

BOOK REVIEWS

Apple, M. (1990). *Ideology and curriculum* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 204 pp., \$12.95 (softcover).

Toward the end of the new edition of *Ideology and Curriculum* Michael Apple reminds us that "Anything is a deal more than it appears" (p. 132). The reality of the American public school curriculum, in particular, is significantly more than meets the uncritical eye. The content, methodology, and overall objectives of American public schooling have been determined predominantly by legally authorized policy-makers (aided and abetted by a legion of researchers) who live unexamined political lives. These curriculum functionaires — at once significantly ahistorical, aphilosophical, and apolitical — have established school programs which frequently in an unwitting manner serve the vested interests of those who wield political power. "Recognition of the dialectical relationship between schools and economic and cultural control is not something educators are used to looking for" (p.152).

While it might be tempting to characterize Apple's position as largely reductionist neo-Marxist rhetoric, such a description would be singularly inaccurate. His interpretation is woven from a richly eclectic philosophic fiber which, by and large, avoids becoming entrapped by inflexible propositions. A strict economic determinism is clearly rejected (pp.3-4, 34). Moreover, even though the analysis is inspired by the critical theorist orientation, he recognizes that even this persuasion can be excessive (p. 130).

Apple's insistence that much of our behavior is governed by assumptions and postulates, most of which we are at best dimly aware, is most assuredly not a novel idea. In the 1830s Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* brilliantly explicated the thesis that much American behavior was rooted in a frequently unacknowledged ideological base. What is notable about Apple's variation on the implicit culture theme is the historical and empirical evidence adduced to embellish it. In chapter 3, "Economics and Control in Everyday School Life," the author presents a brief historical overview of American curricular theorists which suggests that, during the late 19th century and throughout much of the 20th, they clearly regarded the American public school as a device for reproducing the socioeconomic structure (pp. 47-50). In the same chapter — shades of R. Rist and K. Wilcox — he relates how the American public kindergarten experience is a not-so-thinly-veiled effort to reinforce this structure (pp. 50-57). In chapter 4, "Curriculum History and Social Control," he reinforces the salience and significance of the political power-knowledge relationship.

The American mentality, insists Apple, reflects a marked structural-functional bias, a disposition characterized by a penchant for establishing and sustaining a Durkheimian condition of social equilibrium. The public school enterprise is among the key institutions enlisted to ensure this ongoing stability. Corollary to the process is the "natural" expected generation of social strata whose members necessarily enjoy differential status and prestige.

The classical liberal-consensus bias is highlighted by the school's virtual avoidance of the recognition of social conflict. This point is nicely developed in chapter 5, "The Hidden Curriculum and the Nature of Conflict." As reflections of this uncritical assumption of sociopolitical consensus, Apple focuses on the bland nature of the social studies curriculum (pp. 85-87) and faulty presentation of the biological and physical sciences as virtually devoid of conflicting interpretations (pp. 88-92).

Consistent with the position adopted by critical theorists, attacks on the "liberal" disposition to engage in curriculum reform are pervasive. Apple characterizes liberals as being ineffective if well-intended reformers due, in large measure, to their alleged inattentiveness to the need for basic structural realignment. Attacking their overall strategy, the author nonetheless finds many of their tactics praiseworthy: "Only by action on day to day issues can a cultural framework be made sensible" (p. 161). When he attempts to link liberalism to pragmatic philosophy, Apple articulates a curious position. In asserting that "the pragmatic position tends to ignore the possibility that some theories must contradict the present reality and, in fact, must consistently work against it" (p. 133), he suggests a point of view at variance with perhaps the most penetrating explication of the liberal-programmatic philosophy, Dewey's *Democracy and Education*. Clearly, Dewey's position, and that of many liberals who were inspired by him, contradicted "the present reality" and embraced a commitment to "work against it."

To his credit Apple reflects an all-pervasive social philosophy, one inspired by the Rawlsian notion of justice. Informed by this sense of vision and by a corollary curriculum mission, the discussion is at once inspiring, provocative, and compelling.

In calling to our attention latent aspects of the American public school curriculum, highlighted by an emphasis on the reproduction of social class strata, Apple's book is significantly distressing. Even assuming that his interpretation is practically correct, those concerned with the condition of American public schooling seemingly ought to react with great pause.

Apple's style is lucid; the logical flow of the discussion is quite satisfying. Especially helpful are well-chosen summative paragraphs where fairly technical matters are recapitulated in precise lay language.

While this is a 1990 edition, in at least one chapter (5) considerable updating is indicated. A 1970 social science curriculum packet is adduced as evidence to make a case against the hidden curriculum (p. 95). In referring to the content of select Black and Women's Studies programs, a 1969 reference is cited (p. 96). Has nothing significant ensued in the succeeding 21 years?

Ideology and Curriculum might be a very useful text for graduate courses in, among other areas, Social Foundations of Education and Curriculum Theory. It should be included as required reading for all who are legally charged with the responsibility of establishing the public school curriculum, especially state legislators and school board members. Moreover, the book embodies valuable insights for all who are engaged in educational research.

Apple's critique is quite significantly more than a highly emotive rhetorical attack on the educational establishment. Indeed, he is uncomfortable with much of the revisionist writing which gained popularity in the 1960s (p. 40). With the exception of some excessive interpretations of the liberal position, the book is a reasoned presentation, well-researched and well-written.

Art Newman
University of Florida

Tochon, F.V. (1990). *Didactique du français: De la planification à ses organisateurs cognitifs*. Paris: ESF éditeur, 199 pp.

La définition d'objectifs pédagogiques précis est indispensable pour structurer l'apprentissage et en évaluer les effets. Cependant les modèles traditionnels d'analyse par objectifs n'aident guère l'enseignant au niveau de la planification. Les hiérarchies abstraites et statiques qu'ils proposent, se limitent généralement aux aspects cognitifs et ne correspondent pas à des séquences d'enseignement bien définies. Elles sont particulièrement mal adaptées aux approches intégratives de l'enseignement du français. A la logique cartésienne analytique qui préside à ces taxonomies, François Tochon oppose une logique de terrain qui se fonde sur les pratiques d'enseignants aux prises avec les réalités quotidiennes de la classe.

Après avoir démontré l'inadéquation d'un modèle linéaire d'enseignement par objectifs, l'auteur montre concrètement comment le contexte global du projet éducatif permet de concilier une planification systématique avec la complexité mouvante de la classe. Ensuite, à partir de l'expérience d'un atelier d'écriture, il dégage une démarche d'organisation de l'enseignement sur trois plans: maîtrise des connaissances, transfert de procédures et expression dans un contexte et il