Tracing the Path of a Modern American Paradigm: Chapter 12

For chart portions above this point, see the chart for Chapter 10.

Calvin

Rousseau

Aristotle

Plato

Social Contractists

Pythagoras

Empiricists

Spencer on Education, Late 19th century (Chapter 10)

- Spencer extended the prenatal "recapitulation" hypothesis into the postnatal realm of mental development, saying that patterns of historical development of the "race" *must* be followed.
- He popularized an image of the child as incapable of flexibility, adaptability, or resilience, *and* as injured by mental overstrain.
- He applied a biological model of development to the mind, saying – in Aristotelian fashion – that its disposition to reach a "given," pre-determined form *must not* be interfered with.
- His demand on parents and teachers was for constant, active compliance with, and promotion of, all of each child's "givens."
- His test for good teaching was pupils' pleasurable excitement.

Background to Spencer, Late 19th century (Chapter 9)

- On the individual level, Spencer posited "survival of the fittest," which saw each one's "givens" as rigidly limiting his ability to adapt/develop.
- On the collective human level, Spencer posited "homogeneous-to-heterogeneous" as the template for all things developmental, which promised purpose-driven progress to ever-higher planes of fulfillment.
- He and contemporary philosophers proclaimed that each individual's intuition is a valid and self-sufficient means of scientific investigation.

Pestalozzi: See Chapter 8

17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries in the Colonies and the United States (Chap 11)

- Three views of child-rearing, and by extension of classroom instruction, had come into competition by the middle of the 19th century: Calvinist, Romantic, Practical.
- The Calvinist and Romantic views, utterly at odds in most respects, were similar in that each (a) dealt with the child as a unique individual, and (b) envisioned the child as carrying out "given" universal imperatives, which in turn required respect from, and even catering to, by parents and classroom instructors.
- The Practical view, linked to Mann's Common School Movement, saw the child as a future contributing member of local society.

Calvinist: See Table 1

Focus: UPwards towards God, heaven, afterlife, importance of salvation.

19th century: Declining

Romantic: See Table 2

Focus: INwards on each child as precious, able to "organically" flower

19th century: Gaining

Practical: See Table 3

Focus: OUTwards to local community & FORwards to a near-future time

19th century: Gaining

Classical: See Chapter 13

Spencer: See Chapter 9

Social Currents in late 19th century U.S. (Chapter 12)

- Facing challenges due to waves of immigrant children, and under pressure from industrial capitalists, policy-makers decided to "sort" children based on their "given" intellectual abilities, assumed to be *very* modest.
- Emerging were "scientific" ways to test & measure human abilities (details Section 15); early testing confirmed that the school newcomers had, indeed, very modest abilities.
- Animated by "democratic" values, policy-makers arranged undemanding schooling "to meet the newcomers' needs."

←Chart for Chapter 11 Overview of the Eight Key Beliefs Chart for Chapter 13→

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