THE CONNECTION

It goes without saying that the tone and structure of [school] is necessarily conditioned by the life outlooks of the adults [in charge].

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THE THREE THEMES OF TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

METAPHYSICS
(What is reality? What does it mean to exist?)
THE THREE THEMES OF TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

EPISTEMOLOGY
(What is Truth and how does one arrive at it?)

THE THREE THEMES OF TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

AXIOLOGY
(What is good?)

- Aesthetics
  (What is beautiful?)
- Ethics
  (What is just?)

A FOURTH THEME, JUST FOR THIS COURSE:

HOW SHOULD WE EDUCATE?
FIVE “FOUNDATIONALIST” PHILOSOPHIES

- Idealism
- Realism
- Theistic Thomism
- Secular Thomism
- Naturalism

A BIT OF HISTORICAL FACT

- Socrates: 469? - 399 BC
- Plato: 427? - 327? BC
- Aristotle: 384 - 322 BC

2 MISNAMED PHILOSOPHIES:

- Idealism is not more Pollyanna-ish than other philosophies. It would more accurately be called “Idealism,” but that is too hard to pronounce.
- Realism is not the only philosophy concerned with reality.
The world we see around us is just shadows of a more genuinely real world, a world of ideas.

For Plato, eternal forms - things like Justice, Beauty, & Piety are real. Earthly exemplars - just acts, beautiful people, pious observances - are . . . as muddled & sketchy as . . . a photocopy of a fax of a photograph of a drawing of an apple.

Mathematics demonstrates that eternal truths are possible: $2 + 2 = 4$
Always and everywhere, regardless of what our senses tell us.
IDEALISM - EPISTEMOLOGY

Plato believed that we must search for universal truths in other areas, such as politics, religion, and education. We would do this through our ability to reason.


IDEALISM - EPISTEMOLOGY

The search for absolute Truth should be the quest of the true philosopher. Only the person in whom reason reigns supreme can find Truth.


OTHER VERSIONS OF IDEALISM:

Religious Idealism:
Augustine said that the universe was divided in two:

The City of Man

The City of God

OTHER VERSIONS OF IDEALISM:

Modern Idealism:
Hegel held that
Nature and Idea
Could be synthesized into: Absolute Spirit

Absolute Spirit is manifested by the historical development of a people.

Should we continue to look upwards? Is the light we can see in the sky one of those which will presently be extinguished? The ideal is terrifying to behold, lost as it is in the depths, small, isolated, a pin-point, brilliant but threatened on all sides by the dark forces that surround it; nevertheless, no more in danger than a star in the jaws of the clouds.

VICTOR HUGO

IDEALISM - EDUCATION

Language
Mathematics
The Arts
History
IDEALISM - EDUCATION

- Stress development of the mind.
- Focus on things of lasting value.
- Stress character development, since the search for Truth demands personal discipline and steadfast character.

IDEALISM - EDUCATION

- Everything else is subordinate to the life of the mind.
- A life among books is both the idea life and the ideal life.

IDEALISM - EDUCATION

- Universities are sometimes called “ivory towers,” removed from the realities of life, & thus of little value.
- Idealists would insist that ivory towers are precisely what colleges & universities should be.
REALISM - METAPHYSICS

The world we experience is not some dim copy of reality but indeed the real thing.

REALISM - METAPHYSICS

Aristotle turned away from the tendency to concoct other worlds presumably more real than the one we wake up to everyday.

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Rafael’s Painting of Plato and Aristotle
REALISM - METAPHYSICS

The world’s component elements all move and behave according to fixed natural laws.

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REALISM - EPISTEMOLOGY

A person knows by being a spectator of a world-as-machine.
We test ideas by seeing if they depend on sense data or inferences from sense data.

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REALISM - EPISTEMOLOGY

The component elements of the physical world all move & behave according to fixed natural laws.
We discover these laws through science.

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REALIST EDUCATION
- Create masters of the “machine of nature.”
- Create individuals who study the world for principles, regularities, & laws & turn them into programs of action.

A realist school: systematic, orderly, and direct
- Mathematics
- The natural sciences
- “Whatever exists exists in some amount.”

Thomas Aquinas
1225? - 1274 AD
Components of the ideas of mainstream Western Civilization

Biblical Tradition.
Conservative but reforming.

Moderity. Reason becomes critical of faith, and faith seems to come from rationality.

Presbyterian Reformation.
Reclamation of the power of the biblical word, but still think of God and philosophical categories.

Renaissance reclamation of classical humanism, but still Christian.

Middle Ages.
Dechristianisation and Syntheses of faith and reason.

Classical Tradition.
Critical, questioning spirit.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH PRE-CHRISTIAN PAGAN LITERATURE?

- Destroy it?
- Preserve it but don't integrate it into Christian education lest it confuse the faithful?
- Preserve it as an integral part of a Christian's higher education?

Gutek, G. L. Historical & philosophical foundations of education

Like Aristotle, Aquinas argued that human ideas originated through the senses, which experienced an external world of objects. The mind, in turn, formed concepts as it extracted the form of the objects conveyed with sensory data.
Added to this natural power of cognition or conceptualization was the truth revealed by God through the scriptures.

Aquinas sought to integrate two great principles:

- The importance of Divine Revelation as the ultimate source of truth, &
- The validity & efficacy of human reason.

NEO-THOMISM (ECCLESIASTICAL) - METAPHYSICS

It is possible to have a world both of mathematical certainty and God's love at the same time.

Morris, V. C. & Young, P. Philosophy & the American School
Aquinas’s view of education:
- Religious studies at the summit.
- Moving downward to those that cultivated rationality.
- Finally, reaching those dealing with earning a living & the economic sustenance of society.

Jacques Maritain: 1882 - 1973

THEISTIC NEO-THOMISM - EPISTEMOLOGY
- We know through reason & faith that humankind’s ultimate prescribed destiny is: Fulfillment as a rational animal & union with God.
THEISTIC NEO-THOMISM - EDUCATION

- Teach Christian doctrine & explanations of it
- Avoid exposure to harmful teachings & writings
- Teach nice systematic languages like Latin & Greek

SECULAR NEO-THOMISM - METAPHYSICS

- A body of truth exists that is universally valid regardless of circumstances & contingencies.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical & ideological perspectives on education. P. 272

Robert M. Hutchins
1899 - 1977 AD
SECULAR NEO-THOMISM - EPISTEMOLOGY

- The human mind is naturally oriented to know reality.
- A sound education will contribute to the cultivation of permanent principles of right & justice.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical & ideological perspectives on education. P. 272

SECULAR NEO-THOMISM - EDUCATION

- Truth can best be taught through the systematic study & analysis of the human past - as portrayed in the great works of religion, philosophy, literature & history.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical & ideological perspectives on education. P. 272

SECULAR NEO-THOMISM

- Scholastic & academic freedom for both teacher & students.
SECULAR NEO-THOMISM

Then train the intellect in the most rigorous logic so students can discover Truth.

Jean Jacques Rousseau
1712 - 1778

NATURALISM
NATURALISM-METAPHYSICS

Nature itself is a total system that contains & explains all existence, including human beings & human nature.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education

NATURALISM-EPISTEMOLOGY

The arts & sciences can be injurious to human nature in so far as they encourage pride.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education

NATURALISM-EPISTEMOLOGY

Avoid premature introduction of books & verbal lessons that result in parroting memorized bits of information.

Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education
NATURALISM-EPISTEMOLOGY

- Direct experience of nature, through the senses is a far better source of truth.
- Naturalism was not a radical departure from Aristotelean Natural Realism

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NATURALISM

- Two forms of self-esteem:
  - Amour de soi - a natural life-affirming sentiment that inclines the person to self-preservation.
  - Amour propre - selfishness, an externally derived product of society by which individuals seek to control, dominate, & use others for their own social aggrandizement.

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**NATURALISM - EDUCATION**

- Aim is to form character in such a way that the original inclination to *amour de soi* is so developed that it can resist & overcome the social temptations & pressures that lead to *amour propre*.

  - Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education

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**NATURALISM - EDUCATION**

- Three themes of naturalism & progressive education:
  - 1. Childhood, as an intrinsically valuable period of human growth & development, has its educational timetable.

  - Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education

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**NATURALISM - EDUCATION**

- Three themes of naturalism & progressive education:
  - 2. Education best occurs in a prepared environment, which, while retaining its natural features, is designed to cooperate with . . .

  - Gutek, G. L. Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education
Three themes of naturalism & progressive education:
2. The child’s readiness to learn by presenting situations that stimulate his or her curiosity & bring about action.

3. The child learns in a permissive atmosphere in that he or she makes the choices regarding one’s actions . . .

3. but must also enjoy or suffer their consequences.