

Cremin seminar, October 16, 2007

George asked that I take 45 minutes to give you a sense of "On (Not) Defining Education".

I'll use about 5 minutes to talk about it in general, 5 minutes for each of its seven sections, and 5 minutes to wrap up.

The material before you is derivative of work-in-progress on www.studyplace.org, a open Wiki where people can join to advance the scholarship about the question, What educates?

StudyPlace uses the same software as Wikipedia. The idea is to use it, not for encyclopedic purposes, but to provide a better environment for the advancement of learning, the conduct of scholarship.

The material before you has two components:

- 1) an academic paper with a traditional apparatus of endnotes, pp. 1-50.**
- 2) a sampling of what is additionally part of it on-line in the note to the reader, pp. 1-3, and in back material, pp. 51-61.**

I am going to talk about the content of the academic paper today – I invite to participate in the on-line effort as you like.

Section 1: A Prolegomenon – pp. 1 to top of 4.

I aim here to move into the substance of the essay via

- 1) a brief homage to Cremin**
- 2) initial reflection on his definition of education and its importance**
- 3) recognition that his work has lost influence, a loss often attributed to the excessive ambition of his definition of education**
- 4) assertion that the problems Cremin wanted to combat through his definition are getting worse and worse. Therefore we need to find a different reason why his work has lost influence.**

Read paragraphs 1 & 2 and the last paragraph of the section.

Section 2: What did Cremin miss? pp. 4-9

In this section I look more closely at Cremin's work in order to explain the quick demise of its influence. My basic point is that Cremin's basic agenda was to define and illustrate, not to explain. As a result of his reluctance to analyze and to provide the reasoning behind his judgments, his work insufficiently illuminating, given its scope and difficulty, to hold a public or professional following.

pp. 4-5: I begin with the interaction between Bailyn's *Education* and Cremin's *Transformation* and end with Cremin's coda to his trilogy in *Popular Education*.

pp. 5-8: Evidence of the real problem: too little explanatory analysis – the examples of Weber and Myrdal.

pp. 8, middle to end of section: Section concludes discussing the only place where Cremin really explained his principles of judgment --

Read, parts of ending. . . .

Section 3: Did Bailyn deliver? pp. 9-15

In this section I look at Bailyn's *Education in the Forming of American Society* from the perspective of the Committee on the Role of Education in American History, which I consider very important.

pp. 9-11, I introduce the Committee. Let's look briefly at p. 11, the list of topics around which it wanted American historians to produce an "educational interpretation of American history."

p. 12, I show that the Committee, particularly Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., was at least the proximate source of the very broad definition of education at the heart of Bailyn's and Cremin's work.

p. 13, I hypothesize that given its purposes, the Committee may have been disappointed substantively by Bailyn's essay, and

p. 14, I suggest that the Committee may have been surprised, perhaps piqued, by Bailyn's digressive critique of the history of education written in schools of education.

pp. 14-15: Bailyn left historians and social scientists working in schools of education between a rock and a hard place. He did little to make the *rock*, academic departments in the arts and sciences, hospitable to a move into their midst. And with respect to the hard place, schools of education, he said simply that if you stay there and speak to their interests you will end up doing bad scholarship. Can we slip the Bailyn dilemma? Read from end of section, p. 15.

Section 4: Who was Schleiermacher? pp. 15-22

My aim in this section is to begin explaining why American educational historians of a century ago wrote the sort of history Bailyn found them writing in the hope of finding a more interesting, enlightening form of scholarship that can thrive in schools of education.

p. 15: The Americans build their version of the history of education primarily on a German foundation. Comparing subsequent fruits of both traditions, shows an interesting difference among the "great educators." For the most part, it is the same cast of characters, except that the Germans feature Schleiermacher in it and the Americans do not. Hence the question, Who was Schleiermacher?

pp. 16-17 introduces Schleiermacher and I will read, starting the middle of p. 17:

p. 18: recapitulates the overall argument and states 3 questions to ask in light of what we see in Schleiermacher. Read, starting in the middle of p. 18:

pp. 19-20: In answer to the first of these question, I introduce *Neuhumanismus*, a movement of thought running roughly from Kant through Herbart, of which Schleiermacher was one of the great representatives. Read, starting in the middle of p. 20:

pp. 20-21: In the next two sections, I respond to the second question, how and why did it happen that *Neuhumanism* did not make it to the USA?

Section 5: What was Barnard thinking? pp. 22-25:

Henry Barnard's use of Karl von Raumer's mid-19th-century history prepared the ground for thinking that the history of education should illustrate examples of practice deemed good or bad according to some external standard.

Skip over as it is primarily an episode of comic relief.

Section 6: What did Rein do? pp. 26-34:

In this section I explore the early origins of education as a professional study in German universities, contrasting the historical/anthropological program of August Niemeyer and Friedrich Schwarz to the ethical/psychological program of Johann Herbart. The upshot: a derivative of Herbart's program provided the basic structure for the study of education imported into the United States and embedded in it was the peculiar role for the history of education to the character of which Bailyn took exception.

Niemeyer and Schwarz were originally dominant. They used history and anthropology to impart pedagogical finesse to educators.

Read Niemeyer view, bottom third, p. 28:

Schwarz's *Geschichte*: Read from his sense of its purpose, p. 30:

Read his definition of education, p. 30, 3/4s down page:

**p. 31: Herbart as contrast to Niemeyer & Schwarz:
Read quotation from Jean Paul's *Levana*:**

**p. 32, Herbart's review of Schwarz's *Erziehungslehre*:
psychology should have the role Schwarz assigned to history.**

Read quotation, bottom third, p. 32:

**p. 33: Wilhelm Rein's view of *historische Pädagogik*,
Read, p. 34:**

Section 7: Is historical pedagogy important? pp. 34-41

In this section, I try to bring the argument to a conclusion by showing how Wilhelm Dilthey revitalized historical pedagogy and discussing its potential value in the context of recent American history.

p. 34, Dilthey's 1888 address to the Prussian Academy of Science. p. 35, comparison to Dewey. pp. 35-6, long quotation on the historical world and the human sciences.

pp. 36-37: the Herbartian view of historical pedagogy was embedded in American schools of education. Its costs – abdication of historical argumentation to popular ideologies.

p. 38: two questions we should be asking in our professional role in schools of education: read, top of page:

pp. 38-40: broadening this conclusion by asking, who is the *we*? Back to the Committee on the Role of Education in American History. A look again at the background of the committee members – major figures in the mid-century concern for general education.

P. 39, read quotations from the *Harvard Report* as a statement of the controlling historical goals to be achieved in the education of each youth on completion of secondary education.

Their failure and our task. . . .

