Thinking Out of the Box: Rethinking and Reinventing a Moribund Social Studies Curriculum

Ross, E.W. (2001) *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities* (Revised edition), Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 350, $59.50 (cloth), $19.95 (paper), ISBN 0-7914-4961-0.

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For more than a century, the social studies curriculum has been relatively unchanged, and yet ironically, for more than a century, social studies has had an identity crisis. During the past century, the social studies curriculum has remained somewhat static and discipline-bound (especially in history), and its scholars have been trapped in what Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) called an endless maze—"to project some order or pattern on the chaos around them" (p.1) E. Wayne Ross has developed and edited *The Social Studies Curriculum, Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities*, that attempts to rethink and reinvent what truly has been a century of chaos, contradiction and controversy in the social studies curriculum that has resulted in a curriculum that has remained relatively unchanged since 1916.

Ross has gathered no less than seventeen scholars in the field of the social studies in this compendium to discuss their conception of the social studies curriculum at the turn of the century. What emerges is a wide range of provocative essays that thoughtfully encourage social studies educators to rethink what is taught in the social studies classroom. Somewhat predictably, most of the essays in this edition advocate a particular political or pedagogical sensibility toward social studies-related topics such as standards, multicultural education, racism, and feminism. Most of the authors, either directly or indirectly, support a social justice perspective toward teaching the social studies. They all seem to argue for a social studies curriculum that addresses the real problems of 21st century society.

From a pedagogical point of view, this collection of essays focuses on aspects of a critical pedagogy that help teachers with strategies that get students to think and act responsibly and thoughtfully, only independent from what the teacher believes, or the community may support. From a intellectual point of view, this collection of com-
positions will challenge social studies educators to rethink their own positions regarding why, what, and how, they teach in the social studies classroom. Perhaps most importantly, *The Social Studies Curriculum, Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities*, will emend educators knowledge about specific issues and understandings in the social studies curriculum. In his introduction to this, the second edition, Ross provides insight into his perspective on the social studies curriculum and the driving forces behind this edition:

"As with the world itself, it is impossible to provide one true representation of what the social studies curriculum is. However, in the concluding section, I argue that the conceptions of the purposes problems and possibilities of the social studies curriculum as depicted in this book provide an effective starting place for educators who believe social studies should help children transform their world....The curriculum is what students experience. It is dynamic and inclusive of the interactions among students, teachers, subject matter and the context. The true measure in any social studies program will be found in its effects on individual students’ thinking and actions as well, as the communities to which students belong. Teachers are the key component in any curriculum improvement and it is my hope that this (sic) book provides social studies teachers with perspectives, insights, and knowledge that are beneficial in their continued growth and professional educators.” (p. 14)

**A Democratic Community of Inquirers**

Ross has organized a thoughtful examination and review of the social studies curriculum from the perspectives of social transformation and participation in a democratic society. The focus for this second edition is on the unique problems and issues that social studies educators face in contemporary society, and specifically in today’s schools. This collection addresses such important issues as citizenship as an impetus for oppression and anti oppression; the influence of, and resistance to, standards and testing in the social studies; building community; and assessment in the social studies. In the concluding chapter, “ReMaking the Social Studies Curriculum,” Ross states that the aim of social studies curriculum is not merely preparing students for simply living in a democracy, rather, “our aim should be to create a social studies curriculum that fosters broad participation in a democratic community of inquirers” (p324). Ross forwards as a framework for achieving this goal the work of Rich Gibson and Michael Peterson in chapter 5, “Whole Schooling: Implementing Progressive
School Reform." This framework for a social studies curriculum provides significant insight into the kind of citizens and society Ross believes social studies educators should produce:

"1) empowers all citizens in a democratic society; 2) includes all those living in the democracy; 3) engages citizens in meaningful, authentic activities rooted in the real world problems of diverse learners with divergent needs, interests and abilities; 4) intentionally build learning support strategies; and 5) fosters partnering and builds collaboration within the school, with the families and within the community." (p.325)

It is the perspectives of democratic inquiry, transformation and authentic participation that form the conceptual glue from which Ross and his contributors have constructed The Social Studies Curriculum, Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities. What emerges from this collection of writings is a social studies curriculum is more seditious than orthodox, but certainly not definitive. In the final chapter, Ross provides a very clear view of the what the social studies curriculum ought to be at the turn of the century, and he explains how the various perspectives that the authors discuss in the volume are combined to make a coherent social studies curriculum. To gain a clearer understanding of the vision that Ross has for the social studies curriculum and this book, I recommend reading chapter 16, before reading any of the other chapters. Reading the final chapter first will help the reader understand Ross’ notion of what the social studies curriculum is, and what it can be, for today’s schools.

The remaining 15 chapters of The Social Studies Curriculum, Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities are a clear effort by these social studies scholars to begin to rethink and build a social studies curriculum for all who believe deeply in education for social justice. It is positioned in a social studies curriculum that teaches critical pedagogy, supports opposition to the status quo, encourages transformation, and the insists on the interrogation of purposes, positions, and practices in the social studies.

The book is divided into three parts: 1) Purposes of the Social Studies Curriculum; 2) Social Issues and the Social Studies Curriculum; and 3) The Social Studies Curriculum in Practice. Ross opens part I with a brief, but informative, essay that presents an overview of the origins of the social studies and some of the debates that have determined the nature of the social studies since its origins. While attempting to provide an historical perspective on the social studies, Ross addresses three penetrating questions about the social studies curriculum: 1) What is the social studies curriculum?; 2) Who con-
trols the social studies curriculum? and 3) What is the social studies teacher’s role in relation to the curriculum? If one’s beliefs center around the importance of transformation, social justice and participation as being central to the social studies, then the reader will find this chapter illuminating. Ross’ assumptions for this chapter center around values rooted in social justice and change, and they color his view of the history and nature of the social studies. This chapter offers an engaging point of view regarding what has not, and what ought to be done with the social studies curriculum. My only wish is that other contributors in their essays would have addressed one or more of the three penetrating questions that Ross poses for the social studies curriculum. These are good questions to ponder for those who are seriously interested in rethinking and rebuilding the 21st century social studies curriculum.

**Purposes, Issues and Practice**

Parts I and II include chapters that argue strongly for a particular point of view in the social studies. Most notably in Part I, Michael Whelan in “Why the Study of History Should Be the Core of Social Studies Education,” argues the timeworn, and tired position that history is the soul of the social studies; an important question to historians perhaps, but one that becomes passe to those whose attention is seriously dedicated toward issues of an integrated social studies curriculum. Kevin Vinson in “Oppression, Anti-Oppression and Citizenship Education” asserts that as we think critically about citizenship education. The concepts of oppression, marginalization, exploitation, and violence must be studied as a means by which to interrogate various interpretations of citizenship, and citizenship education, as well as a mechanism by which to uncover both oppressive and anti-oppressive possibilities - a point of view that signals the limits, and even obsolescence of, a 20th century Deweyan perspective toward citizenship and democracy.

In Part II, societal issues such as the influence of standards and testing, multicultural studies, racism, gender and feminism, are presented as ideas that ought to be central to a social studies curriculum. Sandra Mathison, E.W. Ross, and Kevin Vinson in “Defining Social Studies Curriculum: The Influence and Resistance to Curriculum Standards and Testing in Social Studies,” states that among the powerful forces in education, the standards-based education reform movement is one that enjoys both favor and disfavor across the political spectrum. They boldly declare that there is “every reason to believe it will fail.” (p.101). Their essay counts the many ways that the standards movement and its failure is imminent, and its existence is harmful to the social studies curriculum. Jack Nelson and Valerie Ooka Pang in their passionate chapter on “Racism, Prejudice and the Social Studies
Curriculum” contend that racism and prejudice continue at a serious and frightening level in American society. They state the social studies curriculum does “a poor job of examining the disparity between the American credo [liberty, justice and equality for all] and the pervasiveness of racism in the American experience.” (p157) They maintain that “the time to act is now” if social studies educators are to have a serious impact on the social fabric. Nel Noddings — “Social Studies and Feminism” — and Jane Bernard Powers — “Gender in the Social Studies Curriculum” — agree that gender and feminist issues have had minimal, but important, impact in the social studies curriculum. Bernard Powers states that there are profound “gendered issues” that belong in the social studies curriculum: teen pregnancy and death from gunshots among African-American males are among but two of these issues. Noddings discusses the current state of affairs regarding feminism and gender in the social studies:

“Feminism’s initial effect on social studies changes the surface to some degree: more female faces and names now appear in standard texts...Women have gained access to a world once exclusively maintained for men. On the negative side, social studies as a regular school subject has been flooded with trivia and is threatened by continuing fragmentation. Further, the women’s genuine contribution have been glossed over because they do not fit the male model of achievement” (p.174)

Part III’s intent is to provide more of an “how to” perspective on designing culturally relevant curriculum, moving toward authentic assessment in the social studies, the place of the arts in social studies, understanding science in social studies, providing for a world-centered global education, and teaching social studies using social issues. Taken separately, there is little that revolutionary in the essays; all state the importance of incorporating a particular perspective into the social studies curriculum; many of these ideas are not new and have been discussed before as essential elements of a social studies curriculum. Taken as a whole however, if these ideas were actually placed into a single social studies curriculum, that curriculum would be very different from what we currently have, and, in fact it would be a bold step towards a truly integrated social studies curriculum—something that exists in too few schools at the turn of the 21st century. In section III, Gloria Ladson-Billings in “Crafting a Culturally Relevant Social Studies Approach” makes a compelling argument for the need for social studies teachers who will make social studies teaching more culturally relevant. She lists several dimen-
sions of what a contemporary social studies teacher should possess. Social studies teachers whose teaching is culturally relevant:

- believe knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled and shared by teachers and students
- view knowledge critically
- are passionate about content
- help students build bridges (scaffold) knowledge and skills
- see excellence as a complex standard which may involve some postulates but takes student diversity and individual differences into account. (pp. 210-213)

Ronald W. Evans, in “Teaching Social Issues: Implementing an Issues Centered Curriculum,” presents an approach to teaching social studies that has as its focus an interdisciplinary approach. Evans makes a cogent case for interdisciplinary social studies that uses an issues-centered focus for instruction. In the chapter, Evans provides an example of an issues centered, decision making lesson and discusses how such lessons could form a unified, interdisciplinary social studies curriculum. His vision of a social studies curriculum is one that is truly interdisciplinary and rejects the current mediocre, history centered, disciplinary practice in which we currently are enmeshed. Instead of building a social studies curriculum based in the social science disciplines, Evans engages in imagining the social studies curriculum from an issues based perspective:

Imagine a semester-long high school course titled ‘Race and Ethnicity in American Life”; another titled ‘Social Class, Stratification and Social Responsibility”; another on ‘Gender in Social Life and Culture,'; another titled “Power in America”; another on ‘Ideology, Government, and Economic Life,’; still another, The Border Mentality: Nationalism and International Relations,’; another on ‘Philosophy in Personal and Public Life,’; another on, ‘Media and Social Understanding,’; another titled ‘Utopian Visions and Competing Ideologies,’; yet another on ‘Technology Society and the Environment,’; another titled ‘Sex, Marriage, and Family Life,”; and, of course, ‘The School as an Institution,’; ...This incomplete list could go on...”(p.303)

Thinking Out of the Box

Evans’ issue-centered social studies curriculum incorporates significant strands from all of the essays offered in part III (e.g. designing culturally relevant curriculum, moving toward authentic assess-
ment in the social studies, the place of the arts in social studies, understanding science in social studies, providing for a world-centered global education). And while Ross argues that there is no one way to organize the social studies curriculum, the issues-centered approach goes a long way to help those who may be locked in a traditional curricular conception of the social studies to think out of the box. Such thinking is desperately needed at the beginning of the 21st century to reinvent the currently moribund social studies curriculum.

One could argue that important topics such as economic education, legal studies, literature, and technology have been omitted from this volume. In fact, any listing, or collection of essays, will undoubtedly overlook some ideas that others deem to be important. However, social studies educators who are committed to preparing social studies teachers to be thoughtful intellectuals, and caring instructors dedicated to democratic ideals, transformation and participation, will find that the second edition of The Social Studies Curriculum to provide a strong foundation for them, and for those teachers seeking to enrich and broaden their curricular understanding of the social studies.

Society has changed remarkably since 1916 when the report of the National Education Association Committee on Social Studies was issued. From transportation to technology, from social life to sexual mores, life at the turn of the 21st century would be virtually unrecognizable to those living in 1916. Incredibly, during the same period of time the social studies curriculum has remained virtually static. Contemporary social studies is ensnared in a history-centered, discipline bound, non-partisan, moribund curriculum developed almost 100 years ago, designed for a particular time and society, situated at a particular intersection of class, race, and gender, and immersed in an industrial revolution.

At the turn of the 21st century, some educational thinkers are starting to take a critical view of social studies icon John Dewey's notion of democracy, and question its applicability to oppressed and marginalized groups in our complex, and diverse age. (Greene, 1997, Schutz, 2001) Such analyses are healthy for the field of social studies and critical to its long term existence. Now is the time for some serious thought be given to a revolution in the social studies curriculum. Ross, and his collection of social studies scholars, have made an admirable attempt to do exactly that, and have provided an excellent example of "thinking out of the conventional social studies curricular box." One can only hope that this second edition of The Social Studies Curriculum, Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities, will encourage a plethora of new scholarly perspectives on the social studies curriculum.

This collection of essays is must reading for anyone who interested in social studies curriculum theory and design, and those who
wish to “think out of the box” regarding curriculum practice. I would hope that social studies educators will spend the next decade debating new approaches for the social studies curriculum that could be introduced into public school practice in the 21st century. Perhaps an even more significant outcome from such a debate is the idea that there may be many ways to conceptualize the social studies curriculum, rather than a singular set of state or national standards for the social studies curriculum. That indeed, would be thinking out of the box at the beginning of the 21st century.

Notes

1 There is general agreement among social studies educators that the 1916 report of the National Education Association Committee on Social Studies produced a tremendous impact on the social studies curriculum. It produced the scope and sequence of courses that, some 85 years later, still defines the contemporary social studies curriculum:

grade K: self, school, community, home;
grade 1: families;
grade 2: neighborhoods;
grade 3: communities;
grade 4: state history, geographic regions;
grade 5: U.S. History;
grade 6: western hemisphere;
grade 7: world geography or world history;
grade 8: U.S. History;
grade 9: civics;
grade 10: world history;
grade 11: U.S. History;
grade 12: American government.

For a brief, cogent, discussion of the creation of the social studies curriculum see “Emergence of the Social Studies” in Barr, R.D., Barth J.L., and Shermis, S.S., in Defining the Social Studies, NCSS Bulletin 51, Washington, D.C. 1977.

2 See “John Dewey’s Conundrum: Can Democratic Schools Empower?” in Teachers College Record, Vol. 103, Number 2, April 2001 in which Aaron Schutz makes a compelling argument that Dewey’s educational approach fails to equip students to act effectively in the world and that Dewey’s model of democracy is inadequate to serve our contemporary society. Schutz argues that Dewey genius was situated in a time very different from contemporary society, and that Dewey drew from his own experiences a philosophy that “made sense of that experience and that matched with his own way of being in the world” (p. 297)

References

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Greene, M. (1997). Exclusions and wakenings. In A. Neumann and P. L. Peterson, (eds.). Learning from our lives. New York: Teachers College Press.

Schutz, A. (2001). John Dewey’s Conundrum: Can Democratic Schools Empower?” Teachers College Record, 103(2).
At the beginning of the twentieth century, Harvard-trained sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois published the inspirational collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*. In it, Du Bois named the moral problem of the twentieth century as “the problem of the color line” (1903, p. 5). At the outset of the twenty-first century, we read in the foreword of *Souls Looking Back: Life Stories of Growing Up Black*, “race” again “promises to be the most challenging issue facing the United States” (p. ix). The only word from the title of Du Bois’s original work that is missing in the title of the present volume is “folk.” *Souls of Black Folk* provided something of an ethnography of the black population of the South, whereas *Souls Looking Back* provides something of a psychology of black college students uprooted from and missing their folk.

**Downstairs, Upstairs**

Edited by Andrew Garrod, Janie Victoria Ward, Tracy L. Robinson, and Robert Kilkenny, *Souls Looking Back* offers a two-storied view of the lives of young Americans who are gifted and Black. *Downstairs, Souls Looking Back* is an uncommon collection of contemporary narratives, written by sixteen remarkably honest young women and men of color when they were students at prominent historically white universities. *Upstairs, Souls Looking Back* is a collection of substantive reviews of social psychological theory and research on Black adolescent development. These narratives and literature reviews are organized around three concerns in relation to the overarching theme of race: social class, identity, and resilience.

**Social Class and Race**

In Part I, Peter Murrell discusses how race and class interact in adolescent development. He tells us that the student narrators “are coming to terms with their social class conversion at the same time they are confronting issues of racial identity” (p. 4). He locates the
first set of narratives by Prince, Maria, Alessandro, and Rob in the adolescent struggle to develop critical consciousness. Prince grew up in a poverty-stricken community where, he tells us, boys learned “how to use drugs and beat women” (p. 26). With impetus from his determined mother, the Big Brother she found for him, and his own yearning for challenge, he decided to strive and “reach for the moon” (cf. Ellison, 1952). In contrast to Prince, Maria grew up in suburbia where “I was just another happy, self-confident, smart kid who happened to be black” (p. 32). She was stung when she heard her high school classmates put down her academic achievements as an artifact of affirmative action. Maria’s narrative explores her attempts to understand herself while trying to resolve the expectations of different social classes in an academic setting. Alessandro’s biracial narrative explores the interaction of his Latin cultural heritage (Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico) and the very different meaning of being African and dark skinned in the United States. Rob’s experience of privilege parallels Maria’s in one sense, but, unlike Maria, he is not the first generation in his family to join the upper class. His mother went to medical school after his father died. He carries on a long family tradition and is all too conscious of his role within the Black community as a member of the Talented Tenth. All four narratives, Murrell observes, reflect the experiences of Black adolescents as their identity emerges and is transformed in a political landscape still marked by “dual consciousness” (p. 8). Prince provides Du Bois’s explanation in his story: “It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of other, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his ‘twoness’ — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (p. 29). Overall, these first narratives illustrate the ways that race, racism, and social class shape the authors’ perceptions and color the ways in which they negotiate the developmental hurdles of late adolescence.

Identity and Race

Two essays, one by Jewelle Taylor Gibbs on the social construction of race and one by Tracy Robinson on stage models of Black identity development, introduce the six narratives in “Part II: Identity.” This second group of narratives is particularly touching and provocative. Christine, Liz, Claudio, Susanna, Steve, and Scott each face existential questions of how they know who they are and know what is good and right in an unfair world. From various perspectives — biracial and bicultural, bisexual and gay — each describes her/his challenges, conflicts, and approaches to creating an individual identity.
and a sense of belonging. Each of these young people addresses universal themes: Scott wonders how he can separate who he wants to become from who his parents want him to be. Liz wonders how she can be fully herself in a world that sees “Black first and me second” (p. 117). Each speaks from the struggle of one soul to make sense of the illogic that requires them to acknowledge America’s threats and evils. Susanna, for example, had a White best friend in high school whom she lost to a skinhead movement. As a middle-class Black child of a White mother, Susanna felt like an outcast from her college’s Black Student Organization. Only as an exchange student at Spelman, a college for Black women in Atlanta, did she have the freedom to experience her personhood. Claudio, too, sought community in college. The son of a mixed-race family of privilege in Curacao, Claudio was not prepared for the nowhere land he faced coming to America. His mother told him he was not African American yet his dark skin clearly marked him in the eyes of whites. For Black American teens, Claudio’s homosexuality proved difficult. For Latinos he was “too black.” Claudio locates his struggle for freedom, identity, and belonging in the gay liberation circle on his campus and in his community. Susannah, the biracial child of a Swiss mother and an African American father, claims a bicultural identity. In her essay, “Becoming Comfortable in my Skin,” she comments: “I’m tired of explaining. I often wonder why more black people haven’t gone into international relations; we have more practice at diplomacy than anyone. Our relationships with whites require such constant diplomacy that we should get diplomatic immunity from the U.S. government” (p. 134).

**Resilience and Race**

The final six narratives, “Part III: Resilience and Resistance,” are introduced by Janie Victoria Ward. She notes that “though economic success may mediate its intensity, no dark-skinned individual is completely immune to racism” (p. 175). For the young people in this section, the titles of their self-portraits suggest the range of their struggles: “Gotta Keep Climbin’ All de Time” (Chantal), “Finding Zion” (Viola), “Feeling the Pressure to Succeed” (Rick), “Running Hurdles” (Stacey), “Reflections on my Survival” (Malik), and “Quest for Peace” (Denise). Viola, for instance, refuses to split off either part of her racial heritage — her mother is a White Canadian and her father is a Black Jamaican. She writes, “I know racism; I know how many mixed people choose to be Black because it’s easier. I know white people who prefer it that way too. I am reluctant to resign myself to one side or the other, which shows up in many aspects of myself. I am neither Black or White, but I can be both” (p. 217). The “souls” in Part III all grew up through hardships and triumphs, to gain a better understanding of themselves, and the liberation and con-
connections that come from working for social justice. Of course, as Ward also observes, “not all resistance strategies” adopted by these youth were “liberatory and psychologically healthy,” but, nevertheless, all were survivors (p. 182).

**Some Concern, Some Strength**

Even as the reader experiences the book’s substantial strengths, some concerns may occur. The first relates to the reference to W. E. B. Du Bois. The title and introduction lead the reader to expect that Du Bois will serve as an interpretative lens to frame the book and decode the stories or that occasional links would be made between the two volumes. Such is not the case. Although Du Bois’s two most prescient statements are quoted, one on the color line and the other on double consciousness, his insights are otherwise left implicit.

Nevertheless, there are numerous potential links between *Souls of Black Folk* and *Souls Looking Back*. In fact, social studies educators would do well to assign both books during a course in order to discuss and reflect on their similarities and differences. This pairing might be most illuminating in considering such issues as: the Talented Tenth and the role of higher education in Black liberation movements in the twentieth century; integration (assimilation) and separatism (nationalism) as social goals and psychological realities; and the universal alienation that Black American students confront in being educated in a white world (Du Bois, 1963).

The second concern is the politics of skin color. The inclusion of five avowedly biracial students in a book of sixteen Black educational success stories might appear to illustrate continued racial bias in higher education. Indeed, if the selected sixteen Black voices reflect the general Black population of first-ranked Ivy League colleges, then this seems to suggest that color continues to be a formidable filter in college admission and success. For three hundred years of African-American history, lighter skin has generally assured a head start toward upward social mobility in the larger society (Du Bois, 1940).

On the other hand, including the stories of biracial students immensely enriches our understanding of growing up as a person of color in the United States. Historically, people of mixed race in the United States have been Black by virtue of both the “one drop of black blood” rule and by the inclusiveness in African American culture. People were Black with “some white in them” or “some Indian Blood.” Rarely have people been identified as white, with some black in them. Although most African Americans are of mixed racial heritage to some degree, only the generation of children born after the legalization of “interracial marriage” have had the opportunity to choose to embrace their own biracial heritage in a community in which racial mixing is legal and out of the closet. The biracial youth who contributed
to *Souls Looking Back* question the validity of the previous racial classification system and demand an end to our dependence upon outdated, mutually exclusive categories. They cope with their Du Boisian double consciousness, typically, by claiming an inclusive identity and refusing to be identified as simply Black, as simply Latino, or as simply White, and by claiming bicultural skills that enable them to negotiate both Black and White social worlds. Viola and Susanna provide interesting contrasts with Du Bois who, although he too was mixed (African, Indian, French, and Germanic) and had grown up in a predominantly White community (Great Barrington, MA), resented the echoes of the master’s genes in his son’s “eyes of mingled blue and brown” (1903, p. 131) and chose fiercely and tenaciously to identify himself as Black, and to die in Africa (Lewis, 1994, 2000).

Related to the question of complexion is a third concern—social class representativeness. The background information embedded in the narratives suggests that 75% of the sixteen students came from middle class or upper class backgrounds. The students, therefore, are again unrepresentative of all African American adolescents and their stories cannot illuminate the more arduous paths to educational success followed by working class African American youth.

However, the personal narratives of these seemingly privileged African American college students teach us a surprising and critically important lesson that would have been lost in another group of students. That is, even economically and socially privileged African American students attending the most elite liberal arts colleges remain marginal in their sense of attachment and belonging and are very much at risk for dropping out, being pushed out, or flunking out of college. Why is this and what can be done about it? The narratives suggest a variety of answers. Although educational institutions normally provide care for their students, for instance, this potential support fails to make it over the hurdles of cultural differences and racism, never reaching many African American students. The stress experienced by African American students attending predominately white schools is, for many, quite palpable. University administrators and faculty need to realize that even highly successful African American students attending their elite colleges need and deserve their caring support. Several of the narrators are quite clear that having Black faculty, administrators, counselors, and mentors made a critical difference in their courage and in their confidence.

**A Seat in the Rehearsal Hall**

The value of *Souls Looking Back* is precisely in its particular peculiar skew. *Souls Looking Back* offers us a seat in the rehearsal hall where sixteen young adults are giving voice to their stories. These narratives are not twisted clinical portraits of painful adaptations to
race and racism. This collection is not *Black Rage*, updated (Grier & Cobbs, 1980). Rather, *Souls Looking Back* challenges our complacency and comforts and supports those who feel alone in their struggle. Little attention has been paid in the past century to the similarities and differences among the Talented Tenth. Yet here are the spiritual descendants of Du Bois, the ripples in the placid lakes, that reflect from Great Barrington, Harvard, and Ghana to Dartmouth College, Simmons College, and McGill University. Garrod, Ward, Robinson and Kilkenny have given us a gift in sharing their students' souls.

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Making the Commonplace a Question

Ollman, Bertell. *How 2 take an Exam and Remake the World*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001, 260 pages, ISBN 1551641704, paper, $20.00, hardcover, $48.99.

Review by RICH GIBSON, College of Education, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182.

As perhaps the sole prominent Marxist philosopher in the U.S. who has tried hard to mix what he thinks people need to know with how they come to know it, a central problem in curriculum and instruction, Bertell Ollman has sought to cross common academic boundaries of profundity and humor (his book *Alienation* and his board game *Class Struggle*), to move from the esoteric to the accessible, with the kind of humility that marks a good teacher.

Who else is going to produce a funny book, *How 2 Take an Exam and Remake the World*, about testing in schools, and the class struggle? Who else is going to include the Fugs' Tuli Kupferberg, poet-author and Fugs band-leader of the 1960's, as an advisor and illustrator and admit it? Who, but the more dangerous of the dialectical materialists, is going to cover the book with upside-down pictures of Groucho Marx, Einstein, and Karl Marx? Who else is going to offer an index that readily directs the reader to "frog jumping," and, "chicken, headless," a special index of where to find the great cartoons by luminaries like Huck and Robert Miner, as well as the tragic Rosa Luxembourg and Brecht?

Ollman did it. The book is an amalgamation, a mess of a fruit and nut cake as Ollman describes it, that anyone who has sweated an exam, or wondered about their academic and social powerlessness and guilt and the mysteries of capital—will enjoying chewing through. This is dead-serious good fun, erudite scholarship easily read, and a how-to-scambig-exam guide that is as good as most of the marketeer's test-prep courses. It's surely for every teacher, and every student, and plenty of workers who want to know more about how the school and the workplace intersects as a challenge to normalcy and a call to action for a more humane way to live.

Ollman leads us joyfully through the sometimes daunting warrens of the Old Mole of historical materialism, from alienation to exploitation to reification to commodity fetishism, all the while chuckling at what he sees as the fizzle-wits who insist upon tests about the
fonnics of skaircity and choyse, the academic mask of political economy that Marx sought to rip off 150 years ago.

Along the way, we learn how to take multiple-choice tests (if it says, "all," four out of five times it's false), essay exams (write clearly), and the fearsome oral examination (get a good night's sleep). There are better test maneuvers here too. For those, you pay. But we also get bigger treats: not always tentative answers to the questions, "Is it better to get rid of the bosses, or capital?" and, "Why have school?" or "What might be the relationship of tests, grades, money, and wearing the Yellow Star?" or, "Why have government?" One that he does not pursue much, unfortunately as he is so well positioned to do it, is: "What is the relationship of struggling for the truth and movements for social justice, and why have they so often parted?"

**Making the Commonplace a Question**

Ollman understands that a good education leaves a student with memorable questions, not necessarily good answers, but not rudderless either. Rigor is mixed with freedom here; with this recipe we chew down on both at the same time. But this is not just pedagogical theory. Like all teaching, it is both analysis and a call to action. The point is: "RESIGNATION SUCKS." He thinks social justice can win.

We also get the clarity that Ollman cultivated over a lifetime, the humor that underpins the understanding that we all just might be a little wrong. Still, Ollman has some answers he wants to underline. He goes at the de rigueur notion of globalization, or neo-liberalism, head on: this is capitalism, imperialism, but on a world scale never seen before, no holds barred, absolute freedom for the movement and accumulation of things, especially the main thing, more capital; utter degradation for human beings and the perfidious scientific divisions that the Big Tests require. Globalism's freedom and tolerance become the liberty to tolerate hierarchy and inequality. Globalization has its demands and, in school, where the key products are knowledge and hope (real or false) it's: More Exams Everywhere. The Big Tests prepare us for life, quantified and segmented beneath capital, unconsciously ruled by things that people created and governed by process so habituated that they are usually unnoticed. This is where Ollman truly enters, laughing. He plans to outwit the appearance of the invincibility of capital and the humorless wreckage of reason which marches with the high-stakes exam fever that infests all of schooling today. Like a good social studies educator, he wants to make the commonplace a question.

How shall this be done? What are the limits to capital, and to testing? Does Ollman himself give tests? Grades? It's all in the recipe Ollman is playfully offering, tongue not so much in cheek, but right out between the teeth. Yes, there are limits to capital, and like Istvan
Meszaros (Beyond Capital), David Harvey (The Limits of Capital), and others, Ollman thinks we approach them now, in the environment, in the pending crises of overproduction, and in the nearly unthinkable chances of war (more unthinkable to Ollman than many others).

But there is no guarantee that crisis of capital, whether through over-production, the declining rate of profit, war, or the last monster sewage spill, will ever lead people to conclude that the forces which propel us together as social beings must overcome the forces that drive us apart—that social production, exchange, and distribution must transcend racism, nationalism, authoritarianism: irrationalism. This is where Ollman probed what he called the subjective factor, in his earlier book, Dialectical Investigations, where he examined how it is we can investigate the processes of transition from individualist consciousness to class consciousness. The subjective factor is where, in practice, the battle for justice has broken down, and Ollman's contribution in the text under review can only be considered partial. Even so, there is a parallel between Ollman's paraphrasing of Wilhelm Reich's question, "The issue is not why the hungry workers steal, but why they do not," and the moth-to-flame behavior of many educators who are lured to the Exams by promises of educational equality, or who simply march to the Tests out of habituated obedience.

There is tradition here too, within the authentic radicalism of the entire text. There are traditional cartoons (the organized bee-hive and Miner's Headless Soldier) worth the price of admission alone. Ollman's tradition wants abundance as a basis for equality and democracy, a dubious requirement for a society run by elites who don't shrink from poisoning the air their own children breathe and who bomb their own factories in their death throes. The sole limit to capital is, as Ollman has said, the conscious decision of masses of people to live better, in the connected interests of each for all. Those interested in education and social justice will see the link made but perhaps not as deftly as some might desire. There remains a gap between what Ollman thinks people must know, and how they must come to know it, curriculum and instruction, that cannot be excused as merely a dialectical transition, but needs sharper investigation. Perhaps that task falls to people mainly concerned about pedagogy.

Ollman writes with urgent sense of patience here. With all that the mainstream press will probably call the strident pointing to crisis levels of structural limits and injustice, there is the fortitude that understands the requisite role of reason, changing millions of minds, in order to make the struggle for a better world worthy, and defensible. How we do that is in the book too, and so is the passion the sets the stage for reason.
Finding Ways Around Those Exams

Social studies educators should be drawn to this book in part for the questions it will raise, in part to the challenges to even left discourse it offers. Ollman is struggling with issues common to the social studies: What is social justice, citizenship, and what do people need to know to win democracy and equality all of the people? How can we conduct serious investigations of things as they change, while at the same time we are mired in those things, both trapped and freed by issues of necessity (publish, pass the test, give the test, win the grade, give the grade, pay the rent) and power (where is tenure within an academic world that appears none of us really made?). Social studies educators interested in challenging questions, and answers, might do well to adopt this text and find ways around those exams.
What’s Love Got To Do With It?
Charity as Repression in America

Wagner, David. (2000). *What’s love got to do with it? A critical look at American charity*. New York: The New Press, 210 pp., $25.00. ISBN 1-56584-413-0

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“Perhaps the most overrated virtue in our list of shoddy virtues is that of giving. Giving builds up the ego of the giver, makes him superior and higher and larger than the receiver. Nearly always, giving is a selfish pleasure, and in many cases is a downright destructive and evil thing.”

John Steinbeck

Wagner’s book title, “What’s love got to do with it?” is just one of many important and perplexing questions posed in this book that are important for social studies educators to consider as we think, talk, and write about democratic citizenship. As a professor of social work, Wagner looks at the history of charity from a unique lens; his insights expose a decidedly negative view of the generally revered notion of American philanthropy.

**Repressive Benevolence**

How can giving possibly be destructive or evil? In his book, Wagner plays David to a Goliath among American values—charity—through disclosing how philanthropy in the United States has repressed those in need, mitigated guilt among the “haves,” and too often preempted real social change. Wagner’s analysis is at once psychological, historical and sociological; his treatise challenges us as social studies educators to consider how charity figures (or doesn’t) into the notion of what it means to be an informed and active citizen in contemporary society. His work also offers social studies educators additional perspectives beyond the textbook and other status quo sources for analyzing various aspects of U. S. history.

In the first part of the book, Wagner explores how, historically, claims to altruism have often coincided with cruel and violent action toward those who were different. Wagner calls this phenomena “repressive benevolence” because those who believed they were actually helping spearheaded it.
Repressive benevolence can be used to describe the actions and attitudes of those who claim to do good, but because of cultural and power differentials often harm their intended subjects. Underlying repressive benevolence is the strong American ideological belief that its churchgoing, white, middle-class citizens know what is best for others as well as themselves, and hence are summoned to 'do good' by spreading their gospel of living to others. Such spreading of the good life is considered well-meaning and constitutes a strand from the Puritans of old to American soldiers in Vietnam or the Middle East in the twentieth century. (p. 18)

While the examples above are well taken, Wagner focuses his lens primarily on two other groups: Indians and the poor. He notes that charitable acts by the "Friends of the Indian" led to the disenfranchisement of native peoples from most of their land, to the removal of hundreds of thousands of Indian children from their families, and to the destruction of native languages, religions, and cultures. In regard to the poor, the widely held belief that poverty is a moral flaw that is only made worse by providing material aid led to poorhouses, workhouses, auctioning poor individuals, use of the lash, and other punitive measures. Like Indians, poor people were seen as undisciplined, deviant children who needed education, rehabilitation, and, in extreme cases, punishment in order to reform their character for the better.

**The Ideology of Charity**

In the second part of the book, Wagner traces the success of charity as both an American ideology and a set of institutional arrangements. Beginning with religious roots in Christianity, philanthropy in the United States came to be the province of the rich and powerful. In the twentieth century, "a huge apparatus of ostensibly caregiving institutions and organizations has arisen and has been glorified as 'non-profit.' Though funded by wealthy sponsors, nonprofit organizations have been severed from these origins in the public mind" (p. 74).

Wagner's discussion of the differences between charity and social action is particularly illuminating. "Charity belongs to a totally different class of social action than economic or political action...We are comfortable praising the volunteer who enters another's life because we understand such action to be in the (idealized) realm of personal communication between giver and receiver" (p. 81).

While Wagner does allow that at times charity has contributed to the common good (such as through providing disaster relief and working for the rights of the blind and deaf), he asserts that most of our important social movements and legal victories have come about
through other means, such as social unrest and ensuing structural mechanisms to channel (and often weaken) social protest. For example, protests surrounding the rights of people of color, children, women, those with disabilities, gays and lesbians, prisoners, and the environment have led to some positive changes.

But these gains have not been consistent or as considerable as they might have been. "Those in power strive not only to repress and control rebellions. They also try to organize and channel disorder into less threatening forums" (p. 154). Thus, the government has given representation to individuals from previously excluded groups in ways that would adhere to the law and the normal channel of politics. Government has also moved "to replace substantive economic and political changes with vague service and therapeutic goals that were less costly and ultimately less challenging to the status quo" (p. 155).

**Doin' Good**

In Wagner's view, volunteer and service activities are characterized by sentiment rather than social change. "Today's younger generation of activists, human service workers, and volunteers has seen no major radical movements in two decades and consequently has come to mistake the missionary zeal of service work with politics... 'Doing good' has become, in the absence of active oppositional movements, the 'only game in town' for those who want to embrace some cause broader than themselves" (p. 169). Wagner's questions to advocates of community service should give us pause. "What if the challenge was seen as attempting to change society for the better rather than merely ladling out soup at a kitchen or making sandwiches at a shelter? What if Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Eugene V. Debs, or Cesar Chavez had been content to ladle soup?" (p. 177).

While Wagner's critiques take down two of America's most revered civic endeavors (charity and community service), his arguments are not devoid of positive suggestions for how we can make a difference. In just a few brief pages at the end of the book, Wagner at least gives us a glimpse of how we might create more widespread and meaningful social change. In Wagner's view, only two major alternatives to the charitable project exist: first, completely transform our social organization into an egalitarian (read: socialist) society and second, accept the outlines of a capitalist system but seek to limit the excesses of a free market by providing a welfare state. Admitting that the latter is probably more doable and citing Sweden and Holland as two examples, Wagner offers several specific aims toward societal reform: stronger unions, higher rates of corporate taxation, family allowances, paid maternity leaves, and national health insurance.
The United States has the sharpest rates of income inequality in the Western world, the sparsest public social welfare system in the industrialized world, and festering social problems that produce much violence and more prisons than elsewhere... Why do most societies provide their citizens with family allowances to support children, free health care, and other services as a basic right while the United States does not? (p. 4).

This question, posed at the beginning of the book, also is fittingly where the book ends. It is a critical question for social studies educators to ponder and then reflect on how we might “get there from here.” While never light or easy reading, Wagner’s treatise on American charity provides some assistance to those of us endeavoring to figure out how to most effectively teach for meaningful and significant social change.
Numerous reasons exist today, as always, for promoting the concept of justice within social studies education. Entrenched problems such as racism, sexism, and homophobia stubbornly persist. Globalization offers a new round of assaults on the environment and human dignity. Violence, consumerism, and narcissism threaten to undermine whatever vestiges of civil society still exist in this country. In the last chapter of this book, Andra Makler offers a further rationale: While most social studies teachers say they consider social justice issues in their teaching, her research shows they do not. What they are teaching about instead is social injustice, without considering explicitly what social justice actually means.

Defining Justice

The problem of what justice means is a thorny one. As John Rawls (1999) points out in A Theory of Justice:

"Now let us say that a society is well ordered when it is not only designed to advance the good of its members but when it is also effectively regulated by a public conception of justice. That is, it is a society in which (1) everyone accepts and knows that the others accept the same principles of justice, and (2) the basic social institutions generally satisfy and are generally known to satisfy these principles...Existing societies are of course seldom well-ordered in this sense, for what is just and unjust is usually in dispute." (p. 5)

Correspondingly, when we move to the cross-cultural arena, we find that understandings of justice pose even greater difficulties for consensual definition. Martha Nussbaum (1999), in the introductory chapter to her work, Sex and Social Justice, presents a critique of relativism as regards women’s status worldwide:
To express the spirit of this chapter very succinctly, it is better to risk being consigned by critics to the “hell” reserved for alleged Westernizers and imperialists—however unjustified such criticism would in fact be—than to stand around in the vestibule waiting for a time when everyone will like what we are going to say. And what we are going to say is: that there are universal obligations to protect human functioning and its dignity, and that the dignity of women is equal to that of men.” (p. 30)

Readers of this journal will perhaps remember Makler’s own effort to uncover what meanings social studies teachers bring to the notion of justice in her article, “Social Studies Teachers’ Conceptions of Justice,” published in 1994. In this research, the author found teachers teaching about injustice (for example, lessons about the treatment of minority groups in U.S. history, women in other cultures, civil liberties, etc.), yet reluctant to frame this instruction as about justice. In-depth interviews with two teachers revealed them to be well aware of their reluctance to engage the concept directly. It would be tempting to speculate about the reasons behind this reluctance and whether the phenomenon is widespread.

Not surprisingly, therefore, these teachers’ students did not recognize their lessons as concerned with justice. Makler asked students to “imagine a just country” (p.213). She describes their answers as reflecting cynicism, realism, and relativism. What she finds missing in these classrooms, and disturbing as omission, is the expression of a theory or theories of justice that help students develop a sophisticated, critical approach to social injustice while supporting their construction of an understanding of a just society.

Thus, Makler entitles her chapter, the last in the book, “What Does Justice Look Like?” The approach taken overall by this wonderful book, co-edited by Makler and Ruth Shagoury Hubbard, is to answer the question by allowing teachers to share their stories of teaching for justice. Readers encounter a set of definitions, a variety of considerations, and fourteen examples of teaching for justice in social studies classrooms, written chiefly by teachers at the middle and high school levels. The subtitle of the book, “millions of intricate moves,” comes from chapter 1 in which Kim Stafford, a writing instructor at Lewis and Clark College, describes vividly how his own sense of justice began in childhood. His father, the poet William Stafford, often documented family events like car trips into the Cascade Mountains of Oregon through poetry. One particular Sunday, the Stafford family car became the setting for an expression of racism that provoked William Stafford to scold the passenger, silence the children in the back
seat, and pen the following: "We live in an occupied country, misunderstood; justice will take us millions of intricate moves." (p. 13)

The Framework

In the introductory chapter, Hubbard reviews the legacy of issue-centered education in the social studies and the daily contributions to that tradition made by the intricate moves of teachers struggling with how to bring social justice into today's classrooms. She talks about "teaching from the center of the circle" (p. 1) and social justice as "good work in action" (p. 1). Clearly, John Dewey's pragmatism is at work here, as is Nel Noddings' emphasis on caring as central to the educational enterprise.

Hubbard's adept use of language reflects the sensitivity to writing that makes this book a pleasure to read as well as a prescription for good social studies education. Writing also serves as one among a range of teaching strategies to be used in addressing social justice issues by fostering introspection, reflection, and a sense of inquiry. Developing a sense of membership in a professional community, respecting the disciplines, varying teaching strategies, and using the Internet—all figure in the teaching stories told here. Four of the chapters contain extensive appendices of teaching materials for use in conjunction with the approaches described by their authors.

The chapters complementing Hubbard's introduction and Makler's conclusion include: writing as a path to social justice by Kim Stafford; immigration by Linda Christensen; collective action by Sandra Childs; Guatemalan history by Jessie Singer; sweatshops and child labor by Bill Bigelow; social protest movements in U.S. History by Daniel Gallo; the Vietnam War by Michael Jarmer; community service by Mary Burke-Hengan and Gregory Smith; peer mediation by Russell Dillman and Geoffrey Brooks; gangs and street justice by Theresa Kauffman; mock trials by David Molloy; market failure by Paul Copley; Nigeria and oil companies by Sandra Childs and Amanda Weber-Welch; and migrant farm workers by Dirk Frewing. Two authors, Linda Christensen and Bill Bigelow, write regularly for Rethinking Schools; all are social studies or language arts teachers or teacher educators at Lewis and Clark College. To give a better sense of the book's approach, I'll describe four chapters in more depth.

Jessie Singer's chapter is entitled "Looking Through Layers: A Study of Guatemala." Singer says, "I wanted to teach a way of seeing" (p.43) Guatemalan history in her high school global studies class. Having lived there for a number of years and because "Guatemala is a country grappling with questions of how to create social justice for its people," Singer used a post-holing approach by looking at four segments of its history: the Mayan period, 2000-1000 BC; the Spanish conquest of the 1500s and 1600s, the "Liberal Revolution" of 1871-
1900; and a period of land, social reform and US-backed coup, 1944-1954. Her theme over all aimed at having students understand “how control and outside influence can lead to complex social and political divisions that are not easily erased” (p. 44). Singer used writing workshops to encourage students to think about the idea of a “people’s voice” and the multiple perspectives necessary for understanding history. In particular, she had students write “interior monologues” from the perspective of persons of Mayan descent when the Spanish invaded (p. 47), so they would better understand the issues of autonomy, oppression, helplessness, and poverty that have shaped Guatemalan history.

Looking at poverty closer to home, Mary Burke-Hengen and Gregory Smith of Lewis and Clark College were motivated by the question: “How many of our graduates...had the knowledge and understanding of poverty that would even begin to prepare them to serve this population?” (p. 100). Prompted by a belief in the “insufficiency of abstractions,” they took their student teaching interns into places in Portland where they would encounter the poor face to face: “For us, the willingness to work for social justice is based on the capacity to care” (p. 100). The two instructors required students to meet for five 3-hour blocks on Fridays between September and December. Their semester began and ended with whole-group sessions of all those enrolled. In between, students volunteered in small groups at a number of local organizations dedicated to caring for the poor. Journal writing offered a means of coming to terms with the students’ experiences and documenting whatever transformation, if any, occurred in their thinking about the poor. Remarkably perhaps, students seemed to achieve a new understanding that the poor are people like themselves and that the sources of poverty are rooted in injustice.

Like service learning, conflict resolution is an educational strategy often found within social studies curriculum. Russell Dillman, a high school social studies teacher, and Geoffrey Brooks, the “integration specialist” for the Portland School District, shared an interest in making peer mediation work in their school. They write:

We believe power and conflict are concepts central to a discussion of justice. Conflict resolution programs in schools provide a venue in which power is more evenly distributed than historically has been the case in schools as well as the larger society. (p. 119)

The authors describe the successes and failures of their peer mediation program. On the one hand, the program has been successful in reducing school violence by empowering students “to find justice on their own terms” (p. 119). On the other hand, the authors la-
ment the fact that those who apply to become peer mediators are over-
whelming European-American females. Very few males apply and few
conflicts between male students or between African-American stu-
dents get handled through the peer mediation program. Differences
in racial attitudes about justice more generally are also manifest in the
African American history class Brooks teaches. Together, these expe-
riences bring the authors to reflect on what they call “the color of jus-
tice”—in both schools and life.

The last example comes from a student teacher, Dirk Frewing,
who wrote a unit plan for the study of migrant living and working
conditions in the United States. Frewing taught one week’s worth of
this unit at a large suburban high school, which he describes here. The
author correctly notes the hidden nature of this subject in the Ameri-
can history curriculum, even when a unit on civil rights gets taught.
He offers this rationale for his unit: “Today, migrant workers are inti-
mately and fundamentally connected to everyone who eats fruits or
vegetables. They are an integral yet socially invisible component of
U.S. society” (p. 200). Yet growing up in Oregon, Frewing, like so many
others, had “no idea that migrant farm workers were suffering many
similar types of abuses just across the mountains in the sunny orchards
and fields of the Northwest” (p. 200). As he taught this subject, the
beginning teacher found students concluding that bringing justice to
migrant workers was almost impossible in the face of agri-business
and American citizens’ demands for cheap produce. While Frewing
may not have succeeded in moving his students to social action, he
concludes his chapter by sharing his own move for social justice: His
students today are the “sons and daughters of migrant farm
workers...sitting in the graffiti-scarred desks of my basement class-
room” (p. 207).

Making even small moves towards justice, the authors of this
book suggest, will help convince students that action is never futile.
These teachers stand in contrast to the teachers described in Makler’s
original research by helping their students actively engage the con-
cept of justice at the beginning, middle, or end of teaching units. They
also understand that teaching about justice demands that sensitivity
to justice begin in the classroom, in the interactions between a teacher
and his or her students. As Hubbard correctly notes, teaching for jus-
tice means treating students fairly as well as respecting their differ-
ences of opinion about the meaning of justice in a society.

Social Justice and Teacher Education

Of course, if teaching for social justice is to occur, teacher educa-
tion programs need to produce graduates sensitive to these concerns
and skilled in providing the means of enacting such goals. As a teacher
educator, I hoped I would find something more here about the ap-
approaches of other teacher educators to motivating and developing teachers committed to social justice within social studies. Further, I would have liked greater consideration of the problems of resistance from parents, administrators and communities, the issue of time constraints, and the scourge of high-stakes testing and its impact on curriculum. Beyond the many fine stories here, more direct consideration of the question posed by Sandra Childs, "How do you turn the situation in the Delta from a lesson about social injustice to a lesson about social justice?" (p. 3), would have been helpful. Perhaps a companion volume for teacher educators could be Makler and Hubbard’s next project.

Nevertheless, I recognize that, as befits a book on such a complex issue as teaching for justice, no simple prescriptions, formulas, or definitions can be offered. Those looking for a critique of the structural conditions that impede social justice in classrooms, schools, or society will likewise be disappointed. Nor do the editors promote a particular model of justice, although Makler’s conclusion reminds readers of feminist approaches to justice as caring that balance notions of justice as fairness. In short, this is a book filled with stimulating models for teaching and enacting social justice in social studies classrooms. As with good parenting, effective instruction in this realm has more to do with setting a good example than with preaching, prescribing, and nagging. Readers can surely be satisfied with that.

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The End of Critical Thinking?

Zevin, Jack. 2000. *Social Studies for the Twenty-first Century: Methods and materials for teaching in middle and secondary schools* (2nd ed). Mahwah, NJ: LEA, Inc. Paper, ISBN 0-8058-2465-0

Review by JONATHAN LEE, State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, NY, 13905.

In his autobiography, *A Call to Assembly*, jazz bassist Willie Ruff recalls being told that 'music don't mean a thing, unless it tells a story'. Quickly switching scenes, this phrase can be highly illustrative for social studies educators. Primarily, it speaks directly to our role and the project of our discipline: a sort of calling-into-being (or calling-into-assembly) of the vast and temporal facets of history and social life, inflating them with space and meaning derived from a critical analysis of, and self-reflection on, everything within our reach. If this sounds vague, it should. In many ways, social studies has become 'the discipline without a definition', 'the subject without a subject'. It is nowhere and it is everywhere; it is grounded in its groundlessness. Much like the 'world religions' that it claims to study, social studies is very much an academic attempt to make us feel confident by supposing to have a handle on the unknown. Still, history happened, and we live social life each day, right? So are we really studying the 'unknown'?

**Studying the “Unknown”**

Of this 'unknown', it is easy to convince ourselves to the opposite (we just need to look at the institutional calligraphy framed and hanging proudly on our walls). What is the true challenge, then, is to convince our students in the same manner. We must introduce them to the 'unknown'. More importantly, we must train them to walk that fine tightrope (or tripwire) that translates into the 'known' while, at the same time, informs the critical moment when we realize that, by claiming to 'know', we are only giving ourselves time to investigate the 'unknown'.

Paul Bove, literary critic at the University of Pittsburgh, is currently undertaking a project that focuses on the retrieval of, what he calls, 'the end of thinking' (Bove, 2001). Essentially, this is a project spawned by what Bove sees to be a 'poverty of thinking' in contemporary global theorizing, where intellectuals (such as Fukuyama and Greenblatt) eagerly put out-of-date theories to use in reference to something completely new, rather than attempting to come to grips with their intellectual roots, and devise new strategies and insights towards
this 'new' arena. [The newness of this global arena is, of course, a prime example of the 'known versus unknown' dilemma referred to above. Its particular debate, however, is reserved for another time.]

In many ways, we are at a point in social studies education where we are asked to tackle the same halfback. Nichols and Good (2000) make the claim that, at the core, there is very little difference between education in 1900 and the same 100 years later. This is quite an unfortunate presumption, one of the very same manner that Bove disclaims. The pressures, borders, realities, and goals of contemporary education far exceed what any educator in 1900 could imagine. Sure, in theory, we rely heavily (and justifiably so) on educational philosophers such as Dewey and Du Bois, who began their thinking even prior to 1900. But to put their seemingly timeless words into use today requires a completely different set of rationales and applications than these 'knowers' were dealing with at the time of their writings. What this all means is that we must not fall into the trap of those social educators before us; we must devise the new to deal with the new. Plainly, before we can even begin to think about curricula, standards, and students, we must think about us; we must be students before we can teach them.

As students of social education, we are in a unique position: we embody our subject, immediately becoming constant examples for reflexivity. This position cannot be pushed asunder. Along with being active learners, students of education (of social education in particular) need to be openly critical of the sources of their learning. Here, 'critical' is not meant to call for massive and unfounded source-bashing. Rather, we should turn our sources on their ends, allowing, in a sense, the sources to critique themselves. Stephanie Wasta, (2001) for example, puts to use a teaching strategy that she has modified from Ogle's K-W-L formula: For Ogle, teachers should go about their business by keeping three student-oriented questions in mind: 1) What do I know? 2) What do I want to know? 3) What have I Learned? Wasta transforms K-W-L into T-W-L, changing the first question-step to 'What I think I know'. This relates directly to our relationship with the unknown. Never do we admit to be experts or knowers. Instead, we are driven by a self-reflective desire to learn. In a sense, we follow a very Kuhnian thoughtline, where progress is seen to be an improvement on the past, rather than an increased nearness to a concrete goal (Rorty, 1998). Although we should not rule out short-term goals, we can never allow our goals to be wide-ranging to the point where we consider knowledge to be outside of this realm of the 'unknown'. To see and self-admit this is primary to our unique position as learning teachers.

It is with all of this in mind that I introduce the main character of this text: Jack Zevin's Social Studies for the Twenty-first Century. Aimed at offering some clearly-drawn and fresh perspectives on a
discipline that has, historically, been a muddled watercolor of old habits, this text (hereafter signified as 'SS21'), rather, illustrates a problematic 'end of thinking' in academia, especially dangerous considering its potential usage as a model with which to instruct future educators.

Framework

We are so selfish. We want it all now, never patient or meditative. Case in point: how do we approach the books we read? Do we sit right down and hammer away at chapter one (looking for style in introduction) or chapter four (looking for continued textual excitement as the book rolls along)? Or do we pull the book off the shelf, look at the cover and back-jacket, and quickly browse down the table of contents before turning to the index and setting up camp, looking for the ways that this book is going to help us? Or worse, do we affix our gaze at the bibliography, looking for clues as to the amount of research undertaken (illustrating an immediate, yet unfounded, distrust of the author)? Personally, I fall along the lines of the latter. As ignorant as this way of text-approach may be, it remains the most concise method for introduction.

Before I even pulled the book's first edition off the library shelf, I notice the strange combination of the title (21st Century), and the dated (1992), library-code sticker - an eight-year time disparity. In light of some major disciplinary shifting during the late 1980s and early 1990s [whose particulars need not be indulged here], SS21's assertion that one can skip right over what was turning into (and turned to be) a revolutionary 1990s, aiming an instructional program at the next century, is certainly problematic. Why not title the book Social Studies for the 1990s or Social Studies at the End of the Twentieth Century or Social Studies: The First Century. Of course, hindsight is the critic's best friend. But in the simple matter of an illogical title for a textbook, SS21 appears to have closed the old mental orifice before even starting, opening itself to harsh criticism.

Eight years later, the second edition is nothing more than a slightly-angularized modification of the first. Zevin's agenda, which will become clear through this essay, is still intact, and he has made little amends for major problems in the earlier edition. While new sections appear at the end of various chapters (ie. 'globalism'), the only major adjustments deal specifically with technological advances made, over the span of the 1990s. In other words, rather than attempting to deal with some of the large-scale changes that have occurred since the first edition of this mal-titled text, Zevin prefers to focus on changes that are not specific to social education - internet and new media, for example.
In frame and structure, SS2T attempts an emphasis on promoting *active* learning. The appendices are thoroughly-researched and well-organized, listing sources for 'further reading', along with a variety of social studies-oriented organizations and journals. However, Zevin has eliminated a more detailed ‘further reading’ appendix that appeared in the first edition - one of the sole shining moments in that edition. In another fashion, the text promotes active learning with the inclusion of in-text 'activity boxes'. These come, generally, in two types. The first are sub-divided into 'To Do', 'Let's Decide', and 'What Do You Think' - ranging from a series of questions related to developing both objective and subjective relations with a set of given information, to a set of questions for interpretation of a given picture, poem, or historical prose. The second type, 'Research Report', gives a few paragraphs of primary source material, but asks nothing of the reader. Perhaps it is the second type of activity that best suits the active learner, in that it requires the learner to formulate their own queries and responses. Either way, these activities closely resemble their '7-12' counterparts, in scope and difficulty (or more precisely, in shallowness and ease). While this is good in its ability to give the learning teacher a chance to develop a certain 'expertise' at attacking these types of activities, it is simply a regurgitation of an old strategy that can only lead toward formulaic responses to generic questions. In short, while this teaches the reader to cope with present textbooks, it says nothing of what changes in the scope of the title (21st Century) may bring - or has brought already.

**DRA, or The Pros and Cons of Simplicity**

Underlying the whole mission of SS21 is a reliance on a three-part schema for organizing knowledge, a plan that could be called the DRA format. This strategy is all-inclusive, and embodies a sort-of X-Files shape-shifter, able to be aimed at everything from student learning to teaching style to subject analysis. And like the shape-shifter, within the pleasant and familiar DRA format lies a potentially-harmful creature. It is simply, well,...simple.

The DRA format combines the following: the didactic (referring to factual memorization), the reflective (referring to the objective analysis of the facts), and the affective (referring to the subjective conclusions based on the objective). At the most basic level, SS21 considers these three components as being "different but not exclusive" (p. vii). They are meant, taken together, to act as a framework for a holistic approach to studying the social. Unfortunately, SS21 has broken the concept of 'holistic'. Zevin, in the very first chapter, clearly states that, although the best lessons will, in some capacity, combine all three facets of DRA, a more 'realistic' lesson will be centered on one ele-
ment of the three. The reason given: we don't want to confuse the children. Seems to me, moreso, that we don't want to confuse the teachers. DRA segregation (the pick-and-choose method of lesson knowledge) fully opposes any attempt at either holism or critical instruction on the part of the teacher.

Zevin fashions a wide range of potential action for this format. First, DRA is utilized as a means of ranking student thought processes [didactic = lower processes, reflective = middle, and affective = upper]. With no disclaimer emphasizing individual ability, this sort of oversimplified generalizing that falls along the lines of Bove’s critique. In a second sense, the format is used as a marker of teacher roles in the classroom [didactic = ‘authority, resource, guide’; reflective = ‘questioner, scientist, artist’; affective = ‘dramatist, socialization agent, devil’s advocate’]. This clear-cut distinction sticks to the ‘separate but equal’ notion regarding DRA, thus also betraying SS21’s claim to ‘holistic instruction’. Elsewhere, the analysis of role differentiation has been undertaken in both ‘periphery’ (Turner, 1962) and ‘center’ (Bourdieu, 1996), each of which discusses the interrelatedness of the different roles. More importantly, they discuss the ranging effects that both the separation and integration of the roles each play into the society in which they are performed. SS21 prefers more of a self-appointed schizophrenia, suggesting that the instructor should select one or two roles, so as to create a more centered and, in Zevin’s words, ‘dramatic’ lesson or learning environment. Where Turner and Bourdieu speak of roles as becoming internalized within the actor, SS21 intends to produce actors in a more Hollywoodesque vein. It all just appears to play right into the false nature of teaching based on corporate standards and constructed histories.

**Inscribing Ignorance**

Throughout the text, Zevin constructs a pattern of bias and forgetting, centered around two aspects: dominance through mentioning and passive acceptance. Loewen (1995) defines ‘dominance through mentioning’ as a process by which an author keeps the reader in the dark by briefly or broadly alluding to a subject or event, seemingly giving it voice in the overall picture. In actuality, the author likens the reader to a ‘cultural dope’ [a creation of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz], assuming control over the reader in a power dynamic that relates directly to the author’s appropriation of limited information and the reader’s assumption that they are receiving the ‘full picture’.

SS21 accomplishes this in two diverging ways. First, throughout the text, Zevin drops phrases onto the reader that are somewhat unique, only to give them a distorted discussion - or no discussion at
all. Two cases in point. In the first, he mentions how the humanities and the natural sciences have recently become ‘vital elements of the entire social studies curriculum’, and proceeds to give them a single (and brief) in-text citation - and never mentions them again. His archaic definition of anthropology, for instance, says nothing of archaeology or physical anthropology [many of whose texts are located, respectively, in our own Fine Arts and Science libraries]. Secondly, Zevin lays out three different notions of self among social educators [the good citizen, the critical thinker, the expert], calling them ‘tensions’ within the discipline, affecting ‘everyday teaching in important ways’. He then sinks back into his DRA safety-blanket, talking about how didactic thinking can develop accurate lessons or how reflective thinking can develop a sense of critical-mindedness among the students - rather than elaborating on this critical distinction among educators. Here would be an excellent time for Zevin to refute his refusal to think critically or force the reader to do so. But, unfortunately, here was an opportunity wasted. In these two examples, Zevin clearly takes the reader for a ‘cultural dope’, who simply nods their head to accept whatever they are fed, without asking ‘please, sir, can I have some more?’.

A second example of ‘dominance through mentioning’ relates to an exclusion of information by providing the reader with an extremely uneven topical framework. Where the subject surrounding the first ‘dominance through mentioning’ example impacts the teachers, this second example weighs in quite heavily on the students, asking the teachers to regard primary hues as having less importance than some rather secondary issues. For example, Zevin’s treatment of multicultural education is exceptionally limited, even given that the book was written when this topic was still, very much, in the developing stages. In this 300-plus page textbook, less than six full pages of text are given to multicultural education, and a majority of this deals with the inclusion of material from the Middle East or bilingual education. Compounding this, the phrases ‘African-American’ and ‘Native American’ are each mentioned barely more than once - and often in the very same sentence! In fact, Zevin claims that “changing ethnic population mixes are alone an insufficient justification for adopting a pluralistic conception of society” (p. 56). This shows the exact nature of Bove’s critique of current social thought, in that Zevin sees changing populations simply as changing ratios - regardless of the deeper effects and social responses to these changes. Clearly, he is treading on thoughtless (morally and professionally) and dangerous ground!

Similarly, Zevin deems it possible to discuss the processes of adolescence in less than four pages and the vast variety of ‘special students’ [ranging from those confined to Special Education classrooms to those considered ‘gifted’] in five pages. In other words, Zevin ac-
counts for multicultural education (including ESL), problems of adolescence, and all students with 'special needs', in less than fifteen full pages of text. Elsewhere, Zevin spends six pages on a single in-text citation [examples of letters from the late 18th Century] and its potential for in-class discussion, as well as fourteen pages on describing the differences between T-F, multiple choice, matching, literary analysis, and essay questions on tests. In other words, SS21 spends significantly more textual space and time on information that either could be accessed in any social studies textbook or that learning teachers have been dealing with for the whole of their academic careers [historical citations and the nature of examinations], than on information that is both vital and probably new to a student of education [multicultural education, adolescence, and 'special students']. This is more like 'dominance through slighting'.

Zevin has also accepted a philosophy of 'passive acceptance' of information throughout the text, using language that makes SS21 appear to have a critical turn while, at the same time, refusing to take a stand on the information itself [sources of, usage of, responses to, and so forth]. While not promoting historical inaccuracies or other common problems within social studies [thus not demonstrating 'active acceptance'], Zevin does very little to actually critique them [thus not demonstrating 'resistance', actively or passively]. Some of this has been alluded to above, where SS21 relies on some very 'old school' in-text activity boxes as catalysts for thought. Elsewhere, Zevin appears confused on where to take a stand, choosing to fall to the easy position of accepting the material and critiquing the program. For example, in the chapter entitled 'Teaching World Studies', he recalls numerous past critiques of Western-oriented world history - the absence of the feminine or minority voice, for example - and how these critiques can be useful in developing an objectively-drawn picture of global interrelatedness. But elsewhere, Zevin makes some glaring subjective assertions:

You might ask students to compare the American nuclear family with the extended family common to the Muslim Middle East; students may perceive advantages in the large networks of relative, and they may also begin to understand the origins and rationale for polygamy and purdah...in Saudi Arabia and other places, even if they disagree with such practices...[Similarly], by studying relatively wealthy and poor societies side by side, students can begin to develop their own theories of political development - ones that see the correlation between juntas or dictatorships and weak economies and political or ethnic hatred, and between democracies and relative wealth,
strong beliefs in the rule of law, and histories of political compromise (p. 214).

Here, while appearing to exhibit fairness, Zevin makes assumptions about lack of acceptance on the part of the students, and uses language that clearly favors the West. In a related fashion, SS21 describes studying ancient Greece or the Viking tradition in Scandinavia as being ‘cross-cultural’ in nature. Though true at the base level, the refusal to go deeper is troubling. I call it passive acceptance, or the ‘end of thinking’.

**A Reluctant Justification**

To claim a critical stance by arguing with the one-sidedness of a text can not be countered with a one-sided critique. My problem with liberal and conservative die-hards has always been their reluctance to accept anything the other side claims as truth, evidence, or reality. A few weeks ago, I was within the broadcast realm of WABC Radio (770 AM - New York City) - the home of Rush Limbaugh, the ‘Excellence in Broadcasting Network’, and a markedly conservative format - to hear an interview conducted by WABC’s Sean Hannity and Malik Shabazz, the leader of the New Black Panthers. It was remarkable to hear how different their arguments were, while exhibiting similarities in tactic, tone, and justification. Point is, rather than ignorantly fighting fire with fire alone, I feel obligated to mention three aspects of SS21 that are of use to social studies teachers.

As mentioned previously, Zevin does engage in the beginnings of giving the learning teacher a point of departure into the realm of critical analysis. Especially in his introduction, Zevin includes sections comprised of several questions related to the critique of source material, of past teaching techniques, and so forth. If not discouraged by Zevin’s lack of continuance on this arena, the reader will go on to make their own critical analyses. This leads into the second point, SS21’s emphasis on other source material. The final two chapters, along with a lengthy series of reading lists at the end of each chapter in the form of bookend appendices, give the reader ample chance to do their own investigation. But only if they can get past Zevin’s limited (and biased) understanding of source material, which relegates, for example, Zinn’s People’s History...to a text only aimed at multicultural education. Similarly, SS21 lists problematic sources for ‘African-American’ topics, including a 1961 text called Slums and Suburbs and a 1986 text entitled Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles. The problem here is in the lack of disclaimer or rationale, which could lead to deeper economic, social, racial stereotypes and barriers. Finally, Zevin appears to be openly critical of textbooks and turns this critique into something positive., Zevin mulls discusses
several ways to successfully utilize even the poorest of textbooks. He maintains that one can only do this if taking textbooks to be 'open to critique', thereby taking historical inaccuracies or conflicting social assertions and turning them on their head.

**Are We There Yet?**

The intended audience of this text is comprised of future educators, and learning from this text immediately induces a non-productivity that, at times, plagues current education. As a graduate student, majoring in secondary education, I count myself among this intended audience.

For one, by making statements such as that "so far, there is no single view" (p. 296) of curriculum (especially in terms of multicultural education), Zevin pushes the reader directly past a process of critical revisionism (such as the process invoked in Peter McLaren’s *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*), calling for an ignorance of national conservative agendas that push for national standards and high-stakes testing. Similarly, the statement that "most teachers tend not to view the classroom as a place to design and conduct experiments" (p. 318) not only further turns the reader away from insisting that compliance with standardized assessments is willingness to be a catalyst for a *nationalist experiment*, but Zevin ignores projects such as a school involvement with the Peace Corps, as reported by Syracuse teacher James Miller in a recent *Social Education* (Miller, 2001).

Perhaps the most undermining aspect of this text, is a "between-the-lines training" of the 'whining teacher' syndrome. For example, in discussing the role of textbooks in social education, Zevin asserts that teachers are likely not to be inclined to go beyond the text due to a variety of time demands and constraints on them. What about over 180 days of paid vacation, standardized exams, required coherence to curricula, and a general lack of productivity facilitated by the safety of tenure? Of all professions, teachers have the time! But in making students believe that they have no time and are under constant demand before the even begin to teach, Zevin installs a negative ignorance that will be difficult to remove. Similarly, the comment that, in terms of new media, ‘too much knowledge is being offered...with a speed that may be overwhelming to both the average student and to us teachers’ (p. 335) reifies this inscribed complaining. First there is not enough information. Now there is too much. Does this mean we actually have to work? Does this mean we actually have to think?

Over the course of reading SS21, I found myself feeling like one of those classic Family Circus 'on vacation' episodes. They always start out with calm parents, eager kids, and in relation to the vacation destination, the inevitable question 'are we there yet?'. But, they al-
ways end with frazzled parents and fighting kids, each whining (in relation to home) 'are we there yet?'. It is discouraging to find a textbook, aimed at teaching future teachers, to be so full of hypocrisy, academic reluctance, and of Bove's 'end of thinking'. Still, the text is very much an illustration of itself. By reading this text as is, and in doing little thinking, one is left with an incomplete and illogical methodology for teaching social studies. However, by taking a critical eye (moreso, by taking it upon oneself to do this), the learning teacher will engage in a program of active learning, self-reflection, and critical thought. Of course, this does not excuse or rectify the fact that a text such as SS21 can be quite dangerous, problematic, and harmful to the radical project embodied by social studies as a whole.

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Zevin Responds to "The End of Critical Thinking?"

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I always appreciate reviews of my books, particularly if these offer ‘constructive criticism’, offering a balance of positive and negative remarks that assist me in improving my ideas and my communication skills for readers. However, in this review, my reaction is that the message is predominantly inaccurate, confusing, contradictory, and hostile.

My book was developed and written over many years with my own and other colleagues’ methods students, and many of the ideas and techniques in the book were honed in the classroom by, with, and for future social studies teachers. To give the book coherence and unity, I have followed what I believe to be a pragmatic philosophy very much in the tradition of Dewey, Bruner, Taba, Gardner and others who have written with a ‘progressive’ bent. The tripartite system espoused in 21st Century, teaching by implementing didactic, reflective, and affective goals (that the reviewer derides by the acronym DRA) in each and every social studies lesson is really a version of reaching the greatly desired goal of having teachers in our field give roughly equal weight to what have been called facts, reasons, and values.

Ask, don’t tell

I try to show readers practical ways of defeating the pressures in our field to cover, cover, cover; test, test, test. The whole point of the book may be summed up as, ‘Ask’, question, don’t operate in the ‘Tell’ mode. To this end I offer three overlapping goal sets, and six instructional strategies of my own invention, based on the work of many educators. These six strategies, data-gathering, comparison & contrast, drama-building, mystery, frame-of-reference, and controversy, refer to different ways of engaging students in social studies materials that will move them forward by enhancing their research and critical thinking skills at increasingly challenging levels of interaction.

Although I consider the strongest part of the book my chapters on instructional method, the reviewer seems to have little to say about this, but does observe, contrary to the overall tone of the writing that, “students have an ample chance to do their own investigation.” This sounds very much like a compliment to me, one that I take very seriously since the overall philosophy and orientation of my text is that future social studies teachers and in-service teachers, CAN and DO make their own decisions.
Throughout the book, I invite participation through questions, activities and a series of ‘boxes’ using quotes from texts, research studies, and historical documents, to spark thinking and decision-making on a wide swath of issues. Certainly, I do NOT, as the reviewer says, treat readers/students as “cultural dopes”. You will nowhere find that phrase or anything like that in my book, and I am deeply insulted by the idea that, in a book inviting the reader/teacher to develop a sense of self-definition and choice, they are treated as too stupid to make up their own minds! This is one of many contradictions in the reviewer’s essay in which she/he also notes that the book is, “thoroughly researched and well-organized.”

The reviewer found it somewhat strange, for example, when I recommend books from the 60’s and 70’s dealing with race relations and ‘Black Power’. In a social studies methods text, shouldn’t readers have a sense of history and be invited to look at some of the novels, texts, and books of the time themselves and get a feel for the arguments and issues then current rather than read summaries of what these were about? Some of these are well worth reading, and might someday be considered classics, or at least worthy historical documents.

**Defensible partiality**

In any case, this is a minor matter compared to the overall philosophy of my book which I would describe as integrative, open, and balanced; integrative or holistic because I espouse a position that history and the social sciences, as well as related fields, can be viewed as mutually overlapping sets of ideas which can be sources of borrowing providing there is a productive fit; open because I seek to influence teachers to keep their own minds open, to employ open questions in the classroom, and to be willing to revise their ideas about both content and process based on student feedback, experience, and research; balanced because I believe that a quality lesson, unit, or course should give equal time to providing information (didactic), reflecting about theories, causes and effects, underlying reasons (reflective), and taking positions on issues or controversies that are important to our social well-being.

In *21st Century*, I argue that is not for us, professors or teachers, to tell either each other or our students exactly what values and positions they should believe in, however right to ethical we believe these to be in our hearts. That is simply teaching as polemics, the one right answer syndrome, and denies to others and to students the struggle to decide for themselves, to adopt a position as their own, without coercion or approval from their teacher/professor. The reviewer’s tone and style has just a touch of fascism in it, to my way of thinking, since it accuses *21st Century* of avoiding stands and backing away from the ‘right’ positions. Philosophically, I have staked out a method as my
position, a method that allows me ‘defensible partiality’ (an area totally unnoticed by the reviewer) in giving views, which I do freely, but demands that I provide explanations for others to evaluate en route to their own formulations.

The reviewer attacks my philosophy (but I am still not sure about his, are you?) and offers little in its place except to say that, “the false nature of teaching is based on corporate standards and constructed histories”. *21st Century*’s basic view is that social studies teachers need to reflect on their goals, methods, curriculum, and testing, so as to tie it together in a coherent way that improves student reasoning and judgment. In no way do I either take ‘popular’ corporate’ positions or opt for ‘constructed histories’, nor do I demand that readers buy into justice, goodness, and mercy of a particular brand, although I believe in those values. To me, social studies is all about helping others to make their own choices and take action based on a solid understanding of evidence. I offer choices, provocative questions, and some answers, carefully guarded, which the reader has a responsibility and an invitation to disagree with whenever they like to do so. It would be very depressing to me if anyone slavishly followed my book or another’s without question, since that would defeat its entire purpose and pedagogy.

The reviewer particularly complains that I have not treated certain topics in sufficient detail or coverage, especially adolescence and multiculturalism; and that I manage readers’ understanding by practicing, “dominance through mentioning”, a process in which topics are emphasized or downplayed skewing one’s understanding to suit my purposes. It is amusing to me that a book like mine, dedicated to keeping options open, should be accused of managing the mental maps of readers, as though that is possible in our rather critical and contentious field.

As an example, I think the reviewer often misunderstands or misquotes the text, particularly in the case of multiculturalism. You will see that multicultural topics are spread out throughout the book, not just in one chapter, and reach into world/global and American history as well as into trends in the field, but it is not a book about multicultural topics which have been more ably covered in detail by others such as Banks. Furthermore, the reviewer quotes me as saying that, “changing ethnic population mixes are alone an insufficient justification for adopting a pluralistic conception of society.” (p.56) This might not be my most felicitous sentence, but if you will read the whole section, I argue that all of us need to know about each others’ cultures whether or not folks from these groups are present in large numbers or small numbers. In other words, I take the view that pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism, should and must be part of social studies instruction to provide students with a sense of respect for each and
every group and its history, particularly those with whom we are in
direct contact in our own neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Consis-
tent with my overall integrative, 'holistic,' approach, I don't particu-
larly like to have cultures treated in their own little section of a book
separated by hyphenated designations. Rather I would like to see cul-
ture, gender, race, and ethnicity viewed as part of American and glo-
bal society as a whole, looking at the world as an interlocking system.
Otherwise, how can we understand how our history and social struc-
ture and economy work, and how can we teach these subjects to oth-
ers?

To sum up, I believe that the reviewer has misunderstood and
mangled the basic intent and philosophy of my book, and has dis-
torted rather than critically reviewed its contents and strategies. I of-
fer my response as a correction to the confusion and contradictions of
the review, and I invite social studies professionals to read the vol-
ume and make their own independent judgments on the text Social
Studies for the 21st Century.