

# Education, Work, and Imagination:

A critique of Mary Warnock's views

## Abstract

This paper deals with the question of the justification of curriculum content which has attracted the attention of philosophers of education since the time of Plato. It examines the justificatory approach proposed by Mary Warnock who attempts to resolve this problem by focussing on the imagination and work as the two, equally important, criteria for inclusion or exclusion of curriculum content. While Warnock's position might be seen to promise a more adequate and balanced solution to this problem, it is argued, however, that her position is not devoid of problems. It is suggested that a more adequate justification might be arrived at by viewing education as a form of work, and work as a form of education.

This paper discusses the role of the imagination and work in relation to the justification of the content of the curriculum in the writings of Mary Warnock (1), notable in her book **Schools of Thought** (1977). The choice of considering Warnock's position is not arbitrary. As it will soon be explained, her position tries to merge the rift between two main and influential justificatory approaches, and also attempts to bridge theoretical and practical considerations. However, one might question whether she succeeds in this project.

The aim of this paper is three-fold: (i) to analyze Warnock's position with regard to the justification of the content -- a justification that rests on the notions of work and imagination; (ii) to identify some possible problems with this position which at

face value seems quite plausible and adequate; (iii) to make some proposals with regard to how one might view the relationship between work and education -- a relationship that might provide us with an adequate justification for the content of the curriculum.

### Justifying curriculum content

In recent writings about the philosophical justification of the content of the curriculum, one can identify two major approaches on the question of how to justify the content of the curriculum. The first approach represented, for example, by R.S. Peters (1966), contends that some "educational activities" given their nature, are necessarily and intrinsically worthwhile (2). This view is usually referred to as "the knowledge-centred view" which can be traced back to Plato. The second approach is couched essentially in terms of "what interests someone." This approach, which has its roots in Rousseau and was elaborated by Dewey, is, for example, today defended by P.S. Wilson (1967, 1971) who argues for the intrinsic value of "what interests someone" as the major criterion for justifying the content of the curriculum.

These two approaches have been criticized and to some extent rejected by various philosophers of education and educationists. (White, 1973; Woods & Barrow, 1975; Barrow, 1976; Pring, 1976; Martin, 1981; Kleinig, 1982; and Bailey, 1984). Critics of these positions have argued that neither "the knowledge-centred approach" nor "the interest-centred approach" **alone** can provide us with adequate justification. These philosophical approaches, it is maintained, do shed some light on the issue but these kinds of approaches **alone** do not resolve the problem of justification.

The renowned British educational theorist G.H. Bantock (1980) recently proffered just such an attack on attempts at justifying educational matters solely or primarily on philosophical grounds (pp.127-137). In Bantock's view, philosophical justification, irrespective of relevant qualifications and/or specific arguments they may provide, face two major problems. First, philosophical justifications do not take into account empirical considerations such as the limited time which may be allocated to the teaching of certain subjects or the social and cultural backgrounds of students and their intellectual ability. Second, Bantock notes that philosophical justifications attempt to justify the content in terms of a single principle. For example, for Peters the ultimate principle is the value of truth, and for Wilson it is the notion of "interests".

While Bantock (1980) states that "curriculum decisions are essentially practical decisions" (p.131), he does not believe that all we have to take into account are practical and empirical

considerations. He speaks of the need for "a balance of argument" (p.131). The basis upon which we justify the content of the curriculum must attend "both to the values served and the empirical facts supporting rejection or implementation" (Bantock, 1981, p.131). In short, according to Bantock, when we attempt to provide a justification we must take two things into account: (i) values such as truth, happiness, and self-expression, and (ii) empirical considerations such as the ones mentioned above. In addition to taking values into account, empirical evidence to support our decision must be provided. Bantock advocates a balance of theoretical and empirical considerations.

This position seems plausible but how are we to reconcile these two considerations? (I do not mean to suggest that these two considerations ought to be at odds). Bantock sketches the way a process of justification should proceed, but he does not flesh out his position. In other words, he has not worked out the details of a justificatory position that resolves possible conflicts between these two considerations.

Warnock's proposals for justifying the content of the curriculum in *Schools of Thought* (1977) seem to be in line with Bantock's work, but she does more than sketch her position. In a nutshell, Warnock proposes that a process of justification must take at least two things into account: work (which corresponds to empirical considerations) and imagination (which corresponds to theoretical considerations).(3) Work and imagination are two of the basic components, according to Warnock, of "the good life." Education, Warnock maintains, should aim at helping people achieve "the good life." This is possible if what is taught helps students to reach such a goal. I propose in this paper to investigate briefly Warnock's position, to see whether or not she has, by taking into account both theoretical and practical considerations, resolved the issue of the justification of the content of the curriculum. It is important to consider this attempt because on face value, the position seems quite plausible.

### The popular view

Before proceeding to this investigation, I would like to sketch briefly a "popular view" of how one ought to justify the content of the curriculum. This view is frequently voiced by members of the general public, politicians, and some educational theorists (4). This view is considered at this stage because it proposes justification of content primarily (in some cases **essentially**) in terms of empirical considerations, more specifically, in terms of those considerations which determine whether what is taught will enable students to find jobs.

Let us take a bird's eye view of this position. Peters (1966) distinguishes two categories of things that could be included in

the content of the curriculum. Category A includes such subjects as mathematics, languages, history, literature, and technical and vocational subjects (all subjects traditionally accepted as part of the content of the curriculum), while Category B includes such things as bingo, soccer, and billiards. I would like to make a distinction, within the former of these categories, between non-useful and useful subjects. The point is that while the popular view explicitly agrees with the distinction made by Peters between Category A and Category B, it seems to assume this further distinction and to advocate the inclusion in the content of the curriculum of **useful** subjects. The popular view insists that we should teach, principally, and perhaps solely, those subjects that are useful. "Useful" is a relational term: A thing is useful **to someone**, in view of **something**. On the popular view, subjects are useful to students in virtue of the role such a view proposes for education, namely that education ought to prepare students to function properly in society.

According to the popular view, decisions as to the content of the curriculum ought to be directed primarily -- and some maintain essentially and solely -- by a principle which I shall refer to as "Principle P.V.". This is that education should aim at producing people who function properly in society, that is, to get along well in their lives. And proper social function cannot be achieved without a job, that is, an activity involving financial compensation. Therefore what is taught should be useful to the student in the future, that is, should help in the securing of employment. This insistence on a strict correspondence between what is taught and employment is the mark of what I label "the popular view." While this vision of education is not new, it has been increasingly evident in recent years in response to the economic recession with which we have had to cope.

According to Principle P.V., in forming any decision as to the content of the curriculum, an investigation of areas where manpower will be needed in the next "X" number of years is necessary. Once this is established (if it can be established), one ought to propose the teaching of those subjects which will prepare students to work in those areas where jobs are expected to be available. Strictly speaking, one ought to discourage, perhaps even to abolish, the teaching of "non-useful" subjects.<sup>(5)</sup> Ultimately, what goes on in schools is determined by what goes on, or is expected to go on, outside schools.

Underlying this view is the assumption that proper functioning in society requires a job. A corollary assumption is that if one is successful in learning "useful" subjects in school, one will get a job (and, conversely, if one is not successful in learning "useful" subjects, one will most probably find it very difficult, if not impossible, to get a good job or, perhaps, to get any job).

Various objections have been made to this position, both by conservative and by radical educationists (including the "de-schoolers" and those with a socialist bent). The main objection voiced by the former group is that if one were to follow Principle P.V., we would end up with a process which should not be called "education", but "training". We would be robbing human beings of an experience -- education -- which is uniquely human.(6) Radical educationists object to the popular view on at least two grounds:

1. Principle P.V. does not take into account the varied capacities or inclinations (interests) of students. Even if it were argued that, by fitting students for employment, it does take their capacities and interests into account, can one really determine what are the capacities of students with regard to what kind of job they will be able to do? How does one determine such capacities? At what time should one attempt to determine them? These are delicate questions involving serious moral considerations.
2. Application of Principle P.V. does not lead to the exercise of freedom: we must distinguish "work" from "mere employment" or "labour". In most cases, a rigid application of Principle P.V. does not lead to "work" but to "labour". Labour it is argued, does not "free", it "alienates" employees. A rigid correspondence between education and jobs has a hidden by-product: inequality. It convinces "the majority that they are not good for anything but the most menial occupations" (Wringe, 1981, p.129).

This latter point was also made by Dewey, who while condoning the vocational aspects of education, wrote:

There is a movement in behalf of something called vocational training which, if carried into effect, would harden these ideas (i.e., what he earlier termed "the aristocratic ideals of the past") into a form adapted to the existing industrial regime. This movement would continue the traditional liberal or cultural education for the few economically able to enjoy it, and would give to the masses a narrow technical trade education for specialized callings, carried on under the control of others. (Dewey, 1966, p.319)

This comment is very similar to those made by Antonio Gramsci who held that too much emphasis on vocational education would jeopardize any possibility of forming working class intellectuals (Entwistle, 1981).(7)

One might argue that this picture of the popular view depicts an extreme stance. One might agree that employment is frequently, especially today, adduced as a criterion in decisions

about the content of the curriculum, but it is never the sole criterion. A less extreme version of this view is maintained by some educational theorists, however, and since this version might seem more plausible, it is worthwhile to consider it. Warnock's position might be seen as an example of the less extreme position as she attempts to incorporate a balance of empirical and theoretical considerations.

### **Warnock's position: review and critique**

Warnock seems to accept the distinction drawn by Categories A and B in Peters' work (1966), as well as the further distinction between useful and non-useful. Her general argument is that the subjects in Category A should be included in the curriculum content because they are "useful". The criterion she applies to determine whether or not something is useful shall be referred to as Mary Warnock's Principle W.P., which can be formulated thus:

- . Something ought to be included in the content of the curriculum if it is deemed that by having learned such a thing, life on leaving school will be better, that this thing will help the student achieve "the good life."
- . The essential considerations to be taken into account when one talks of "the ingredients of the good life" are work and the imagination.
- . So, the "determinants of the curriculum" are work and the imagination. These are equally important.

Warnock's position seems to combine the two major approaches to the justification of curriculum content, i.e., the knowledge-centered view and the interest-centered view. It also takes into account theoretical and practical considerations mentioned by Bantock. Does Warnock resolve the issue of the justification of the content of the curriculum, or does she actually account for justification in terms of one but not both of the positions mentioned earlier? Can one produce a coherent way of justifying the content of the curriculum, by considering both work and the imagination, or does such an attempt lead to a principle or criterion too encompassing to be of any real help? Before attempting an answer to these questions, we must look closely at Warnock's position.

Let us start by looking at imagination and its implications. By imagination Warnock (1977) means "a human capacity shared by everyone who can perceive and think, who can notice things and can experience emotions" (pp.151-152). It is "involved in all perceptions of the world, ... it is that element in perceptions which makes what we see and hear meaningful to us" (p.152). It

is also an "image-making capacity" related, but not confined to, creativity. It is that by virtue of which "the significance of the world we live in" (p.152) is increased.

According to Warnock, educating one's imagination involves educating one's reflective and perceptive capacity, which may lead to creativity, but definitely leads to a life which is more interesting and meaningful. She includes "the imagination" as one of the essential criteria which we should take into account when making content decisions not only because educating one's imagination may lead to "good" things, but also and primarily because it is a good in itself. In her words, "there is no need to raise the question, 'Why do you want it?' ... if understood, it will be seen to be good" (p.153). Such a perspective resembles the one Peters adopts with regard to the notion of truth, and the one Wilson adopts with regard to "what interests someone."

Another argument Warnock adduces in favour of educating the imagination is that such a process will be helpful in eliminating boredom. She argues that such a process will lead students to focus their attention on specific subjects in which they are particularly interested. This will diminish boredom as she believes that: "It is only by considering a thing deeply and for its own sake that one can properly begin to enjoy or to understand it" (p.152). A corollary of Warnock's view is that students should have a variety of subjects to choose from and should be allowed to follow their inclinations as much as it is possible and thence, to specialize, "to become experts, even if this is in a relatively narrow field" (p.164).

Can the criterion of imagination as Warnock describes it be reconciled with that of work? Although work is only one of the ingredients of the good life, Warnock believes it is an essential one. She believes a life with work (by which she understands paid work) is **always** better than one without work even if that work is a "nasty job", a job which is "bad in all kinds of ways" (p.144). By the inclusion of work as a criterion in curriculum decisions, she means that what we teach children at school ought to be directed toward helping them to find employment when they leave school. Warnock feels that work involves an effort on our part to transform, order, and control the environment. This leads to satisfaction and a manifestation of our freedom. "Work", she says, "is ... a proof of human freedom" (p.146). The direct relation of work to freedom makes it an essential ingredient of the good life.

The first implication of applying the criterion of work to decisions about curriculum content is that information about what employment will be available in the future must be obtained. Planning must involve predictions and take into account as to the kinds of jobs which will be available in the future. In Warnock's view, this will inevitably involve control, and it is a responsibility

which should be largely borne by government. According to this criterion, then, an "educational activity" ought to be included in the curriculum content if it is "useful", and its usefulness is determined by whether or not it is a step in the series of steps which ultimately lead to employment. She writes:

The ideal of a curriculum should be that what everyone begins with should be useful for the next step, so that at the stage where some people leave school they will be qualified for the next bit of education. (1977, p.147)

Those who have the opportunity of "the next bit of education," will find it to be a further stage which will lead ultimately to work. She admits that the application of such considerations will lead to a scheme that is "ruthlessly utilitarian" (p.151). She believes such a scheme, on its own, is unsatisfactory. It neglects the other essential dimension of education -- imagination.

Has Warnock succeeded in producing a coherent justification by combining the two components of "the good life"? Or does each of the components have characteristics and involve considerations such that they cannot be merged without creating new conflicts? Warnock believes they do not conflict, that ultimately each can be viewed as "a means to freedom" or "as a contributing part of freedom" (p.170). She concludes that the dilemma of the justificatory issue can be resolved by considering both work, and imagination, treating them on a par. "The crucial point in curriculum-building must be to ensure that none of these aspects of freedom is forgotten..." (Devlin and Warnock, 1977, p.67).

Can we always proceed in a way that allows us to consider "these aspects of freedom" on an equal footing? Given the way Warnock describes imagination and work, and given her views about how they are related to the educational process, is her position consistent? Can one offer a justification in which one essential criterion -- work -- involves control, and the other essential criterion -- imagination -- involves diversity?

Perhaps an adequate justification ought to take into account the two general considerations mentioned by Bantock. Although Warnock attempts this, and her position seems plausible on face value, the issue is not as simple as Bantock suggests. Warnock has not really resolved the conflicts that arise when one attempts to combine work and the imagination. At least two rifts arise from her position. This will be indicated by the following schema:



**Work components**

1. This component encourages and at times restricts, students to direct their efforts toward an occupation according to the directions dictated by those in power (government and/or industry). And she thinks "there is nothing ideologically harmful in this" (p.148).
2. The range of subjects to be included in the curriculum content will be restricted in accordance with whatever jobs are expected to be available.

**Imagination component**

1. This component encourages the utmost development of such capacities as creativity and reflectiveness and involves an emphasis on what "interests" the students even if these interests are not related to employment (p.155). (And there is no guarantee that what interests students will tally with what is proposed by those in power.)
2. This component encourages a wide range of subjects.

Although Warnock believes that the two "ingredients" do not conflict, she seems aware that they might be seen to do so. This is why she argues that work and imagination are related to each other via the notion of "human freedom." Even here there is a problem, for her notion of "work" is such that it admits of what she terms "a nasty job," a job that is "bad in all kinds of ways." Is it really the case that any activity for which one receives financial recompense is a form of work that involves a crucial relationship to and manifestation of freedom?

Warnock raises another point which might be seen as an attempt to resolve the impasse. In the section on work she says that "someone must try to work out roughly what kinds of jobs there will be for them...," that there has to be a "kind of central control" and that "schools must, if they are not to fail in their duty, consider the state of the market" (pp.146,147 and 149). But in the same breath she adds that "within the framework there should be enough diversity to accommodate different interests" (p.148). She does not tell us how to determine what should count as "enough diversity". Where do we draw the line and on what grounds? While she says that this will become clearer when she considers imagination, when she does consider this component the conflict becomes sharper. In the concluding section of her book, while she does not deny the charge of paternalism she reiterated the importance of considering the two components as "twins" (p.170).

Faced with such problems, it might be suggested that the

issue will be resolved if we accept a compromise between the two components. The two might become alternatives rather than conjuncts. On certain occasions priority would be given to work and on others to imagination. If one accepts this, one would not really be following Warnock's principle, but would have reverted to either the popular view or to a view which took only theoretical considerations into account.

### Concluding remarks

From this brief investigation of Warnock's position it is evident that the justificatory issue is itself very complex and that agreement with regard to this issue is not close at hand. In this concluding section some suggestions will be made and some conclusions will be drawn about this issue.

**The problem of justification.** The issue of justification is unresolved: the major proposals or arguments offered are problematic in various respects. The issue remains a pressing one: crucial decisions must be made and made seriously. Some plausible and adequate justification needs to be found.

Some curriculum theorists, such as Denis Lawton, argue that since none of the main "theories" usually adduced for the justification of the content (the child-centered view, the knowledge-centered view and the society-centered view) provides on its own complete justification, "each one may have something to contribute to planning a curriculum as a whole" (Lawton, 1978, p.4). In other words, as Lawton maintains, "neither philosophy, nor sociology, nor psychology, can on its own justify a curriculum..." (p.4). Lawton concludes that in justifying the curriculum one has to take into account: (i) philosophical criteria, such as the issues of aims, worthwhileness, and the structure of knowledge; (ii) sociological considerations, such as social change and technological and ideological changes; (iii) the nature of the culture in question; and (iv) psychological theories of development, learning, instruction, and motivation. He fails to show us how to combine these components without creating serious conflicts. Each might lead to good reasons for making necessary curricular choices. But on what grounds do we establish priorities? How do we arrive at the best reasons?

**Ethical theory.** Given the nature of the justificatory issue we have been dealing with, it is obvious that any resolution of this issue must, at one stage or another, incorporate an ethical theory.

**Political theory.** Another important consideration which must be taken into account is the question "who should decide such curricular matters?" (This issue becomes more crucial if we are not able to produce a coherent and acceptable justification).

And this presupposes a political theory.

**Labour and work.** Although a "balanced position" seems to be more adequate, further work must be done to resolve the rifts such a position faces if it is to be workable. One consideration here would be to try to utilize a broader notion of "work" than that suggested by Warnock, whose notion of "work" is too narrow. It refers primarily to a job -- any job. It does not take into account the important distinction between work and labour made for example in the work of Hannah Arendt (1959) or Ivan Illich (1973). The major distinction between work and labour is that the former involves activities in which one utilizes some skill in order to create a product which can be seen as being the direct result of one's efforts and imagination, and one feels responsible for such a product. As Marx puts it, "One not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his **modus operandi**, and to which he must subordinate his will" (quoted by Entwistle, 1983, p.6).

Again, in the same vein, Arendt considers work as "essentially expressive activity", an activity in which human beings realize themselves (i.e., they become more fully human) and the result of work is not seen as a product for consumption but exchange. And Illich identifies work as a process in which one uses tools "for fully satisfying imaginative and independent" (p.35) activities. Work, as an activity, cannot "be purchased or sold in the marketplace... only the result of convivial work can be marketed" (p.35).(8)

More recently, Robin Attfield (1984) elaborates on this distinction thus:

- A. "Work may be contrasted with labour in that the product of work is the objective of the worker; whereas the point of labour is the rewards that it brings" (p.142). Labour is exclusively connected with contingent and extrinsic considerations; work is not. This does not mean that the process of work may not lead to extrinsic and contingent advantages. In essence, however, work is connected with the intrinsic relation between "the product of work" and "the objective of the worker." Thus Attfield concludes that "work can itself be a pleasure" (p.142). It is a pleasure when the objective of the worker is fulfilled in the realization of the product, irrespective of the extrinsic considerations. In this respect work can be included under Aristotle's notion of "scholē" (leisure), that is, being involved in something worthwhile and valuable for its own sake, and, in Aristotle's own words, "of itself gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment of life" (Quoted by Ozmon and Craver, 1981, p.69).

- B. "Work, unlike labour, must have a point which the worker can endorse, involving standards of excellence which he or she can also endorse for the kind of product to be produced" (p.142). This point is not unrelated to the first one since according to Attfield, the second point implies that the worker will identify with his or her work. And this involves that the worker "works, or can work, autonomously," which, in turn means that work "displays our part in making, ... the presence of skill or judgment" and that the workers are "enabled to have some say in deciding how their work is to be executed" (p.143).

**Proposal: Education-as-work.** Taking such considerations about the distinction between labour and work into account might make it possible to develop a justification which views education as a form of work and work as a form of education.

The image Warnock's position suggests is that education is distinct from work. Education leads to work and therefore "preparation for a job" should be one of the principal aims of education. In my view the connection between education and work need not be limited to a cause-effect relationship. If education is viewed as a form of work and work as a form of education, then the strict division between education and work might be lessened. "Education-as-work" may lead to "work-as-education" but this does not mean that education ought to continuously and exclusively direct students to a specific type of job. As J.P. White remarks:

Work being ideally an expression both of one's innermost reflections and of one's fraternal links with others, vocational education is merely one aspect of education for citizenship. **It has nothing to do with steering pupils into particular kinds of jobs:** its objective is to acquaint all pupils with the whole pattern of work within the community ... both as a background to their own choice of a career and so that they come to understand the mutual reliance of each on each. (1979, p.171)

Such a view is beginning to be expressed also by some people in business. For example, John Stoik, President and Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Canada Ltd., although perhaps still restricted to the cause-effect relationship between education and work, has recently stated:

We must produce people who have been taught how to think; who understand and can deal with rapid changes; who have learned how to discipline their efforts. We need a system that positions graduation as a beginning and not an end; positions it as a focal

point in an education process that continues through life regardless of age or position. (Stoik, 1984, p.A10)

The process of education and process of work could merge into a broader process which incorporates both and which goes on over a life-time.

If such a perspective is workable, planning that is based on predictions about the employment market will be less important and perhaps not important at all. There are, at any rate, serious questions as to whether such predictions are reliable at all (Heyneman, 1981; O'Toole, 1981; and Silberman, 1982). The element of control which results from such limitations would be diminished thereby. And it might, in turn, be less difficult to resolve conflicts between work and imagination.

Resolving the conflicts between work and imagination is not an easy task. As early as 1916 Dewey wrote:

The problems of education in a democratic society is to do away with the dualism (by which he understands "a division between a liberal education, having to do with the self-sufficing life of leisure devoted to knowing for its own sake, and a useful, practical training for mechanical occupations, devoid of intellectual and aesthetic content") and to construct a course of studies which makes thought a guide of free practice for all and which makes leisure a reward of accepting responsibility for service, rather than a stage of exemption from it. (1966, p.261)

Today we are still struggling with this problem.(9)

## NOTES

1. Mary Warnock, a renowned British philosopher at Oxford University, has acted as a principal of a secondary school in England and more recently has chaired an inquiry for the Government into the education of the handicapped children. Warnock was also actively involved in the so-called "Great Debate" in England which was launched by the Prime Minister, Mr. James Callaghan, on October 15, 1976, when he gave an address on the nation's education at Ruskin College, Oxford.
2. A similar view has been defended by Bantock (1963) and Adler (1982).
3. One might argue that Warnock's consideration of work does not really correspond to Bantock's empirical considerations since Bantock is referring to relevant facts. It is true that

for Warnock work is seen as a value and a goal. But she goes beyond this. She proposes that we have to consider certain factual considerations related to this value, for example, see what kind of jobs will be available, balance out economic dilemmas, "listen to what the outside work demands" (Warnock, 1977, p.148), and give advice to students what to do. She refers to work as "the practical part after school" (1977, p.171).

4. A discussion and/or a reference to what I label the popular view can be found in the following: Entwistle (1970); Broudy (1978); Wringer (1981); Barrow (1982); Silberman (1982); White (1982); Apple (1983); and Feinberg (1983).
5. For example, in 1977 the Maltese Government abolished the Faculties of Arts and Science at the University of Malta, deeming the courses taught in these faculties to be "non-useful".
6. It is worth noting that such a position is also held by "old fashioned socialists" such as Gramsci, Simon, and Entwistle. The point is that mere training does not lead to the development of an autonomous, creative and responsible individual. Ideally, all students should be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge accumulated through cultural inheritance and do so critically, and then try to apply such knowledge in practice. (For references, see Simon, 1978, and Entwistle, 1981).
7. In the same vein McNeil (1983, p.120) writes: "Before W.W. II, British education accorded highest status to the cultural forms of the classical education of the gentleman class, and kept the technical knowledge of working people at lowest status. This legacy persists in subtle forms; one's perceived job future, inferred from one's class background, helps determine which kinds of knowledge one has access to."
 

The following is another criticism of the popular view. This might be seen as an extension of the second criticism put forth by radical educationists. It is argued that if there is a strict correspondence between what is taught and employment, and given that the kind of employment that will be available in the future is determined by people outside the realm of education, then the value of what is taught is defined by others: the teachers, it is maintained, are simply acting as agents of those in power and the students will feel "estranged from much academic work" (Everhart, 1983, p.185). And this has several undesirable results: (i) education "is a totally determined institution," i.e., schools become merely "passive mirrors of an economy" (Apple & Weis, 1983, p.21); (ii) teachers and students "fail to be active agents in the processes of reproduction and contestation of dominant social relations" (Apple & Weis, 1983, p.21); (iii) there will be a dichotomy between conception and execution (Apple, 1983, p.148).
8. The distinction between labour and work is also made and applied by Pope John Paul II (1981, p.33).

9. Earlier versions of this paper were read at the St. Lawrence Institute, Montreal, and at the Department of Education seminar series, Dalhousie University. I benefited from the comments of the participants. Special thanks to William Hare who made several helpful suggestions.

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