

RRGWk4

Chapter 3

The Early Modern Regime and its Transformation

Main idea

Hunter states that this chapter is an historical overview ... "both about the changing content of moral education the the changing institutional carriers of this pedagogy." (pg. 32)

Discussion

1. What should be gathered for use today from our historical roots of character education?

Honestly, I think America will soon have to decide whether to continue on with the teachings and fruit of secular humanism or return to her roots based in Biblical morality. I believe as a nation, as families, as people, we were much more united, stronger, and productive when we followed Biblical morality. When I see the historical roots of character education, I want to return. It was a "good" system, a "righteous" system. When we all love our neighbor as ourselves, there is peace. Although, establishing a Biblically based moral law system may not change hearts, in and of itself, it does keep evil in check. And, as the writer of Psalm 19:7 says, has the potential "to convert the soul". ("The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.")

2. What purposes of the "common school" are present in today's public education?

Many people think that the schools today don't teach a specific "religion", however, in truth they do. "... In March 1987, U.S. District Judge W. Brevard Hand ruled that Secular Humanism was a religion. Indeed, Phyllis Schlafly, a graduate of Harvard Law School, wrote in 1980, "Secular Humanism has become the established religion in the U.S. public school system." (Blumenfeld, S., 2012)

A simple read through of the tenants of humanism which can be found here, <https://zelalemkibret.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/humanist-manifestos.pdf>, may surprise you as it did me. This is exactly the belief system being taught in our public schools. And, as Blumenfeld points out, "Secular Humanist and biblical moral codes are at war with each other. For example, the Bible opposes sex out of wedlock. Secular

Humanists believe in sexual freedom, or premarital recreational sex. The two sexual moral codes produce two very different results for society. The biblical moral code leads to courtship, marriage, the rearing of a family, and the real possibility of social happiness based on healthy and productive attributes. It produces social stability. The humanist moral code leads to sex before marriage, unwanted pregnancies, abortion, children out of wedlock, poverty, venereal diseases, irresponsibility, unhappiness, and societal dysfunction.

As Hunter points out in his closing paragraph of chapter three, "...proponents of competing cultural traditions fought over the authoritative core of moral education in the schools....Moral instruction became increasingly detached from the substantive traditions, beliefs, and ritual practices of particular faith communities." (pg. 53)

Instead of a traditional "theistic" religious moral code being taught, we have simply turned our schools over to an atheistic one. We have exchanged our Christian "religion", for a humanist "religion". This was the plan of John Dewey, Horace Mann and other progressives. It would appear they have been quite successful in agenda.

Bloomenfeld, S., (2012) Secular humanism: America's establishment of Religion, New American, Retrieved from <https://thenewamerican.com/secular-humanism-americas-establishment-of-religion/>

3. If teachers are “the best missionaries in the world” to what end do they work today as missionaries?

"In the expanding Midwest and West the conviction was that schoolteachers would be "the best missionaries in the world"... "We wish to see the school house and the church go up side by side and the land filled with Christian teachers as well as preachers....that universal education...be taken up as a Christian enterprise." (pg.42) Unfortunately, although Christians saw the "universal school" as a way to teach Christianity, others of the same era also perceived the potential latent in "universal schools" and the idea of "missionary" teachers.

" I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, **utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanists values in whatever subject they teach**, regardless of the educational level — preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of “love thy neighbor” will finally be achieved."

I wonder if Christians began losing this battle when we abdicated our own responsibility to teach our children to the state. In Deuteronomy 11:18-19 God commands the Israelites to "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.**"

Teachers definitely influence the children they teach. Unfortunately, today, with secular teacher training programs and societal influences, I believe many Christian teachers have inadvertently become "missionaries" of humanism.

Dunphy, J., (2019) A religion for a new age., The Humanist Magazine, Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@johnjdunphy/a-religion-for-a-new-age-f812839c4cb8>

4. How have families changed in recent history (20 years)? What effects are seen in the educational system? How does this compare to the history of the family in the US?

Historically, in America, the family structure and authority for training children emanated from the Scripture (The Holy Bible). The father was most often protector and provider, the mother was the home keeper. Children were to be obedient to parents and honor their authority. "The moral life is defined by and emanates from the authority of God, (which in turn is mediated by the authority possessed and exercised by parents." (pg. 33) Marriage between a man and a woman was honored and adultery and fornication frowned upon, thus helping to preserve the family unit.

In the last 20 years, centuries of custom have been undone, as without God's authority, men's and women's roles have been redefined, gender has been redefined, children have been left without discipline in attempts to train them without punishment, pornography and progressive self-seeking have destroyed marriages, marriage itself has been redefined, and families have been redefined to be "a social unit consisting of one or more adults together with the children they care for." (Dictionary.com, 2020)

Last spring, I spoke with a special education teacher who was getting ready to retire. I asked her what the biggest change was that she had seen in the teaching field during her employment. She said that when she started thirty years ago, she might have two out of thirty students in her classes from non-traditional families. Today she said, the ratio was reversed. Only two out of the thirty students would be from a traditional family. That said a lot.

5. What was the process of separation of religious and secular in common (public) schools?

Hunter states, "And yet the expansion of the common schools also signifies the beginning of an **important transition both in the**

substance of moral instruction and the institutional locus of moral education-away from the family and churches to state sponsored public schools." (pg. 47)

"by making the school system public rather than private, teachers and administrators also insulate themselves from the wishes of students and parents—the ultimate consumers of education. This insulation from market forces solidifies the power of the elite group of educationists for years to come. The suppliers, not the demanders, choose the curricula, the textbooks, decide the certification process for teachers, etc. They run the whole show, and only have bureaucrats to please rather than consumers." With the formation of public schools, education was taken from the church and local communities and put under the direction of the government.(Simpson, 2004)

I contend that the transition from a family and church directed education, began the process of secularizing education. Horace Mann, the father of the tax funded common school, was influential in moving schools away from their Protestant base, to a more secular one, though trying to maintain the appearance of religiosity to appease the Christian community.

Simpson, B., (2004) The common school movement and compulsory education, Mises Institute, Retrieved from <https://mises.org/library/common-school-movement-and-compulsory-education>

My Question(s): I have appreciated learning the history of character education. I have had lots of questions, and have been googling along the way. One question I am curious about is whether Hunter is a Christian or a Humanist.

In my searches I have found that one of the Humanist tenants is: "FOURTH: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture." (New Humanist, 1933)

Just curious.

Reflection

1. Using your family history how much of the early forms of character education survived in the early 20th century (1900-1950)?

In 1920, my grandma became a Pentecostal Christian much to her surprise. Her husband joined her later, and as such their children were taken to church and taught the Bible and basic Christian tenants. Children were taught to respect their elders and corporeal punishment was used. Christian ideals and character were taught through the engrafting of Scripture.

Reaction

1. Create a timeline of events that you see as important to the current state of character development. You may want to create categories such as “extreme practices” or “foundational principles” or “schools of character”.

Colonial Period - Calvinist world view taught by family and church. Academic to the goal of salvation and Christian virtue.

1671 - Old Deluder Law Massachusetts

1690 - New England Primer

New Republic Period - Continued zeal of Christian character promotion through the provision of academic skills

1780 - Rise of Sunday schools in Brittain

1785 - Start of Sunday schools in US

1791 - Sunday schools institutionalized through First Day Society - Primary objective

salvation and Christian discipling

1800's - Battle between Humanistic and Sectarian moral instruction begins in earnest

1820s - Lyman Beecher - Sunday schools transitioning from "evangelical" to "nurturing"

1830s- Horace Mann (Unitarian) Introduction of common schools funded through taxes

Schools move from family and church control to government control

1838 - Antisectarian laws begin being made

1842 - Horace Bushnell authors Christian Nurture

1836 - McGuffey readers used inst

1851 - MA makes school attendance compulsory

1859 - Origin of the Species published by Darwin

1875 - California Board of Education stops the use of McGuffey

Readers

1890 - Evolution embedded in most science curriculum and treated as fact

This could take a long time. So much more here. The rest of the time line is a progressive takeover of the public system.

"Yet Mann did not accomplish his goals without bitter and principled opposition. Many orthodox and even some liberal Protestant leaders strongly objected to what they perceived as Mann's imposition of **his own sectarianism in the schools**. Many also disagreed with Mann about the role of government in schooling—**centralized control of schooling was seen as antithetical to republican traditions; in particular, the freedom of parents to pass on their own beliefs and traditions to their children.**" (Brouillette, 1999)

Brouillette, M. (1999) Michigan children become creatures of the state, Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Retrieved from <https://www.mackinac.org/2035>

Character Matters:How to help our children develop good judgment, integrity, and other essential virtues. by Likona, Thomas (2004).

This book will be read quickly for the big ideas. Chapter 3 is about the partnership between parent and teacher (school). How might you integrate an idea or two in your classroom to partner with parents when it comes to making a moral compact so you are on the same page when it comes to upholding good character in the classroom?

Affirming the family as the primary character educator and as such becoming partners in planning what will be taught. Also selling the importance of character training to the parents would be inherent in both of these endeavors. I also think that it is important to get information on character themes to the parents and developing a parent forum. Parents really are the primary character education vehicle. Their support makes a big difference.