

From Statesmanship to Status: The Absence of Authority in Contemporary Curriculum Studies

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The prestige of the profession is at low ebb. Our authority as experts is, it seems, deeply damaged, and not only among politicians and the public, but among many in the university. In terms of influence, the distance between school and scholarship has never been greater. Our circumstances are so bleak they constitute, I suggest, a “nightmare” (Pinar 2004a, 3, 57). It is a term I use psychoanalytically (in specific reference to the nightmare that brought Freud’s most famous patient to therapy), to suggest the dream-like character of present political reality. The results of events in a primal past beyond our capacity to reconstruct, reality renders us as if asleep, defenseless, facing the wolves.

In this research essay ¹, I will examine two quite different characterizations of the present situation by two prominent spokesmen for our profession: Stanford University Professor David F. Labaree and former Harvard Graduate School of Education Dean Ted Sizer. In part due to their institutional affiliations, each is positioned to represent us – both schoolteachers and education professors – to a larger political public that judges us to be the problem. Speaking from positions of authority, each could clarify what is at stake in the politics of scapegoating – first focused on teachers, now on education professors – and thereby strengthen our professional authority. Do they? I will answer that question through an examination of their recent books: Sizer’s *The Red Pencil* and Labaree’s *The Trouble with Ed Schools*. Through such study we can, I believe, begin to attend to the absence of authority in contemporary curriculum studies.

I

Statesmanship

If Sisyphus were a scholar, his field would be education.
David F. Labaree (2004, 77)

I start with Ted Sizer's autobiographical reflection - he calls it as "an argument wrapped in a memoir" (2004, xviii) - on his long and important career. Named dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1964 at age 31, the originator of the Coalition of Essential Schools (started later, while he was teaching at Brown University), a former principal of the Andover Academy, this distinguished statesman begins his history of the present – "today's impatient and arrogant political climate" (Sizer 2004, 41) – when he was fourteen, a tenth-grader struggling with second-year Latin. His instructor was a severe taskmaster who used a red pencil to record his evaluation of students' classroom recitations. The memory of that pencil and the penalties it recorded remains with Sizer (2004, x) today, a "painful" reminder not only of his battle with Latin but with, as well, a painful reminder that his struggle could be so readily reduced to a single letter in the teacher's grade-book. Like so much autobiographical experience, Sizer's memory has social significance. "What is remarkable," Sizer (2004, xi) rues, "is that so much of the 1946 regimen is still with us." The current versions of the red pencil are, Sizer (2004, xvi) appreciates, "abrupt, one-shot assessments," now legislated by the Bush Administration.

Acknowledging the legitimacy of tradition², Sizer (2004, xiii) declares that today's secondary schools "fail" to "countervail" the contingencies of family, wealth, and residence. Our respect for the idea of public education coupled with our inability to fund public education accordingly constitutes, for Sizer (2004, xiii), an "American paradox." Sizer (see 2004, 1) is clear that the schools cannot succeed on their own. Why? For starters, children spend more than twice their waking hours outside of school, time often

more influential than that spent in the classroom (see Sizer 2004, 4). Conservatives are (or, pretend to be) convinced otherwise.³ Criticism of public education is, Sizer (2004, 5) writes, departing from the restraint he exhibits throughout the book, “now a big, noisy, self-righteous industry.”

Insisting that school can be *the* lever for social improvement, Sizer (2004, 5) notes that conservatives are silent on the “most sensible, indeed stunningly obvious, remedy,” namely the coordination of social and educational services (including medical and financial services) to “create a seamless support and ministering system.” I argue the conservative silence is deliberate. To distract the public from their assault on the poor - by ending welfare, by enacting tax policies in favor of corporations and the wealthy, and by their refusal to enact national health care - conservatives cynically cite the schools as the pivot of social and economic progress (Pinar 2004a). Sizer (2004, 5), too, understands: “if we want a powerfully educated population we must attend to all aspects of each child’s situation, in deliberate, sustained combination.”

This realization started for Sizer forty years ago, during his graduate work in history and education in Harvard’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. His advisor was the eminent historian Bernard Bailyn, whose *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* had been published in 1960, just as Sizer was his starting dissertation research. The book “profoundly” influenced how Sizer understood his own work (see Sizer 2004, 5). Conceived broadly as cultural forces institutionalized through formal and informal agencies, education, Bailyn argued, structures society (see Sizer 2004, 7). Not before and certainly not now, Sizer is clear, can schools operate as if they were the sole or most influential factor in the education of youth. “Schools are important,” Sizer (2004, 8) underscores, “but only to the extent that they are part of a larger, thoughtful pattern.”

This historical insight was made sociological when Daniel Patrick Moynihan came to Harvard in July 1966 as Professor of Education and Urban Politics and the Director of

the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies. Moynihan taught two courses in the Education School. Sizer (2004, 9) recalls the day when Moynihan “strode” into his Harvard office (Sizer was no longer a graduate student but now dean), “flung” a pile of paper on his desk, and “announced,” in the “colorful manner” with which Sizer says he quickly became accustomed: “This is the most dangerous report in the history of American education. What, Mr. Dean, are you going to do about it?” The report had an innocuous title, Sizer thought at first; it was a report to the Congress on “equal educational opportunity.” It turned out to be the “second largest social science survey in history,” conducted by the University of Chicago sociologist James S. Coleman. Conservatives – such as Diane Ravitch – reconstruct Coleman as a conservative school reform advocate.⁴

She is not entirely mistaken. Coleman and Moynihan are guilty of indirectly supporting subsequent conservative school reform when they challenged earlier definitions of educational “quality” as largely dependant upon “inputs” (among these the quality of school buildings, the size of classes, the opportunities for extracurricular opportunities, etc.). After Coleman, however, equal opportunity was to be measured by “outputs,” among these (in Coleman’s study) the test scores of 570,000 children. Only if students from differing groups scored roughly the same scores, Coleman insisted, could we conclude there was equal educational opportunity (see Sizer 2004, 10).

The shift from “input” to “output” was, Sizer (2004, 10) points out, what caused Moynihan to term the Equal Educational Opportunity Report “dangerous.” “Effectiveness” referred not to what a community offered as school, but to what the students demonstrated as a result of attending the school.⁵ “In a profound way,” Sizer (2004, 10) acknowledges, “the Coleman team invented what drove the efforts of the so-called standards movement in the 1990s.”⁶ In the hands of liberals, Coleman’s conception supported greater governmental intervention in the material circumstances of children; in the hands of conservatives, it justifies governmental insistence that schools

themselves (and alone) are responsible for student learning. In the hands of conservatives, governmental support – specifically supplemental medical, financial, and psychological support, coordinated as Sizer points out – recedes.

Sizer confides that he resisted Coleman’s “finding” that students’ achievement is not likely to be changed much by the size of the class, the quality of the teacher, or the seriousness of the school. “Nonetheless,” he reflects, “the data, crude though they might be, sat there” (2004, 12). Unlike conservatives’ allegation that schools are failing and teachers are incompetent, Coleman and Moynihan were acknowledging that there was much more to children’s education than what transpired in schools.

Sizer provides an autobiographical memory to illustrate what might be required to support children’s educational achievement. That memory is his military experience in the mid-1950s peacetime-but-on-war-alert army led by confident World War II veterans. Many of his fellow soldiers, Sizer remembers, came from low-income neighborhoods and their schools, schools Coleman may well have defined as “low performing.” To that experience – “demanding” and “starkly confined” as Sizer (2004, 13) characterizes it – “many responded quickly, and, with the G.I. Bill to support formal education when they had completed their tour of duty, many surely eventually joined the middle class.”

Did they? I would like to see the data. Even in a prison – surely a “demanding and starkly confined” regimen in which often brutal discipline defines the experience – “students” often fail to rehabilitate. (As criminologist James B. Jacobs (1983, 95) notes: “Attendance at public school, although a rather encompassing experience, is nowhere near as total and pervasive an experience as prison.”) Sizer’s point is well-taken, however, if in a different sense that he intends: “accountability” is a cover story for the cultural authoritarianism conservatives want teachers to effect through a disciplined regimen of assessment and testing. The same holds for the military, as it is the poor who are most relentlessly recruited to populate an U.S. Army doomed to fight Mr. Bush’s War in Iraq. If the poor return alive, at least they will be “disciplined.”

The process of education occurs within “configurations” (the term is Lawrence Cremin’s; see Sizer 2004, 22) of multiple influences. “What counts,” Sizer (2004, 15) concludes, “is with whom a young person consorts and what images invade his world.” Indeed, a variety of influences disperse the force of any one influence, be it “family or school” (Sizer 2004, 21). Do many parents believe the right-wing scapegoating of teachers because they want a fantasy to compensate for the insufficient control they themselves have over their own children? It was, I argue, gendered and racialized anxieties that animated 1960s national curriculum reform (see Pinar 2004a, chapter 3). No surprise that parental concern for the children they see slipping away from them becomes expressed as support for an “accountability” for which parents themselves do not wish to be held responsible.

Prominent among the multiple influences that shape a child’s education today is technology. Sizer (2004, 23) points out that “virtually all of the media intrusion is attached to commerce.” It is clear from other passages (see Sizer 2004, 56, 73) that Sizer has a limited appreciation for the business model of education; however, he welcomes technology in education, despite its history of excessive and failed promise (see Pinar et al. 1995, 704-719). His view derives not from an uncritical acceptance of technology, but from his unwillingness to confine education to what occurs within a school building. He sees, then, “enormous promise” (Sizer 2004, 23) in “online distance learning,” but primarily because it reduces the need for a building to house students and their teachers. Instead, students may conduct their academic work in “virtual” courses on his or her computer. “At its oversold worst,” Sizer (2004, 24) acknowledges, “it [distance learning] will further atomize and cheapen what a serious secondary education can and must be.”

Given this analysis, what does Sizer recommend? He makes eight points, none of which is, he acknowledges, “new” (Sizer 2004, 25). (He also insists none is “bizarre” [2004, 25], an evidently gratuitous comment made rhetorically sensible by considering the domination of school reform by conservatives.) The first point is that students are

individuals - “no two children are ever quite the same” (2004, 25) – an point obvious to everywhere except the Bush Administration and the test-making industry. Following from the Coleman Report’s emphasis on “outputs,” the second point is that compulsory education must be judged in terms of performance rather than school attendance. (This one, as Sizer knows, is a sticky wicket ⁷.) His third point is that all citizens should bear the true costs of this education ⁸, a civic obligation that leads to his fourth point, namely that the financing of public education should be linked to the financing of other programs serving the same people (Sizer lists housing, physical and mental health, and job preparation), and in so doing, establish “incentives” for “collaboration” (Sizer 2004, 25).

In his fifth point, Sizer (2004, 26) manages to marginalize the school building, insisting that multiple sites of education be allowed, among them homes, workplaces, the media, and the “street” ⁹ as well as schools. His sixth point supports public funds following the child rather than being funneled into institutions, with more funds following the children of poorer families than the affluent ¹⁰. The seventh is renewed and increased support for public television, providing all-day child-friendly educational programming and Internet access not infiltrated by commerce. His final point supports variation in the programmatic expression of these ideas (see Sizer 2004, 26).

Avoiding the insidious notion of “classroom management,” Sizer understands that teachers are able to teach by virtue of their authority. Such authority is intellectual, psychological, and only finally, institutional. Discussing a teacher named Michele, Sizer (2004, 47) tells us that she “clearly” had “authority,” by which he means she enjoyed “substantial control over her work and workplace.” This control was not bureaucratic authority; it derived from “respect” – not only from school authorities and colleagues, but, most importantly, from students and their parents – for Michele’s “particular, personal professionalism” (2004, 47).

I am writing this at the conclusion of the fall semester 2004. Part of my assignment this term has been the supervision of student teachers. My “observations” focused

primarily on the curriculum, secondarily (although inextricably interrelated with the curriculum) on teaching. The curriculum is standardized at the high school where I worked with three of the student teachers, but, despite identical textbook entries on (say) John Donne, each class was, of course, different, because the teachers and students are individuals. What I noticed, what I criticized, what I recommended (often additional reading, sometimes slightly altered conduct) differed. Now that I am facing the final evaluation, I am told I must use a “checklist” of teaching behaviors. I will share with LSU’s Director of Student Teaching and with the new Dean of the College of Education this page from Sizer’s book (2004, 47) with my suggestion for altering this institutional (mis)conduct. The standardization of teaching undermines – perhaps even precludes - the cultivation of professional authority.

Having worked for thirty-five years on the significance of subjectivity to education, specifically the uses of autobiography for understanding educational experience, I will be forgiven, I trust, for dwelling on this point. In a time when teachers’ conduct was unregulated, teachers often expressed (some, of course, still do) the racism of the period; ameliorative bureaucratization, including standardization, was to be welcomed. But now, in a time when standardization is in the service of political conservatism, gender conformity, intellectual timidity, and cultural authoritarianism, it is anathema. In such a nightmarish, historical moment – in the months after Bush’s re-election – one is obligated to speak of professional authority in intellectual and individual terms.

Sizer does so. Acknowledging that “today, the expression of authority – power – is to an unprecedented degree now found in the form of regulation and threat” (2004, 52), Sizer appreciates that professionalism is properly an expression of what he terms “constructive individualism” (2004, 48). This is an awkward phrase, but necessary I suppose, given the ongoing misunderstanding of such individuality expressed in the U.S. cult of “individualism,” in which self-aggrandizement, social assault, and economic exploitation are rationalized politically in terms of “individual opportunity” in the “free

market.”¹¹ Such “constructive individualism” – autobiography can support its formation – enables “authority.” Sizer (2004, 48) goes even further, associating authority with “powerful personal idiosyncrasy” which, he is clear, “is the enemy of bureaucratic systems that require predictable behavior.” While Michele teaches her students “one way,” Sizer (2004, 48) notes, another “equally successful” teacher will, no doubt, teach in a “sharply differing” way. I would add that the educator as individual might herself teach in more than one way; indeed, one might teach unpredictably, according to time, place, and those children assembled in the classroom.

It is in the context of professionalism as “constructive individualism” that Sizer discusses class size. Class size is often justified on “learning” grounds; smaller classes portend increased learning, i.e. increased scores on standardized tests. Sizer argues on the behalf of smaller classes - and smaller schools (see Sizer 2004, 50; see also Raywid and Schmerler 2003) - for the sake of teacher authority. If a teacher is expected to be an “authority” on each of his or her students, Sizer (2004, 49) says sensibly, s/he must teach no more students than one can know well, in a secondary school “fewer than eighty.” Moreover, one must be the teacher for a period long enough to make the “necessary connections” with each student. Finally, one must be part of a faculty who share the students, enabling one see in a student that which any individual teacher might overlook. David Labaree (see 2004, 47) will also acknowledge the centrality of relationship in teaching, but he will fail to specify what institutional characteristics, such as these, might support more meaningful teacher-student relationships.

The Past is Not Past

School is as school was.
Ted Sizer (2004, xvii)

Sizer wrote his doctoral dissertation on the 1893 Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies of the National Educational Association (NEA), chaired by Charles William Eliot, Harvard's President from 1869 to 1909.¹² What concerned the NEA and its Committee, Sizer (2004, 59) summarizes, was the "apparent disorder" – it was a curricular disorder - in the transition between secondary school to college. For Sizer (2004, 59), the Report's assumptions remain "deeply" (2004, 60) embedded in the ways that Americans think about and structure their secondary schools.¹³

The first assumption is that the purpose of the school is the delivery of skills and knowledge. For Sizer (2004, 60), what teachers deliver is "nice" but "secondary." Sounding for the moment like NCATE, Sizer (2004, 60) says that primary is what the student "knows" and "can do." He notes that memorization demonstrates little of educational value (a point that discredits Hirsch's curricular argument, an argument Labaree will partly praise [see Labaree 2004, 137]); Sizer (2004, 60) wishes for more of the "practical" and "resourceful" use of what is taught, "especially in new situations." This last phrase is reminiscent of Joseph Schwab, at least as Alan Block has interpreted him as within rabbinical traditions. "At the center of Judaism," Block (2004, 58) argues, "is the love and study of text – of Torah. This study is not theoretical but practical, reverential but critical: At the center of Judaism is practical study." If such "study" - not "teaching" - is at the center of "demonstrated performance," then my reservation regarding the idea eases.

The second assumption embedded in the 1893 Committee's report is, Sizer (2004, 61) suggests, the designation of "time" as the "coinage of school." Classes were structured by the number of minutes expended, packaged by the Committee as "periods": each student was to be enrolled in twenty-five to thirty-three periods per week. The truth is, Sizer (2004, 62) points out, "no one" learns in the same way in the same period of time. Timed tests fails to demonstrate performance, including for Sizer himself (see 2004, 62). The obvious, if forgotten (certainly by the Bush Administration), fact is that some learn

quickly, in some subjects but not in others; others are “slow” (Sizer 2004, 62). Even if ordinarily I learn quickly, on a Monday morning I may be “sleepy” and thereby “inattentive,” but by Wednesday I may be “brimming with energy” (Sizer 2004, 63). Ignoring these facts in its reliance on high-stakes standardized tests, the Bush Administration guarantees that children will be left behind.

The third legacy of the Report of the Committee of Ten is the notion of school subjects. What Yale College’s President Jeremiah Day characterized in 1828 as “the discipline and the furniture of the mind” (quoted in Sizer 2004, 64) became “spheres of knowledge,” institutionalized in schools as the “subjects.” Acknowledging that curriculum is “complicated,” Sizer (2004, 65) points out that the standard curriculum gives the impression of “order,” even if the reality of rapidly changing knowledge is considerably more complex.¹⁴

Charles William Eliot’s “arrogance and imagination” have always intrigued Sizer (2004, 67). During the 1970s and early 1980s, he reports, “I met those qualities again, this time in flesh and blood, in the person of Mortimer J. Adler.” Sizer was among those few assembled to enable Adler to think through what would become *The Paideia Proposal*. Adler kept “pushing” the group, Sizer (2004, 68) recalls, “back to the ideas” of the three men - Horace Mann, John Dewey, Robert Hutchins - to whom *The Paideia Proposal* would be dedicated. While the influence of the first and third men is evident in Adler’s (quoted in Sizer 2004, 68) call for the same schooling for all (an “educationally classless society”), it is not clear how Dewey’s is. As a “provocation, not a road map,” Sizer (2004, 71) used Adler’s work to organize his 1984 *Horace’s Compromise* (see Sizer 2004, 70).

Sizer (2004, 71) complains that the “education establishment” did not take Adler’s proposal seriously and, in failing to do so, “let him down.” It is true that Adler was “dismissed” as “prickly” and “out-of-touch,” dismissed by many as a “narrowly ‘classical’ (in the pejorative) philosopher” (Sizer 2004, 71). The *Proposal* appeared the

year before *A Nation at Risk*; is it surprising that it disappeared into the same reactionary and scapegoating moment? I must say it is not clear to me that “Adler deserved better” (Sizer 2004, 71). Perhaps his ideas did and do, especially as Sizer (2004, 73) depicts them, if they stress the importance of “free minds, of individual responsibility and creativity, and of the power of true democracy to create goodness – including ‘good’ schools – from a process of invention rather than a predigested, imposed plan for education.” That depiction sounds less “classical” than “progressive,” especially given how much more reactionary the present historical moment is. The importance of historical contextualization is evident in Sizer’s report on a late 1990s Harvard Kennedy School of Government Conference at which that CEO (see footnote 11) asserted that schools should be shaped after business. To the extent that they are modeled after business, Sizer (2004, 73) knows, the processes of education are “trivialized ... reduced to uniform and predictable routines that could produce evidentiary test.” During the regime of Bush, Adler almost seems a progressive.

Sizer (2004, 87) discerns the throughlines from the 1893 Committee of Ten to the Federal *No Child Left Behind* Education Act of 2001: both stipulate “order” expressed as a “detailed, uniform, imposed set of goals and procedures.” Both reflect “limited trust” in educators, not only to make “major decisions but most minor ones as well” (2004, 87). Sizer (2004, 87) finds “irony” in the situation. I wish I felt such emotional distance from the present.

There is much more to study in this thoughtful self-reflection on a distinguished career, including Sizer’s embrace of Peter L. Berger’s and Richard John Neuhaus’ metaphor of mediation (see Sizer 2004, 76 ff.), his endorsement of school choice and vouchers (see Sizer 2004, 79 ff.), and his appreciation that “accountability” renders the profession less attractive to the talented and socially committed (see Sizer 2004, 87). Losing again his usual measured tone, Sizer (2004, 89) acknowledges that “standardization ... is a recipe for disaster.” There is still more: Sizer recounts the

establishment of the Coalition of Essential Schools, his alter ego Horace, and there is his almost convincing defense of the sports metaphor (see Sizer 2004, 89), including “coaching” (Sizer 2004, 95). I have never liked Sizer’s reliance on sports metaphors (the Kennedys relied on them too: see Pinar 2004, chapter 3), but, I must admit, in Sizer’s hands they seem less authoritarian than Socratic. He is right to criticize the political passivity of professional organizations (see Sizer 2004, 102; see Pinar 2004, 177), but wrong to include schools of education among his five reasons for what he terms the “persistent silences” perpetuating the present (Sizer 2004, 105).

I have been and continue to be critical of education schools – the trouble with “ed schools” is the subject of the second section – but Sizer is only confiding his ignorance of the scholarship (see, for instance, that reported in Pinar et al. 1995) when he suggests (see Sizer 2004, 107) there is little “fundamental rethinking” of the educational enterprise in schools and colleges of education, and his misunderstanding of the politics of school reform when he complains that (see Sizer 2004, 108) “few” of the major school reform programs over the past five decades originated in schools or colleges of education. It is hardly from want of trying! While it is true that “there appears to be little *incentive* in these Schools for aggressively original, sustained, comprehensive invention” (Sizer 2004, 108, emphasis added), he appears to blame the faculty, not the administration, for this sorry state of affairs. As David Labaree understands, we have the schools and colleges of education that society, including universities, have demanded.

But Sizer – and this the only lapse of judgement in an otherwise thoughtful, sometimes moving, memoir – blames the victim. Given the marginalization of education schools within universities, their scapegoating by the Bush Administration, and, most importantly, given the scholarly advances in the field over the past twenty years, it is outrageous for Sizer (2004, 109) to say that a “massive failure of imagination resides here.” In the next several sentences (see Sizer 2004, 109) he seems to catch himself, admitting that university presidents have failed to recognize what is at stake in recent

governmental legislation. If state and federal governments tried to specify “standards” for universities’ curricula and teaching (measured by standardized assessments), there would be, Sizer (2004, 110) suggests, “howls.” With university presidents “silent,” state and federal governments proceed. Certainly Sizer (2004, 110) is right when concludes (with understatement) that it is time to begin “anew” on a new “road” (2004, 120). “I wish,” he (Sizer 2004, 120) tells us, “I had a second lifetime to join in the trek.” I wish he did, too.

Sizer is one of the great statesman of the profession. A lifelong advocate for students, for liberal education, for sensible educational policy and practice, Sizer is a voice of reason in a cacophony of profiteers and right-wing ideologues. Inspiring, inventive, panoramic in point of view, Sizer has fought in good faith, and “good faith” is something altogether missing in the current political landscape. The only failing is his inattention to the scholarship in the field. Given his lifelong activism and investment in the public sphere, he has not, I suppose, had time to study the scholarship. Still, a statesman must represent his colleagues as well as teachers, schools and the children warehoused inside them, and in this responsibility, Sizer disappoints. He blames schools and college of education for failing to produce the scholarship he has failed to read. When deeply decent men like Sizer let us down, is it any wonder we suffer a low status?

II Status

Kicking a broken horse, obviously, cannot make it run faster.
Ted Sizer (2004, 110)

The “lowly status” of schools and colleges of education is exactly what concerns David F. Labaree (2004, 1). Indeed, from Labaree’s point of view, this is the “trouble with ed schools.” Like Sizer, Labaree seems to appreciate that, like a seat in home room, our lowly status has been assigned to us. Politicians and the parents who believe them now take for granted that education is too important to be left to educators, educators whose incompetence derives, they have now decided, from their own miseducation by teacher educators in schools of education, themselves the victims of “research” that serious scholars know does not deserve the name (see Labaree 2004, 2).

Just when we thought things could not be worse, we are now – as we saw in Sizer’s memoir – attacked not only by self-aggrandizing scapegoating politicians, but by our own leaders as well (see Labaree 2004, 7). Schizophrenically, despite the failing grade given to “us” in general, Labaree notes that the public grants high marks to their local schools. Somehow the threats conservatives decry – multiculturalism, the progressive tradition¹⁵ prominent among them – have not quite reached their own neighborhood school (see Labaree 2004, 3). The disparity between concrete reality and public fantasy is staggering.¹⁶

How could our professional authority be so thoroughly absent from the present scene? Several questions will be answered in David Labaree’s study but, from my point of view, not that one. Strangely, Labaree fastens onto the symptom, not the cause. “Something” about the “status” of schools and colleges of education, Labaree (2004, 4) asserts, renders us an “easy target,” a “free-fire zone” in university. What could it be? What is there about “us,” about schools and colleges of education, that results in low

status? Not all low-status fields are openly maligned; why is education? Readers of *What Is Curriculum Theory?* know how I answer that question; educators, I argue, are victims of deferred and displaced racism and misogyny (see Pinar 2004a).¹⁷

Labaree stays with the symptom. Status is important, he argues, because it disables us from resisting being defined, organizationally and programmatically, by a “variety” of “interested parties” (Labaree 2004, 11). Presumably, if only we were respected, things would be set right. Not exactly, as Labaree later comforts conservatives by telling them that because schools of education have no influence, they can do no damage (see chapter 8). So if we had status, the schools would suffer? Who among us – besides Labaree – believes that? Nor I do not believe that low status disables us from resisting; to that point I will return in the conclusion.

Not a comprehensive history of the education school and focused on those education schools found affiliated with research universities, Labaree’s analysis relies, he tells us, on the the “approach” of “historical sociology” (Labaree 2004, 9). “As a sociologist,” Labaree (2004, 10) begins one sentence, making explicit his disciplinary identification. Like Sizer¹⁸, it is not education. This seemingly incidental issue of disciplinary identification illustrates one “trouble with ed schools.” Disidentifying with education enables Sizer to overlook the scholarship of the field (his footnote - n. 8, p. 128 - is filled with psychologists, not “educationists”) and for Labaree to obsess over status. As a sociologist, his status is, presumably, not in question; his appointment to an education school faculty, with its low status, is.¹⁹

Labaree’s “historical sociology approach” makes the story of our low status the story of our victimhood.²⁰ He narrates how American²¹ policymakers, taxpayers, students, and universities collectively produced “exactly” the schools and colleges of education schools they required (Labaree 2004, 8). And the kind of education schools these “interested social parties” wanted is one focused on the preparation of teachers (see Labaree 2004, 12). Preparing teachers, conducting educational research, and training

educational researchers have “assigned” (Labaree uses the passive voice: see 2004, 12) us a “distinctive social role.” That Labaree uses these terms – educational research and educational researchers – discloses his assumption that the academic study of education is a social science, not one of the arts and humanities. This assumption not only misrepresents the field but sets us up for the Bush Administration’s demand for “scientific” educational research to determine “what works” (see Labaree 2004, 191).

Teaching *is* the focus of education schools – as I have lamented (see Pinar 2004c) – and it is this focus that structures intellectually that “distinctive” social role. “[T]eaching is,” Labaree (2004, 12) appreciates, “a peculiarly complex and difficult form of professional practice.” It is “grounded,” he explains, in the “necessity” of “motivating cognitive, moral, and behavioral change” among “involuntary” and “frequently resisting clients” (2004, 12). This is an astonishingly expansive conception of teaching, and one framed in psychological (“motivating”) and specifically behavioral terms. The success of this endeavor, he continues, “depends heavily” on the capacity of the teacher to fashion an “effective” and “authentic teaching persona,” which s/he uses to “manage” a “complex and demanding emotional relationship” with students in the service of learning the curriculum (2004, 12; see also 2004, 96). (Labaree makes no mention of counter-transference in teaching [see Pitt 2003; Britzman 1998, 2000; Grumet 1988]). And if his view has not rendered teaching “peculiarly complex” enough, Labaree adds that we lack a “valid” and “reliable technology of instruction,” as well as “clear ways” of “measuring pedagogical effects” (2004, 12). I say, thank goodness for that.

Labaree is not entirely mistaken in his view, but how his expansive and behaviorally manipulative conception of teaching differs from indoctrination is not clear to me. At least Counts’ interests were limited to political ideology (see Pinar et al. 1996, 127), not the entire spectrum of “cognitive, moral, and behavioral change” (Labaree 2004, 12). Aside from the arrogance of this conception, does it not set us up for being responsible for student learning, as the Bush Administration has legislated? In his enthusiasm for

showing how “peculiarly complex and difficult” our – teacher educators’ – work is, he has, it seems to me, fallen into the political trap conservatives have set for us (see also Labaree 2004, 60).

In addition to the preparation of teachers, Labaree (2004, 12) asserts that the education school is responsible for the “production” of educational research. If we – curriculum studies scholars – were hoping we were going to be represented in Labaree’s conception of the work of schools, departments, and colleges of education, by page twelve our hope is gone. Arts and humanities-inspired scholarship committed to the interdisciplinary understanding of education disappears in Labaree’s obsession with status, expressed here in his admission that educational knowledge is “particularly soft (rather than hard)” and “applied (rather than pure)” (2004, 12). Moreover, it provides more “use value” than “exchange value” (2004, 12). Few would argue with the latter, but an insufficient number of teachers, in my experience, concede the latter (see Block 2004, chapter 6).

Further “complicating” (Labaree 2004, 12) our work is the fact that our doctoral students tend to be former elementary and secondary teachers, a point I, too, have noted (see Pinar 2004a, 174-175). Labaree is more diplomatic in his treatment of this fact - he suggests it leads to “cultural conflict” (2004, 12) - than I. For Labaree, the culture of doctoral education leaves our school-teacher students feeling that they must change their entire “orientation” – from “normative” to “analytical,” from “personal” to “intellectual,” from “particular” to “universal,” and from “experiential” to “theoretical” (Labaree 2004, 12). There is, of course, a difference between the culture of research universities and that of the public schools, but that concept – culture - does not specify the peculiar emotional quality of many teachers’ resistance to graduate education. Like Labaree, I will return to this point later.

Teaching

Teaching is a complex job that looks easy, which poses problems for the public's perception of teachers and teacher educators alike.

David Labaree (2004, 14)

Teacher education is at the “heart” of the “trouble” with schools of education, Labaree (2004, 13) laments. Because he is focused on status, Labaree (see 2004, 18) has little to say about the content of the curriculum in teacher education programs, odd given that one of the major problems of such programs, he asserts later (see Labaree 2004, 105), is that they are not “intellectually rich and rewarding,” even “intellectually dispiriting.” Rather, Labaree is focused on the prestige of teacher education programs. His historical points are not unfamiliar: first, the sheer demand for teachers from an exploding public school system exerted enormous pressure – as it does now – on the production of candidates (see Labaree 2004, 19), undermining Horace Mann’s emphasis upon academic quality (see Labaree 2004, 22). Second, because teacher educators came under “intense pressure” to produce many teachers “quickly” and “cheaply” (Labaree 2004, 23), education faculty (also recruited quickly, presumably, and paid little) were “thinly educated,” and devised “foreshortened” and “unchallenging” curriculum for their academically “weak” students (2004, 24).

Two problems contributed to this pressure: money and gender. While Labaree (2004, 23) acknowledges that the “feminization” of the teaching profession is also a “market force,” he does not seem to occur to him that this fact (or, rather, the fact of misogyny) goes a long way to explain not only the “fiscal problem,” but the low status of education schools generally. ²²

For me, one of the most interesting moments in this market-force history of the profession occurs when Labaree situates the school of education (and its predecessor, the normal school) in U.S. cultural history. He points out that Americans display a “reverence” for individuals’ freedom of choice, expressed as political and consumer

choice (Labaree 2004, 25). (The distinction seems entirely blurred today.) He quotes Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*:

Here, then, is the master assumption of American political thought, the assumption from which all of the American attitudes discussed in this essay flow: the reality of atomistic social freedom. It is instinctive to the American mind, as in a sense the concept of the polis was instinctive to Platonic Athens or the concept of the church to the mind of the middle ages. (1955, 62; quoted in Labaree 2004, 25)

What this means, Labaree points out (drawing on Martin Trow [1988, 17]) is that in the United States “the market preceded society.”

Curiously, Labaree (2004, 25) adds that the “result” of this arrangement is that, in the U.S., the “consumer” is “king,” an assertion contradicted, to choose among recent examples, by the collusion of the Bush Administration with the pharmaceutical industry to prevent U.S. consumers from purchasing drugs from Canada, a move devised to maintain the inflated price of (sometimes unsafe) drugs. To his credit, Labaree is clear that the influence of “the market” on American teacher education has hardly been “elevating” (Labaree 2004, 29). If we include working conditions in that broad and ambiguous concept, we discover that teachers (prospective and practicing) have long voted with their feet. Despite demanding pledges from teacher education students, records at the Illinois Normal School indicate that only 30 percent of graduates during the 1860s spent any time in teaching (see Labaree 2004, 27).

Labaree focuses not on working conditions but on the social mobility function of teacher education programs (see Labaree 2004, 31), implying that because the teacher education programs were more accessible (admission not selective and the curriculum intellectually less demanding), teacher education programs valorized “individual ambition” and “social opportunity” over the preparation of teachers (2004, 31). If this is accurate, then higher admission standards, more intellectually demanding curricula, and

more scholarly professors of education would seem prerequisites to more sophisticated teacher preparation. But, as Labaree (2004, 35) knows, universities are “unlikely” to reduce the “profitability” of teacher education programs, characterized by high enrollments and low costs. This is a point I, too, have made, if in gendered terms (see Pinar 2004a, 179).

We are, then, victims of exploitation on several fronts. We are exploited by the market, we are exploited by students who want credentials without undergoing rigorous intellectual training, and we are exploited by our “colleagues” – especially administrators - in the university who are not about to kill a cash cow. And we are stuck teaching the children of anti-intellectual parents focused on money and/or religion. Republicans don’t like us – even if many teachers (and not a few education professors) are Republicans – because we are public employees in a market economy (see Labaree 2004, 38). Add to this mix, gender, class, age (see Labaree 2004, 36-37; see footnotes 17 and 22), and, it would seem, there is no hope for us.

Our low status is not only due to market forces, Labaree acknowledges; it results as well from the “peculiar” (Labaree 2004, 39) character of teacher preparation. What is peculiar about our work? “Teaching is an enormously difficult job that looks easy,” Labaree (2004, 39; see also 56-58) points out. There are few insights in this book; this is one of them. His explication suffers, however, from his submergence in social and behavioral science, evident in his basic definition of teaching as changing the “behavior” of the “client” (Labaree 2004, 40). Accepting that teaching is manipulation, he suggests that the “most powerful tool” teachers have is their “emotional connection” with their students (Labaree 2004, 47). “Its success,” he exaggerates, “depends” on students’ cooperation, a fact “complicated” by the “compulsory character” of public education (Labaree 2004, 40). Labaree ignores the fact that sometimes even willing students cannot learn.

Teaching is also “complicated” by the fact that social and behavioral science has failed (will always fail as long as human beings enact their existential freedom) to provide “best practices” for “effective” teaching. Discussing “emotional management,” Labaree (2004, 48) acknowledges that “there is no guidebook,” that teachers have to “work things out on their own” (2004, 49; see also 53, 54, 98), as do teacher educators (see 2004, 65). (Will someone tell the Bush Administration?) As Ted Aoki (2005 [1990], 367) appreciated, “improvisation” enables us to hear curriculum in a new key.

Labaree is right, of course, to point to the compulsory character of the enterprise as complicating the process of education, and he is right to observe that teachers and students are “thrown” into an “intense” emotional relationship, but he concludes that sentence back in behavioral science, telling us that the successful teacher has to “manage” that intense emotional relationship in order to produce “desired educational outcomes” (Labaree 2004, 40). Additionally, teachers must live with “extraordinary” and “chronic uncertainty” regarding the “effectiveness of their efforts to teach” (Labaree 2004, 40). His uncritical use of business jargon – “effectiveness,” “outcomes” and “management” – is telling.

That Labaree is reiterating uncritically the business model – a model that ensures miseducation (see Pinar 2004a, 27) – is obvious in the illustration he provides when discussing the teacher’s “success” depending upon the “active cooperation” of the student; he notes that one cannot succeed at sales unless customers are buying. The corollary is “you can’t be a good teacher unless someone is learning” (Labaree 2004, 41). To define teaching in terms of learning seems plausible but is not. Despite the most informed and thoughtful teaching, there are circumstances (social, economic, psychological, physiological) wherein students struggle to learn. (This fact is why Sizer insists on coordinated social services). In itself, study is difficult enough; without social, psychological, and material support it becomes nearly impossible.

To define teaching in terms of learning enables teachers to be held responsible for student learning. This is preposterous. Even parents – who, in most cases, have much more influence – are not held responsible for the academic failings of their children (although many take credit for their children’s academic success). Priests and other religious leaders are not held responsible for the moral failings of their parishioners and they, presumably, have God – not a hapless assistant principal assigned to discipline – to back them. Never mind the facts: Labaree (2004, 41) laments that schools and colleges of education are “stuck” with preparing teachers for a profession in which “changing people” is the “whole job.”

Changing people is not our job. Our job is to know our subject and its relations to other subjects (and, to some extent, its relation to society, history, and to ourselves), and to make every effort to communicate what we know to students, engaging their resistance as well as enlarging their curiosity. Knowledge (including knowledge of education) and its communication are the teacher’s sphere of responsibility; study is the student’s. Perhaps students will want to learn, perhaps even change, but that is their and their parents’ affair. It is not our “job.”

Labaree (2004, 42) is surely right when he observes that, given the choice, young people would probably be doing something other than studying algebra or physics or literature or a foreign language, especially when they are forced to study all of them at the same time. The curricular stranglehold college and university admission requirements exert on the secondary school curriculum dates back at least to the 1893 Committee of Ten (discussed bySizer). The Eight-Year Study (see Pinar et al. 1995, 133 ff.) demonstrated that when teachers enjoy academic, which is to say intellectual and thereby curricular, freedom, young people are more likely to be engaged in the school’s academic program, precisely because the school’s curriculum can be made more intellectually engaging for students.

Still stuck in business metaphors, Labaree (2004, 49) tell us that teachers must employ the “leverage” gained from their emotional relationships with their students to get them to study a curriculum that is “quite external” to those emotions. If we could subtract the manipulative element of this formulation, this is almost interesting; it recalls the centrality of knowledge as “transitional objects” (see Pinar 2004a, 248) in children’s coming of age. If we could subtract the manipulation, Labaree’s insight that teaching is “emotional labor” (2004, 49) – after Arlie Hochschild (1983, 147) – is welcomed, even if it is more fully and interestingly articulated in the work of, say, Megan Boler (1999) or Deborah Britzman (1998) or Alice Pitt (2003) than it is that of David Labaree.

This insight – that teaching is psychological labor – leads Labaree (2004, 50) to equate “good teaching” with “deep acting,” declaring that “effective” [there’s that word again] teachers “feel” their work “deeply” and perform it “naturally, without affectation or artifice.” (By definition acting is artifice, not “natural.”) Like the “best” method actors, he (2004, 50) continues, teachers “plunge” into the “role” [I would have made that plural; see Sizer 2004, 48], drawing upon their emotions to construct a “persona” [again, the plural is preferable] that expresses “real feeling,” then employing this feeling to “promote learning.” Contradictions in terms aside (that a persona is an authentic expression of real feeling), the “promotion” of “learning” occurs through the complicated conversation that characterizes the communication of knowledge, in the process testifying to its educational significance, not only to the academic disciplines but to the lives of children.

The association of teaching with acting is of more than incidental interest to me, having been privileged to work with Madeleine Grumet in the mid-1970s as she pursued the educational potential of acting, reported first in *Toward a Poor Curriculum* (Pinar and Grumet 1976) and, later, in *Understanding Curriculum* (Pinar et al., 1995, 589ff.). Grumet asked her students to examine their participation in the academic disciplines, especially their efforts to teach them, as theatrical forms. The point here is not only “to promote learning,” but to make the curriculum vivid and immediate, a form through

which individuals might refashion themselves and the worlds they inhabit and envision. Drawing upon the method of *currere*, Grumet (1978) sought to provide students with the processes and tools of critical reflection students must know in order to meaningfully transfigure their situations, whatever those situations might be. For Labaree, however, one does not sense that the teacher's acting is in the service of teaching students to appreciate that intellectual work can reconstruct the self and the social world.

For Grumet and for myself, there was never an unbridgeable divide between subjectivity and subject matter; indeed, the point of *currere* was to traverse and reconstruct each through the other. Submerged in a view of teaching severed from knowledge, Labaree blames our low prestige on the split he – and his social science-informed educational research colleagues – create. In this view, subject matter expertise is lodged in arts and sciences departments; teacher educators are responsible for “showing” students “how” to teach (Labaree 2004, 59), an aspiration he has already established as impossible (see Labaree 2004, 53; also 48-49 above). While focused less on teaching as changing behavior and more on interdisciplinary themes and their relation to society, curriculum studies scholars have also been reluctant to acknowledge that the academic knowledge produced in arts and sciences departments is key to their own scholarship (Pinar 2004b). Labaree (see 2004, 174) is evidently unaware of these developments.

Curriculum studies (and the so-called “foundations” of education) would represent, in Labaree's scheme, the “soft” specializations within schools of education. His point is that educational research itself is considered “soft,” a gendered political status less than an epistemological one, I would suggest. But Labaree seems to accept the liabilities of the humanities (not to mention of the arts) which, he suggests, have never been able to “build” upon a “solid foundation” of previous “findings” because such “findings” are always subject to interpretation and, therefore, to challenge by scholars working from different traditions and asking different questions. As a consequence, Labaree (2004, 63)

laments, “producers” of “soft knowledge” are forever “rebuilding” the “foundations” of their fields, continually reinterpreting them. Given the checkered history of science, this is surely a political and not an intellectual problem. Labaree (2004, 64) almost acknowledges this when he suggests that “hard knowledge producers” are, finally, only in a stronger position “rhetorically.” However, they are in that stronger rhetorical position due to political, not epistemological, circumstances.

Conceding that the “impact” of curriculum on teaching and of instruction on learning is “radically indirect” (given that each is dependent on the “cooperation” of teachers and students whose “individual goals, urges, and capacities,” in any case, play a “large” and “indeterminate” role in the “outcome”), Labaree (2004, 65) characterizes education as an area of “inquiry” more than “intellectual discipline.” It is, he asserts, a “public policy field” that is “irreducibly normative” (2004, 65). Certainly he is not thinking of the foundations fields; nor is he thinking of curriculum studies, a field that – in its paradigmatic shift from curriculum development to understanding curriculum – abandoned what its distinguished historian criticized as the ameliorative orientation of the Tylerian field (see Kliebard 2000 [1970a], 41).

Labaree (see 2004, 65-66) draws a simplistic distinction between theoretical and “applied” knowledge (which he reduces to problem-solving). With such a distinction, Labaree is liable to politicians’ pressure upon us to “improve” student learning (see Labaree 2004, 67), a political fact with, he suggests, intellectual consequences for university scholars. It is unjustifiable for us to study what is “interesting,” Labaree asserts (2004, 67, 79), declaring that educational researchers do not enjoy the “luxury” of conducting “pure inquiry” wherever “theory” or “personal preference” might take us. In so doing, he abandons the intellectual field to the bureaucrats, reiterating a historical error he will (after Michael Katz) later discuss. There is no hint of Sizer’s (2004, 48) “constructive individualism” here.

Still making excuses for us, Labaree (see 2004, 67) complains that the social sciences must “construct knowledge” on a “soft” and “shifting foundation,” by which he means “social interactions embedded in institutional structures.” Labaree again assumes that education is a subset – or, perhaps, a (poor) cousin? – of the social and behavioral sciences, ignoring or simply dismissing the broad terrain of educational scholarship and inquiry conducted with the intellectual traditions of the arts and humanities (see, for instance, Labaree 2004, 98). For many of us working in these ancient traditions, social science seems a primitive, even failed, form of the humanities.

Within social and behavioral science, Labaree (2004, 67) declares that sociologists, psychologists, political sciences, and economists are theory-driven, a fact that results, presumably, in the enhanced “intellectual clarity” and “public respectability” of their research. He overstates this point; many social and behavioral scientists are avowedly anti-theoretical and doggedly data-driven. Moreover, there are sharp differences in the “public respectability” among these disciplines, sociology being the poor cousin on his list. Public respectability does not follow from “intellectual clarity” – his points about obscurity are more persuasive (see Labaree 2004, 58-59) – and he ignores the aggressive self-promotion of some disciplines (as in the case of academic psychology) in their inflated public status. Finally, Labaree fails to acknowledge the important fact that there have been and continue to be critiques from within each of these disciplines that challenge the hegemony of “empiricism” and assert humanities-inspired conceptions of their disciplines (see, for example, Gouldner 1970; Richardson 1997).

Labaree (2004, 67) contrasts these theory-driven disciplines with the academic field of education, which he characterizes as, yes, a “people-changing” professional field. In strongly gendered terms, we suffer from being “both highly soft” and “highly applied,” lacking “strong control” over our methods and thereby producing “findings that are nether very clear nor very convincing.” (While no doubt people are changed by education – autobiography enables us to narrate and study such “change” – producing change, as

noted above, is not our professional responsibility.) To ascribe our low status to this “fact” ignores that other “people-changing” fields such as clinical psychology enjoy a much higher status, and not exactly due to “intellectual clarity.” Moreover, I am not sure what Labaree means by “clear” as a descriptor of what our “findings” are not. Perhaps he means “definitive,” as in, say, research to determine the superiority of phonics over whole language (and vice versa). Such an argument would make more sense. And we have already learned (if we did not know already) that we can never know “what works,” except in specific circumstances with specific individuals on certain days. Finally, education scholarship is sometimes quite clear, too clear, that is, not abstract and mysterious enough, as he himself acknowledges (see Labaree 2004, 57).

Labaree’s (2004, 68) “central point” is that, whether we employ quantitative or qualitative methods, conducting “credible research” in education is “particularly difficult.” Credible is the key word here (surely our field is no more “difficult” than, say, physics); if our scholarship and research is to be credible in any public sense the politics of scapegoating must change first. And this is political not an intellectual problem, and it has a specific history in this country (see Pinar 2004a, chapter 3). I am not suggesting we have reached the intellectual summit in the academic study of education, but I am suggesting that, even had we done so, there would have been no public acknowledgment of the achievement, given the educational politics of displaced and deferred misogyny and racism in the United States.

Labaree (2004, 74) has the cart before the horse when he ascribes our inability to “command respect” and to “shape educational policy” to our low status as “purveyors” of “soft, highly contingent, and largely ungeneralizable” knowledge. Due to our low (and gendered) status, he declares, the field of educational reform and educational policy was left “wide open” to politicians and other self-interested parties, such as corporate interests (as Sizer’s experience documents). Labaree is simply blaming the victim here. We left no doors “wide open.” We were victims of a coalition of academic, business, and political

interests that first converged in the Kennedy Administration. Apparently unable to appreciate our victimhood, Labaree directs his outrage at us, at himself, declaring, at one point, that we speak in a voice that is “laughably amateurish” (Labaree 2004, 81). I guess he does not mean “amateurish” in the positive and sophisticated sense elaborated by Edward Said (see 1996, 82).

Self-hatred is an infamous byproduct of oppression. In the following sentence his tone is measured, but the dynamic - “*je m’accuse*” - is audible all the same. “It is not very helpful,” Labaree (2004, 75) reprimands us, “if researchers answer every important question in the field by saying, ‘It all depends.’” But, indeed, it *is* helpful if it is truthful. The last thing we should do is mislead parents or their children or policy-makers that a “science” of learning or teaching is possible. And his criticism seems entirely self-directed when he generalizes that we tolerate “poor research design” and “slopping thinking” (Labaree 2004, 80) or complains that educational research “often seems rather pinched and pedestrian” (Labaree 2004, 78; see also 2004, 107).

Those adjectives may describe the occasional article in the *Educational Researcher*, but in my experience never apply to what appears in, for instance, *JCT* and, I trust, will appear in *JAAACS*. My point here is that Labaree’s self-reproach structures his misdirected search for reasons for our low status. Rather than facing the fact that our low status derives from the larger social and political situation in which we work and only incidentally from the intellectual underdevelopment of the academic field, Labaree (2004, 80) looks for the fault in us, complaining that the “noncumulative”²³ character of knowledge in education functions to make entry easy; newcomers are, then, more able to make contributions that are as “valuable” as those by their predecessors. I should hope so; why he associates “easy” entry with the “noncumulative” character of knowledge in the field I am not sure, but I should think that not knowing the past – that ahistoricism of the field that Kliebard (2000 [1970a], 40) identified as a “persistent issue” thirty-five years ago – renders the task of making valuable contributions even more difficult, as one

is liable to “reinvent the wheel” without knowing so. The humanities and the arts may not be “cumulative” in a scientific sense, but sophisticated scholars in those fields work from an in-depth knowledge of the scholarship preceding theirs. There is a sense - not of a linear, sequential advancement - but of historically-informed movement just the same.

Labaree’s strategy of blaming of the victim is also evident in his discussion of “ed school bashing.” He notes (see 2004, 172) that “when things go wrong with education, the ed school takes the blame.” He ignores the “manufactured” character of the “crisis” in education (see Berliner and Biddle 1995); he seems unaware that politicians’ scapegoating of the public schools and of schools and colleges of education is precisely that. When the economy goes into recession, do politicians bash business schools? When physicians succumb to the pharmaceutical industry and prescribe drugs that are not only unnecessary but sometimes dangerous, are medical schools said to be placing “America at risk”? Despite the facts, Labaree (2004, 172) concludes that, considering the “many failings” of schools and colleges of education, it is hardly “surprising” that critics name it as a “prime source” of the “problems” with America public education. He “defends” us by adding that he has some “good news” to report, namely that schools and colleges of education are “simply too weak to perpetrate such a crime” (2004, 172). At one point (see Labaree 2004, 115), he seems to catch himself, if only for a moment, admitting that his critique is “unfair.”

Labaree is right to acknowledge that education becomes “understandable” when studied from “multiple perspectives,” but here he gets stuck again in social science, unmindful that this very fact (of the centrality of interdisciplinarity in the study of education) renders the field of curriculum studies central to the academic field of education. He is right to point to characteristics of the graduate student population in education, pointing to their advanced (compared to students in other disciplines) age (see Labaree 2004, 87), and to their vocationalism (see Labaree 2004, 87). I point out that, by and large, teachers enter the profession to teach, not to advance knowledge, and that *that*

orientation – combined with a neurotic “marital” relation to education professors (see Pinar 2004a, chapter 7) – can result in nothing less than an anti-intellectual streak in some. Labaree (2004, 90) describes this as “clash between two distinct cultures.”

Teachers are from Venus; professors are from Mars?

Labaree recalls that after recommending in 1969 the recruitment of non-teachers as educational researchers, Lee Cronbach and Patrick Suppes still wanted such researchers to complete school-based internships and extensive classroom observation (see Labaree 2004, 88). Educational research and scholarship are not horse-shoeing; the issues we investigate are intellectual issues, even when they appear to be bureaucratic or institutional ones. On the other hand, importing Ph.D. from the arts and sciences disciplines to become professors of education was no solution. Clifford and Guthrie (1988), to whom Labaree refers (but not on this point), chronicle Berkeley’s experience with this strategy, a strategy I experienced first-hand during my thirteen years at the University of Rochester. The problem is, in part, that the scholar whose Ph.D. is in history is a historian; his/her research represents a contribution to that field, not to education. While we should not require teaching experience for entry into graduate programs in education or for professorships in the field, Ph.D.s in other fields need to “immigrate” to their new field, so that they become members of – and their scholarly work is placed in – the academic community of professors of education.²⁴

Labaree (2004, 93) is right to assert, after Alan Tom (1984), that teaching is a moral craft. Strangely, however, he returns to his strident definition of teaching as changing people. We must make sure the changes we induce in them are in their best interests, he says. This only restates the moral problem. How can even a parent know – beyond basic nutrition, security, and love (and this third is, of course, riddled with complexity) – what is “best” for a child? Moreover, there are irreconcilable differences among conceptions of what is “best” for children, and not only between religious and secular parents, for instance. Rubén A. Gastambide-Fernandez’s and James T. Sears’s conception of

curriculum work as a public moral enterprise and Alan Block's (2001) conception of curriculum as an ethical practice would have usefully complicated Labaree's discussion of the moral character of our work.

Labaree (2004, 93) is entirely mistaken when he asserts – against his own admission that such knowledge is, in principle, impossible - that our “mission” is to determine how schools “work.” *The mission of the scholar of education is to understand education.* The schools represent a subset of the larger not necessarily institutionally-based subject: education. This is an essential point of whichSizer is keenly aware. Why Labaree retreats to this discredited view is dumbfounding. In the next sentence he tries to qualify, even correct, his mistake, when he suggests that the point of our research is not to “fix” a “problem” of “educational practice” but to “understand” it (2004, 93). But by employing “problem” he still moves us into the terrain of social and behavior science, with its pretensions of certainty and prediction. The “idea,” Labaree (2004, 95) asserts, “is to pick an intervention that promises to improve education.” Sounds like the lottery.

Halfway through the book, Labaree (2004, 98) finally acknowledges that “not all educational research fits this depiction.” Still valorizing the capacity for generalization that “hard” knowledge claims, Labaree (2004, 99) declares that qualitative studies are “often trapped” by their emphasis upon experience and the particular, as if studies emphasizing the abstract and the universal are not also “trapped.” Qualitative studies, he continues (as if confiding a secret) “may harbor a deep suspicion that there are no generalities about teaching” (2004, 99). Given his repeated acknowledgement that is, in fact, the case, how could they not?

Why does he raise this point again? He does so in order to explain why teachers (our doctoral students) come to graduate studies skeptical that educational research and scholarship will be of any use to them in dealing with their own specific pedagogical problems. He appreciates, as Bernadette M. Baker (2001, 41) has pointed out in a different context, that “the school has been considered the real space and the university

the theoretical space.” While not mistaken, Labaree’s positing of “culture” as the difference between schoolteachers’ orientation and university-based faculty’s commitment to research and scholarship cannot account for the persistent and peculiar quality of the dynamic between education professors and their schoolteacher-students. Supplemented with my observation about orientation – namely, that teachers enter the profession to teach, not to advance knowledge – we are closer to the truth. But unless we appreciate the pervasiveness of the “troubled marriage” metaphor, we cannot appreciate the neurotic element in many teacher-doctoral students’ discounting of their university-based coursework in education.

Labaree (2004, 121) concludes his distressing study of schools and colleges of education by considering “strategies” for “wrestling” with the “status problem.” He rejects (see Labaree 2004, 127) moving closer to the school-based profession (as Clifford and Guthrie recommend) and he rejects moving farther away from it. He acknowledges that those few schools of education that try to stay in the middle – that is, maintain credibility with both research universities and with public schools (he lists Michigan State, Ohio State, and Louisiana State as illustrative; see 2004, 127) - find themselves in a “particularly difficult” situation (see Labaree 2004, 128). Yet, late in the book (see Labaree 2004, 194) this seems to be what he wants, a “closer” relationship between theory and practice.

Referencing the work of Arthur Powell (1976) and, especially, Michael Katz (1966), Labaree reminds us that departments of education emerged during the late nineteenth century as extensions of philosophy departments, offering courses that were theoretical in nature and general in scope, not specialized according to subject matter and “applied,” that is, based in the bureaucratic organization of the schools. At the turn of the twentieth century, departments became schools and colleges of education as they began preparing school administrators and conducting educational research, new functions spurred by the school reform efforts of the rapidly emerging “scientific” and social-efficiency wings of

the field – what Labaree (see, for instance, 2004, 155) terms “administrative progressives.” To illustrate, he lists Thorndike, Snedden, Bobbitt, Judd, and Cubberley. This was a shift from – the following phrase is Katz’s (see Labaree 2004, 155) - “theory to survey.” Abandoning the effort to understand education philosophically and theoretically, early twentieth-century education professors turned instead to school surveys to provide data to develop – “scientifically” – curriculum structured around “activities.”

In what is for me the most important idea in the book, Labaree (2004, 155) points out that this shift – from theory to survey, from philosophy and theory to applied social and behavioral science – meant the end of thinking of education as an intellectual discipline, with its own “theoretical stance,” enabling us to “stand back” and study education as a “whole.” Instead, we were left thinking of education as a sphere of “institutional responsibility,” requiring professors to “survey” schools and “catalogue” their various characteristics, fragmenting the field into bureaucratically, not intellectually, based specializations (Labaree 2004, 155).

Enabling intellectual distance from the schools and society so that we can understand educational experience is the project of contemporary curriculum theory. In this crucial sense, contemporary curriculum studies represents a reassertion of the originary vision of the academic field of education. Knowing we represent the field before its early twentieth-century degradation affords us the moral authority, demands of us the moral responsibility, to set things right. Of course, we have no status; the “ed biz” (or, in the racial analogy, the “step-and-fetch-it”) bureaucrats surround us.²⁷

Abandoning the philosophically-informed theoretical discipline, the social-efficiency “progressives” devised schemes and, later, protocols for curriculum development, dedicated to making public schools more “efficient” and “effective.” This fundamental intellectual shift from understanding to institutional improvement, Labaree points out (again after Katz), required the organization of university courses and academic programs

that reflected these reforms *du jour* and the shifting bureaucratic structures of the schools such reforms stipulated. Abandoned was the systematic effort to understand education in its larger cultural, political, and historical significance, a view emphasizing the interrelation of its various elements, a view Sizer learned from Bailyn but now segregated in educational foundations and curriculum studies.²⁸

By the 1920s, Labaree (see 2004, 155) reports, education had separated itself from the academic disciplines and defined itself as a professional school. Within curriculum studies (then curriculum development), the move to a professional school model from a theoretical intellectual discipline within arts and sciences foreshadowed the historic mistake that was the conjunction of curriculum with teaching, institutionalized when the first Department of Curriculum and Teaching was established in 1938 at Teachers College (Pinar 2004c). In *Understanding Curriculum* (Pinar et al. 1995), we tried to push the genie back in the bottle, characterizing teaching as a subsidiary concept in the academic field of curriculum.

The outcomes of these fundamental mistakes seems obvious to us now: they structure, after all, the world we inhabit today. What else would a college of education be but a professional school organized around the occupational roles (such as secondary school teacher) and bureaucratic structures (middle school or special education or the separate subjects in secondary schools)? Having abandoned its intellectual calling as the moral and political conscience of the educational system, schools of education became that system's servant, replacing the field's intellectual grounding in the humanities with social and behavioral science, propped up by its brash and illusory promise of a science of human behavior. Rejected, then, was the field's originary intellectual calling as the synthesizer of knowledge about education; accepted was the "scientifically" based role as surveyor and collector of facts. Degraded, the field's moral authority became its ameliorative orientation, e. g., its dedication to incremental institutional improvement. Lost was the opportunity to create a coherent and unified (if ever-changing, as it

advanced) conception of education. Replacing it was a splintering field forever fragmenting into specialties with no internal or intellectual logic (Katz 1966; Labaree 2004). It is the field we inhabit and on view at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association.²⁹

To recapture “critical perspective” and “intellectual coherence,” Labaree (2004, 156) tells us, education schools created educational “foundations,” among them the history, philosophy, and sociology of education). (My guess is that this effort to “recapture” was, by and large, disingenuous; it was, instead, an effort to segregate faculty who kept asking pesky questions about the history, social character and democratic direction of the larger field.) Labaree (2004, 156) judges this effort “inadequate,” as foundations failed to achieve “intellectual and programmatic coherence.” Instead, the foundations have “fostered further fragmentation” (2004, 56). “Credible in neither the disciplinary nor professional domains,” Labaree (2004, 156) points out, the foundations became “intellectual backwaters,” an excessively harsh characterization in intellectual but descriptive in political terms. Like curriculum theorists, foundations professors have no authority in the public domain; and, like curriculum studies professors, they are marginalized within schools and colleges of education (see footnote 28 below).

Within what became curriculum studies, subject matter was segregated as the exclusive province of arts and science faculty, leaving the field to focus on protocols and, later, “principles” (Tyler 1950; see Kliebard 2000 [1970b]) of curriculum development. Insightfully, Labaree (2004, 162) points to the severance of subject matter from teaching methods in twentieth-century schools of education. (In nineteenth-century normal schools, the faculty taught both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. This is still the case in China, for instance.) For most “outside” schools and colleges of education, Labaree (2004, 163, 164) suggests, knowing “how” to teach means “knowing the subject” one is teaching. (They are, curriculum theorists appreciate, inextricably

interwoven.) On this point, Labaree (see 2004, 164ff.) considers Lee Shulman's conception of "pedagogical content knowledge," but I leave that for your own perusal.

Conclusion

[S]chool reform ... makes limited sense.
Ted Sizer (2004, 7)

From statesmanship to a preoccupation with status: how far we have fallen! Through his participation in various commissions and advisory groups, Ted Sizer resisted the business model of education, in service, as it is, to right-wing control of the schools, indoctrination disguised as "accountability." His measured and diplomatic tone does not disguise his commitments, nor does his collaboration with others across the political and educational spectrum blunt his "constructive individualism," his blend of Hutchins, Dewey, Adler and Mann, and its curricular expression in "essential schools." He understands that, without social reconstruction, school reform makes "limited sense." Trained as a historian, loyal to liberal education, Sizer wants us to teach like coaches! Even Ravitch (2000) treads lightly in her treatment of him. A larger-than-life figure, Sizer is the major educational statesman of our day.

Despite his inattentiveness to the scholarly field, Sizer still merits our appreciation. While he has failed to represent us, he has represented well the project of public education, especially the cause of students and their teachers. His study of history (and history not recast as a social science but as one of the humanities: Pinar 2005a) has enabled him to take a long and broad view of public education. He appreciates the great odds lodged in the national promise to educate all, odds made incalculably greater when an antagonistic federal government and its under-budgeted agencies fail to intervene on behalf of those with limited resources. Sizer's is an integrated, coherent and

“constructively individual” educational perspective. May we join him in working for the day when “Horace” no longer has to compromise.

The statesman is now retired; are we left with Labaree? No statesman, Labaree’s primary concern is not with the suffering of others, but, like the quintessential *petit bourgeois*, with his own status in society. Less concerned with schools than he is with his low status as an education professor, Labaree provides a “smart” (see Williams 2004) analysis of that problem. The “trouble with ed schools” *is*, for Labaree, our low status. We suffer, he explains, the predictable fate of a “soft” discipline doomed by a “peculiar” profession maligned by “market forces.” While “smart,” this analysis does not account for the outrageous and unjust situation in which we – school teachers and professors of education – find ourselves. Worse, Labaree blames us for our low status! Like a prison snitch, he provides information to his political superiors designed to both placate them and ingratiate himself with them.

The absence of authority in contemporary curriculum studies does have to do with the status of schools of education (and our status within them), but that is only symptom. And our situation is hardly helped by being maligned by prominent Harvard and Stanford professors. Having been scapegoated by politicians (and by those parents who believe them), sold out by many of our former students (schoolteachers who blame us for failing to tell them how to teach, or, for telling them how to teach), and, now, by our own statesmen and prominent colleagues, our betrayal seems complete. Understanding that betrayal in racialized and gendered terms enables us to appreciate the peculiar pathology expressed in it.

Such a gendered and racial analysis might also inspire us to conduct ourselves with an inner moral and collective intellectual authority in the face of it. There is no more powerful example of such authority than our nineteenth-century colleague Ida B. Wells. A Memphis schoolteacher before she turned journalist and anti-lynching activist, Wells devoted her life to the suffering of others. Herself the victim of racial injustice (the

celebrated Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad incident: see Pinar 2001, 462), Wells would not tolerate the victimization of others. Enraged by racial injustice, Wells nonetheless conducted herself with the dignity and self-respect others were determined to deny her. Such dignified conduct hardly precluded Wells from “talking back,” as she did on innumerable occasions, including against the nationally respected and influential Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) leader Frances Willard and, later, Jane Addams herself (see Pinar 2001). Inspired by our colleague Ida B. Wells, we educators must not be intimidated by those who malign us.

Such a professional course of moral and intellectual action requires us to engage in ongoing self-criticism (see Pinar 2004a, chapter 7), but not the simple self-hatred the uncritical internalization of the others’ contempt stimulates. We must face frankly our capitulation to the market forces Labaree has described and to their residue today: a tendency toward anti-intellectualism, embedded in the ameliorative orientation that structures and animates the stubborn determination to discover “what works.” In the Deep South, the white elite wants us to clean up the mess white elitism created and reproduces (see Pinar 2004a, chapters 4 and 10, section I). Nationwide, the Republicans – and their Democratic allies – demand that that we become responsible for the children their own policies have left behind.

We are entitled, however, to punctuate self-criticism with self-congratulation. Let us acknowledge our accomplishment in the face of market and political forces: while hardly physics, curriculum studies is often intellectually sophisticated. Our understanding is often strong. Being theoretical has not meant abdicating our interest in and commitment to the schools as they endure another onslaught of “reform.” At LSU (an institution Labaree mentions: see above), for instance, there continues sophisticated scholarship in post-colonial, cross-cultural, and women’s studies, on globalization and internationalization, in critical race, queer, and complexity theory, in pedagogies of trauma and remembrance, and in post-structuralism (especially Derrida and Deleuze).

The scholars conducting this research – affiliated with LSU’s Curriculum Theory Project³⁰ – are engaged each semester in graduate and undergraduate teacher education programs. Such sophisticated scholarship and pedagogical engagement can hardly be summarized by Labaree’s umbrella phrase (“pedagogical progressivism”) and it is definitely not “good news” that we are too “weak” in influence the curriculum of the Louisiana public schools.

Labaree does us all a disservice by obsessing over status rather than addressing the pivotal problems, as do Katz and Sizer. In one sense, the trouble with ed schools *is* the preoccupation with status, spawning “ed biz” professors on-the-make, self-aggrandizing (in business terms, “entrepreneurial”) operators committed to their own – not the field’s - advancement. These “colleagues” are focused on the market not on ideas; they are arrogantly ahistorical, cynically ameliorative, profoundly profit-driven. Given the absence of an integrated and coherent intellectual vision – inviting a capitulation to what others say of us – Labaree’s preoccupation with status contributes to the very problem he says he wishes to solve.

While status does affect our political authority, it need not diminish our intellectual and moral authority, our pedagogical engagement with our students and our solidarity with colleagues. As I have suggested, our moral authority follows from the self-critical conduct of our intellectual, our professional, lives. Recall Sizer’s discussion of a teacher named Michele who, he tells us, “clearly had authority,” meaning “substantial control over her work and workplace” (Sizer 2004, 47). Michele’s authority was not derived from her official status within the bureaucracy, even though it translated into “respect” for her work within the institution, and not only from school authorities and colleagues, but from students and their parents as well. Michele’s authority derived from her “particular, personal professionalism” (Sizer 2004, 47). While expressed collectively through an organization like AAACS, our “particular, personal professionalism” must be grounded and expressed in the moral conduct of our daily intellectual lives.

In face of NCATE, state and now federal assessment-driven teacher education programs, how can we assert our academic – that is, intellectual – obligation to study and teach as we are called to do *by our profession*, and not by bureaucrats and self-interested politicians? How can we act as “particular” and “personal” professionals when there is, for example, unrelenting pressure from within schools of education to secure external funding – now, at least at the federal level in the United States – tied to ideologically driven and epistemologically flawed research agendas? How can we resist the political and gender conservatism of many of our students and assert the centrality of social and economic justice in the nation’s historic commitment to educate the public?

Our circumstances – as outrageous and unjust as they are – pale in comparison to what our colleague Ida B. Wells faced one hundred years ago. That elementary school teacher knew the world was wrong about race (and, specifically, about lynching); she refused to be intimidated, refused to stay discouraged; she refused to capitulate. Animated by her commitment to others, Ida B. Wells carried herself with a dignity only moral authority confers. Never, it seems, satisfied by her own success, she never stopped teaching the public: through her journalism, her lecture tours of Britain, her organizational work in Chicago, through her on-site investigations of lynchings. Inspired by Ida B. Wells, we, too, must mobilize ourselves, as subjectively-existing individuals and as professional collectivities. We must become our own representatives. We must “talk back.” In the professional dignity such statesmanship summons, status recedes, authority appears.

Notes

- 1 I use the phrase “research essay” in the specific sense JAAACS defines it: “We especially invite research essays that constitute close readings of significant published texts in curriculum studies. These research essays will not only critique but also contextualize new scholarship in the history and present circumstances of the field, institutionalizing ‘complicated conversation’ between past and present as well as between American curriculum studies and the work in other locations.” See the Call for Manuscripts: www.uwstout.edu/soc/jaaacs/

- 2 For a moment Sizer starts to sound like a conservative; it is, in fact, not obvious where to place him on the ideological spectrum in education. Ravitch (2000, 418) reports that, after the 1984 publication of *Horace's Compromise*, "Sizer was quickly recognized as the leading voice of contemporary American progressivism." Perhaps by conservatives, but, as Ravitch (2000, 418) points out – and this corroborated in *The Red Pencil* – Sizer's "philosophy mingled John Dewey's respect for intellectual endeavor and Robert Hutchins' concern for intellectual habits and demonstrations of mastery." This apparently paradoxical point of view (Ravitch [see 2000, 343] herself dramatizes the Hutchins-Dewey controversy), Sizer finds in Mortimer Adler (whom Hutchins invited to come to the University of Chicago in 1930), an event he reports (and I will discuss) later.
- 3 Sincere or not, some scholars are clearly corrupted by ideology, evident in Richard Rothstein's chronicle of Stephen Thernstrom's descent. The author of *Poverty and Progress* (1964) and *The Other Bostonians* (1987), Thernstrom argued that mid-nineteenth- to early-twentieth-century America offered less social mobility than was believed. An older and "still-wiser" Thernstrom, Rothstein (2004, 29) suggests, would surely be "suspicious" of contemporary claims that differences in class, differences closely associated with race in America, could be erased if only the public schools did their job. Yet, Rothstein reports, Thernstrom and his wife, Abigail Thernstrom, make this very claim in their recent book *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*. The fantasy - Rothstein (2004, 29) more carefully characterizes it as a "premise" - that racism has been erased and that the remaining reason for differences in the relative earnings of black and whites is a difference of skills - is widely shared among conservatives. The Thernstroms, Rothstein points out, are fellows at the Manhattan Institute, right-of-center promoter of conservative causes. Go figure.
- 4 Ravitch (2000, 417) focuses on Coleman's 1981 study of public and private schools wherein, she asserts, Coleman "reversed himself on the crucial issue of whether schools make a difference. He found that private schools, particularly Catholic schools, promoted high academic achievement, regardless of students' background, because they provided a common academic curriculum and high academic expectations." That is true, of course, but juxtaposed with her discussion of *A Nation at Risk*, it appears that Coleman abandoned his emphasis on social class to anticipate, supportively, conservatives' insistence that schools alone can contradict class. For a critical review of Coleman's research see Berliner and Biddle (1995).
- 5 Moynihan and his colleague Frederick Mosteller, a Harvard mathematician and statistician, added other outputs, among them retention rates, proportion going to college, income and occupation of graduates, even happiness (see Sizer 2004, 10). Surely this is social science gone amuck. In the hands of liberals, the emphasis on "outputs" functioned to pressure institutions – not only schools but, especially, government – to be more responsive to unequal opportunities. In the hands of conservatives, the emphasis upon "outputs" becomes a rhetorical tactic to distract the public from the studied failures of government to ameliorate unequal opportunities by scapegoating teachers, making teachers responsible for "outputs." Now that, presumably, "inputs" matter less, additional support for schools is not only unnecessary, but is, in effect, throwing good money after bad. Instead, funds are transferred to the test-making-and-administering industry. In so

- doing, conservatives link curriculum to tests and thereby control its content, further eroding what limited intellectual – academic – freedom teachers enjoy, rendering them unable to teach, reducing them to “managers of learning.”
- 6 David Labaree (see 2004, 195) accepts uncritically the standards movement, characterizing it as the most “durable” and “consequential” consequence of school reform. The insult in this movement – the implication that the schools before had no standards – goes unacknowledged.
- 7 There are those, Sizer (2004, 26) is aware, who “gag” at the prospect of “demonstrated performance” replacing that of attendance. He reminds us of driver’s tests and assures us that he doesn’t equate “demonstrated performance” with “intellectually shriveling paper-and-pencil tests” (2004, 26). I do not gag at this suggestion, but it is essential that students, not teachers, be held responsible for such demonstrations; we must remember that study, not pedagogy, is the site of education (McClintock 1971; Pinar 2004c).
- 8 Either by means of private schools or heavily funded public schools, the affluent pay, Sizer (2004, 41) notes, to ensure that their children are treated as individuals and taught “accordingly.”
- 9 Sizer does not explain what education “on the street” might mean; perhaps he has in mind models of “non-formal” education found in Brazil and elsewhere (see Pinar et al. 1995, 829).
- 10 Sizer (2004, 28) observes that “choice” has become almost as politically volatile a concept as “voucher.” If wealthy Americans already have choices among schools, he asks (see 2004, 28), why ought not all Americans? Invoking the military a second time, he reminds us that the G.I. Bill of Rights for military veterans was not exactly a “sinister privatization gambit,” but, rather, a kind of voucher system (Sizer 2004, 28).
- 11 Curious, is it not, how the ideology of the “free market” translates into sweetheart deals between Haliburton its former CEO? Sizer notices (even if he does not name) the contradiction between the rhetoric of business and its performance when he reports (see Sizer 2004, 56) the CEO of a fast-growing national education tutoring and charter school operation business demanding, at a conference in which Sizer participated, that schools to exhibit order, by which she meant a common curriculum measured by common assessments. Sizer (2004, 57) points out that the processes of education are rarely “sequential.” Rather, we often circle back – this movement is discernible in Sizer’s memoir – to earlier points of interest and engagement, now, presumably, better informed and in a “deeper place” (2004, 57). This last point reiterates Bill Doll’s formulation of the “recursive” in a post-modern view of curriculum (see Doll 1993, 141, 177-178); the earlier concept – control - Doll excavates historically (see Doll 2002).
- 12 Eliot died in 1926. Sizer’s father remembered seeing him riding his bicycle in Cambridge. Eliot was readily recognizable, Sizer (see 2004, 57) tells us, as carried himself with authority and, not incidentally, had a very visible birthmark on his face.
- 13 *A Nation at Risk* reiterated Eliot’s error, Sizer (see 2004, 61) suggests, namely, ignoring the primacy of intellectual judgement and creativity in secondary school education.

- 14 Sizer acknowledges the complexity of curriculum but – if his footnote (n. 8, p. 128) and reference list are any indication – knows little beyond the work of psychologists at elite institutions like his own.
- 15 It now seems almost fashionable, at least among some (see, for instance, Egan 2002), to decry the progressive tradition in American education. In an irritating book, this section (see Labaree 2004, 133-154) is, perhaps, the most irritating. At one point (2004, 137), Labaree finds Hirsch’s analysis “insightful”! He accepts the Ravitch (whom he kindly characterizes as a “historian” [see Labaree 2004, 181])-Hirsch parody of progressivism at face value (see Labaree 2004, 174), at one point (see Labaree 2004, 177) complaining himself about the prevalence of progressive “cant” in education. To treat properly Labaree’s lapses of judgement in this section – his misreading of Kilpatrick, inspired, I suspect, by Ravitch (see 2001, 178ff.), is scandalous (see Labaree 2004, 188) - requires another occasion. Perhaps the sequel to *Understanding Curriculum* will provide it.
- 16 As I note in *What Is Curriculum Theory?*, “we must move to the sphere of psychopathology to grasp the history of the present of public education in America” (2004, 6).
- 17 Like schoolteachers, education professors, too, often come from working-class and lower-middle-class families (see Labaree 2004, 110). But class is, I argue (see Pinar 2004a, 6), a secondary factor in understanding our nightmare. Because, in America, public education and, derivatively, teacher education are associated with women and with African Americans, we suffer the pathological scapegoating we endure today. Is there something about his own gendered and racialized subject position that disables Labaree from facing this unjust reality and, instead, obsessing over its secondary effect?
- 18 While asserting that his Ph.D. is in Education and American History, recall that Sizer (see 2004, 5) also lets us know that his graduate work was conducted in the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (not the Harvard Graduate School of Education), where his advisor was the historian Bernard Bailyn.
- 19 In the hierarchy of academic disciplines in American universities, sociology is not far above education, of course. In the last decade, the University of Chicago closed its famous Department of Education; Washington University in St. Louis closed its historically illustrious Department of Sociology. As a sociologist appointed to the faculty of a School of Education, Labaree has, it seems, double trouble. Should he not be comforted by the realization that status seems to have little to do with disciplinary achievement, as the higher status of academic psychology illustrates?
- 20 If were to shift from our victimhood to our culpability, the emphasis upon teaching – to the exclusion of “study” (McClintock 1971) – ranks high among errors we have made. Others include, as Labaree (2004, 118) notes, allowing the education school to be politically dominated by administration departments and intellectually dominated by educational psychology departments (speaking of double trouble). The former institutionalized a business model of management (in contrast to the principal being a principal teacher: see Aoki 2005 [1987], 350), while the latter institutionalized an ahistorical, apolitical emphasis upon individual characteristics, child development and learning theory, all characteristic of academic psychology (see Labaree 2004, 119). Such an intellectual structure (business and academic psychology readily work together)

- condemns us to focus on “instruction” and “learning,” ignoring the central role of curriculum in the education of the American public. Imagining itself a “science,” academic psychology “retreat[ed] from the challenge of Freud into the measurement of trivia,” as historian Christopher Lasch (1978, xiv) succinctly put the matter.
- 21 It is important for Americans to remember this is our story, not everyone’s. The scapegoating of teachers and education professors is not limited to the U.S.; it is worse in Great Britain, for instance (see Furlong 2002; Pinar 2004, 220-221). It is, however, virtually non-existent in, for instance, China or Norway (see Pinar 2003).
- 22 Labaree (2004, 36) reports that approximate 70 percent of teachers working today are women. In addition to its association with women, teaching suffers from its associations with the working-class (see Labaree 2004, 36) and with children (Labaree 2004, 37). Not only, Labaree (2004, 37) points out, are teachers associated with “stigmatized” images of gender, class, and age, they also “suffer” from being associated with “thinking” rather than “doing,” an “American bias.” (The most prominent historian of this bias – Richard Hofstadter [1962; Pinar 2004a, 70] – maligns teachers *for* reasons of gender.) Nowhere does Labaree acknowledge the centrality of race in Americans’ perception of public education. While Sizer is not unmindful of gender (his acknowledgement of his wife Nancy’s influence is notable [2004, 121-123] in this regard), he limits his analysis of it to the machismo politics of educational administration. He speculates that many are attracted to the gender of administrative positions, evident when principals speak of “my school” as if they owned it (see Sizer 2004, 32). Principals’ idea of possession, Sizer points out, is “ludicrous” (2004, 32).
- 23 Labaree overstates the cumulative character of scientific knowledge. Historical (Kuhn 1962) and cultural studies (see, for instance, Weaver et al. 2001) of science makes clear the disjunctive character of scientific advancement. To claim the “cumulative” character of the field – and to affirm its historicity – I insisted that “advancement” be featured prominently in the names of two new professional organizations, including the one with which this journal is affiliated. The other is the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies: www.iaacs.org.
- 24 Cleo Cherryholmes (1988) and Julie Webber (2003) – their Ph.D.s are in political science – illustrate such “immigration,” much to the advancement of our field.
- 25 To illustrate the continuing intensity of demand for teachers (undermining the academic rigor of teacher education programs), Labaree (see 2004, 34) tells us that replacing teachers who resign or retire requires about 15 percent of the entire crop of new college graduates every year.
- 26 This last point is Hofstadter’s, not Labaree’s. Recall that for Weber they are, in the West, inseparable.
- 27 While Labaree and Katz provide us a broad historical understanding of the trouble with education schools, we lack a particular and detailed understanding of the apparent decline in the numbers of those identifying with curriculum studies. In a confidential email sent last summer, I asked AAACS President Janet L. Miller to establish a **Commission on the Status of Curriculum Studies in the United States** to investigate this problem (see Pinar 2005b, 16-17, n. 12). In addition to

- discovering particular reasons for our present circumstances, the Commission might, through its recommendations, persuade education school administrators and our colleagues in other specializations to provide some additional support for what we know is the intellectual and organizational center of the academic field of education. I am pleased to report that the AAACS Coordinating Council – President Miller, Vice President Tom Barone, Treasurer Jim Henderson, and Secretary Bernadette Baker – will conduct a town meeting on this subject at the 2005 AAACS meeting in Montreal.
- 28 It seems to me that scholars in the foundations fields have abdicated, unwittingly, their historic claims that understanding education through these sub-disciplines (philosophy, history, sociology of education) constitutes professional knowledge. Initially flattered, one supposes, by the appellation “foundations,” these scholars were, it seems now, in retrospect, unprepared and unable to resist their systematic exclusion from the curricular center of teacher education. Aligning themselves with their “parent” disciplines has turned out to be a major tactical error. Despite efforts to rescue their “foundational” status by recasting their departments as “policy studies” and then, more hopefully and expansively as “educational studies,” philosophers, historians, and social theorists of education find that among contemporary social-science driven “researchers,” the school-house can do without its foundations, thank you. In my view, it is long past time when philosophers, historians, and social theorists of education join with curriculum studies scholars in claiming the knowledge communicated in the schoolhouse. The curriculum *is* the schoolhouse, foundations and all; the curriculum is the intellectual and organizational center of the interdisciplinary study of education.
- 29 Sizer (2004, xvii) is quite aware of the legacy of these historic errors, telling us that while “encouraged” by the recent resurgence of interest in educational research he is “disappointed” by its domination by the social, behavioral, and, especially lately, the biological sciences. Sizer (2004, xvii) understands that the problems of public education are not only “technical” and “procedural”; they are, he notes, fundamentally “cultural” and “philosophical.” He rues that the influence of the humanistic disciplines remains slight in contemporary discussion of what is necessary in educational research. Finally, he notes (see Sizer 2004, xvii) that the current emphasis upon “what works” promises to provide detailed schemes of practice that fit into the existing system, the very system that is, presumably, profoundly flawed.
- 30 For additional information, visit the LSU Curriculum Theory Project website: <http://asterix.ednet.lsu.edu/~lsuctp/>

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