students trapped in the same social structures; the other group wants to foster students’ advocacy and help them break societal bonds.

The lack of learner-centered works seems telling. Schiro (2007) notes that learner-centered schools “orient themselves around the needs and interests of children rather than around parental and societal expectations for children” (p. 105). Many schools have yet to embrace this model. Instead, they practice what Schiro and others dub “traditional education,” the standard model of students following a prescribed curriculum and listening to teachers’ lessons. They see the students as future servants of society, not vice versa. Therefore, the dearth of learner-centered works (only one) seems

simultaneously lamentable and predictable. Schools have no desire to teach true autonomy, so they shun works featuring that concept.

A similar explanation could be applied to the small number of scholar academic works. This ideology aims to “initiate children into an academic discipline at the level at which it is being taught” (Schiro, 2007, p. 20). It believes that lessons should be tailored to the specific discipline. For example, if students aspire to be biologists, they should conduct the work of biologists, structuring their learning and inquiry as a biologist might. School curricula, conversely, adopt a standardized approach; they seek to arm students with general skills necessary to participate in society. Works overly rooted in one discipline (e.g., *Animal Farm* and political science) might seem too esoteric from this perspective. Scholar academic works thus go underrepresented.

This ideological spread definitively links the school system, social objectives, and works used in English classrooms. Schools operate as extensions of the government. Social institutions, they seek to accomplish society’s primary goal: molding young people into citizens who will uphold social order and structure, fuel the economic machine, and remain within the confines of their respective classes. The social efficiency-oriented works, which emphasize social cohesion and punishment for deviation, reflect this cultural mindset and its influence on curriculum. Similarly, the social reconstruction works, which demand redress for social ills, mirror the myriad movements for equality that dot the social landscape. If schools represent a microcosm of society, these literary ideologies represent the conflicting viewpoints – conformity versus individuality, stability versus revolution, freedom versus restriction – that seek to attain dominance over the youth and, by extension, the future.

Conclusion and Next Steps

A snappy 1940s newspaper reporter might remark, “Everybody’s got an angle.” This concept pervades society. Anything touched by human hands or shaped by human minds has a viewpoint, an inborn bias. How could subjective minds produce anything else? We all aim to influence each other, to assert our opinions; we want our respective views of reality to reign supreme.

The school system functions in much the same way. Education occurs not in a vacuum but in a wider world filled with special interests, social groups, and ideological disagreements. Ergo, education and curriculum can differ according to who holds power, who creates curriculum, who determines the structure and function of educational institutions. These ideologies manifest themselves most starkly in curricular materials. Literature, the ultimate human product, contains the same viewpoints and biases that define human opinion and interaction. The surface conveys only a portion of a work’s message; the subtext, the commentary that lurks just beneath, proves far more influential.

Though such subliminal messages will never disappear, teachers can at least be cognizant of them. Specifically, they can interrogate the works they intend to teach, asking such questions as, “What does it encourage my students to do or not to do? What ideology does it support, and how aggressively?” Choosing the right ideological spread can give students a broad view of society; it can expose them not only to myriad viewpoints and cultures, as literary study should, but also to different perceptions of reality and their place in it. Every literary work (or television show or movie) has a slant, but teachers can balance these slants and teach an equitable social agenda.

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