What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?

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At the end of a very interesting article, "Hiding the Hidden Curriculum" (1973/74), Elizabeth Vallance raises the question of what to do with the hidden curriculum now that we have found it. We can embrace it wholeheartedly, she says, or we can attempt to expunge it altogether, or we can do something between these two extremes. Vallance leaves the question open and I have no intention of closing it here; indeed, I am not sure it is one that can or should be closed. I would, however, like to explore some of the things that can be done with a hidden curriculum once it is found and some of the pitfalls of doing those things. But first we need to get clearer than we now are on the nature of the beast.

1. Misleading Labels

Most of the labels we use when talking about hidden curriculum are either singularly unilluminating or highly misleading. To call hidden curriculum "covert" or "latent," as people often do, does no harm, but neither does it promote our understanding. To call hidden curriculum "what schooling does to people," "by-products of schooling," or "nonacademic outcomes of schooling" would seem to promote our understanding but in fact leads us astray.[1] For these last three labels, and others, too, make it seem as if hidden curriculum is necessarily tied to schools and schooling when it is not. Much of our education—and I am talking now of formal education and not simply of the informal education which enters into all aspects of our lives—much of this education has always taken place outside of schools. In an earlier day, apprenticeships to craftsmen prevailed. Presently there are internships in hospitals, management training programs in industry, fieldwork placements in social agencies; there are private music lessons, group karate lessons, swimming pro-

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grams at the Y; there are summer camps, Cub Scouts, basic training in the armed forces. I see no reason whatsoever to suppose that schools have a hidden curriculum but that formal educational programs in nonschool settings do not. Labels such as "by-products of schooling" or "what schooling does to people" do no harm if we realize that they refer to one particular class of hidden curricula, namely, the hidden curricula of schools. We must not, however, let them dominate our thinking lest they blind us to the hidden curricula lurking in other habitats.

These labels mislead in another way, too, for they give the impression that everything an educational setting does to people belongs to its hidden curriculum. But while hidden curriculum is not necessarily tied to schools and schooling, it is always and everywhere tied to learning. Both schools and nonschool educational settings do lots of things to people—they have all sorts of by-products. It needs to be stressed, therefore, that only *some* of the things done by a given educational setting constitute its hidden curriculum. Some hospitals because of their location create traffic jams, some swimming programs because of their pools cause earaches, and some schools because of their expenditures produce rising tax rates, but these results or outcomes do not belong to the hidden curriculum of the educational setting in question. They do not because although they happen, they are not *learned.*

Implicit in hidden curriculum talk, moreover, is a contrast between hidden curriculum and what for want of a better name I will call *curriculum proper*—that thing, difficult as it is to define, about which philosophers and educational theorists have long debated and which curriculum specialists have long tried to plan and develop. The contrast is between what it is openly intended that students learn and what, although not openly intended, they do, in fact, learn. Indeed, one important thrust of the critique of contemporary schooling mounted by those who have been called radical school reformers (see Gross 1969) is that curriculum proper is failing while hidden curriculum thrives: students do not learn to read, they do not learn math or science or any of the other subjects and skills endorsed by all parties to the educational enterprise; what they do learn is to be docile and obedient, to value competition over cooperation, to stifle their creative impulses, and to believe in what Ivan Illich calls the Myth of Unending Consumption (Illich 1971, p. 55). Thus, some results or outcomes of school or of nonschool educational settings are not constituents of a hidden curriculum because they are not states that individuals have attained through learning: what I will henceforth call *learning states.* Other results are not because they are openly intended learning states, hidden from neither teacher nor student. In a school which openly acknowledges the goal that students learn to speak French and provides courses to that end, the ability to speak French, if achieved, although a learning state, is not part of its hidden curriculum.

I do not mean to suggest that knowledge of French could never be part of a hidden curriculum. It is tempting to conceive of the contrast with curriculum proper implicit in hidden curriculum talk as one between academic and nonacademic learning states in the manner of one

of the labels listed above, but this is a mistake. Curriculum proper can and often does quite directly and openly aim at what is normally taken to be nonacademic learning, be it of moral values, religious attitudes, political preferences, or vocational skills. We are so used to thinking of the academic dimension of curriculum proper that we forget this. And just as a curriculum proper can be nonacademic, so a hidden curriculum can consist of what normally would be considered academic learning, be it learning of addition facts, scientific theories, or French. To be sure, the hidden curriculum of contemporary public schooling discovered to date is what most of us would call nonacademic. But it does not follow from this discovery that a hidden curriculum *could* not consist of academic learning states. A hidden curriculum, like a curriculum proper, has subject matter, but just as there is no particular subject matter which must be present in or absent from every curriculum proper, so there is none which must or cannot belong to every hidden curriculum.

In sum, a hidden curriculum consists of some of the outcomes or by-products of schools or of nonschool settings, particularly those states which are learned yet are not openly intended. There is no special subject matter which always and everywhere characterizes hidden curriculum, although, of course, a hidden curriculum must have *some* subject matter. It should perhaps be stressed that this neutrality with respect to subject matter means not only that the learning states of a hidden curriculum can be academic as well as nonacademic; it means that the subject matter can be significant as well as trivial, worthwhile as well as worthless.

Actually, when one speaks of learning states one is usually speaking of two things at once: some *state* a learner is in (for example, a state of knowing or believing or being interested or being cautious), and something which may be called the *object* of that state—provided "object" is construed broadly enough to include not just physical objects but such things as the theory of relativity, *David Copperfield,* the free enterprise system, and love. Thus, a learning state is not $2 + 3 = 5$, but believing or remembering that $2 + 3 = 5$; it is not the free enterprise system as such, but being committed to or, perhaps, being adamantly opposed to the system.[2] When I said just now that there is no special subject matter necessarily associated with hidden curriculum, I meant that the learning states which constitute a hidden curriculum are not limited to one sort of object. But they are not limited to one sort of state either. The learning states of a hidden curriculum can be states which we think of as character traits—for example, docility or conformity. They can also be cognitive states such as believing or knowing, states of readiness or of skill, emotional states, attitudinal states, or some combination of those and other sorts of states.[3]

2. *The Hidden Curriculum*

Those who describe the hidden curriculum of contemporary schooling talk of the hidden curriculum as if there is and can be only one, as if hidden curriculum is everywhere the same. But of course it is not. A

hidden curriculum is always *of* some setting, and there is no reason to suppose that different settings will have identical hidden curricula. Actually, a hidden curriculum is not only of some setting but is *at* some time; therefore, we cannot even assume that a single setting will have identical hidden curricula at different times. Settings change, and as they do some learning states may become extinct as new ones emerge.

It is sometimes said that learning states must occur systematically if they are to belong to a hidden curriculum.[4] I am not sure what this means. True, they must *be* results of the setting. However, the learning states of a hidden curriculum need not be systematic in the sense that they are mass products—learning states for all or even most learners in that setting. If John is the only one of his classmates who comes to appreciate good art as a result of the teacher's putting Picasso prints on the classroom walls—the teacher in this instance wanting to make the room more attractive and having no thought of learning states—this learning state of John's belongs to the hidden curriculum of his school, at least for him. A hidden curriculum, like a curriculum proper, is *of* some setting, *at* some time, and *for* some learner.

In view of this relativity to context, talk of *the* hidden curriculum is normally elliptical. Those who speak in this way usually have a particular setting in mind—often, but not always, public schooling in the United States—and they have a particular time, usually the present, in mind. From the standpoint of the learner, moreover, *the* hidden curriculum is an abstraction, for it is neither the set of learning states attained by anyone in particular nor the set attained by all the learners in a given setting. Idiosyncratic learning states are overlooked when a portrait of *the* hidden curriculum is painted, and rightly so, for *the* hidden curriculum of a setting consists not in all the learning states therein attained, but rather in the dominant ones. An account of *the* hidden curriculum of a setting, like an account of *the* history of an era, is selective. Attention is directed to common themes running through the learning states, presumably themes of some importance. Learning states which seem insignificant or which do not fit readily into the general pattern will be shunned, even though they are in fact produced by the setting.

The learning states of *the* hidden curriculum of a setting do, then, occur systematically in the sense that idiosyncratic states are ignored. But what is considered idiosyncratic will depend on one's interest. Learning states which are legitimately ignored when *the* hidden curriculum of some setting is the focus of attention may require attention when *the* hidden curriculum for some learner is at issue. Suppose what is unlikely, namely, that Mary is the only person in her school in the last twenty years who has come to believe as an unintended result of her schooling that women cannot be doctors. This idiosyncratic learning state is rightly ignored by those trying to determine *the* hidden curriculum *of Mary's school.* But those trying to discover *the* hidden curriculum of that school *for Mary* would be remiss if they did not take it seriously since it might well play a very significant role in Mary's life.

I want to emphasize here, because I think it too often forgotten, that our interest can be in hidden curricula for learners as well as of settings. And just as *the* hidden curriculum of a setting is an abstraction from the standpoint of learners, so *the* hidden curriculum for a learner is an abstraction from the standpoint of settings. *The* hidden curriculum for Mary "cuts across" settings, so that to discover it we must look not simply at Mary's schooling, but at the other settings having hidden curricula in which Mary is a participant—or perhaps is simply an unwilling victim. Once again, *the* hidden curriculum is a selection from among the relevant learning states: it is a set of learning states thought to be dominant for Mary.

3. *Finding a Hidden Curriculum*

A hidden curriculum is not something one just finds; one must go hunting for it. Since a hidden curriculum is a set of learning states, ultimately one must find out what is learned as a result of the practices, procedures, rules, relationships, structures, and physical characteristic which constitute a given setting. But one can begin by spotting learning states and making sure they can be traced back to the setting, or by examining aspects of the setting and discovering what learning states they produce. Motivations for the search can, of course, vary. Some investigators may simply want to know what is learned in school, others will want to make their teaching methods more efficient, and still others will be intent on revealing connections between education and the larger social order. But whatever the motivation may be, a full-blown theory of curriculum cannot afford to neglect the hunt for hidden curricula, for the quarry plays a central role in the education of each one of us.

One consequence of the relativity of hidden curriculum to setting, time, and learner is that investigative work on it is never done. New settings with their own hidden curricula are forever being created and old ones are forever changing. Information gathered yesterday on the hidden curriculum of a given setting may not accurately portray that setting's hidden curriculum today. Thus, the scope of the search for hidden curricula needs to be extended beyond schools to nonschool settings, and at the same time the searchers must continually retrace their steps.

Even if hidden curricula did not change over time, there would be reason to revisit the old haunts, for the information gathered at any time is never the whole story. Regardless of setting or time, what we find when we investigate hidden curricula is a function of what we look for and what we look at. The literature describing the hidden curriculum of public schooling in the United States published in the mid to late 1960s provides an interesting case in point. It draws our attention to learning states having class and racial overtones, but it overlooks those having sexist implications (e.g., Henry 1963, Herndon 1968, Kozol 1967). Yet no one who has seen the film *High School* or read even a sampling of the

articles in *And Jill Came Tumbling After* (Stacey et al. 1974) can doubt that public schooling in the 1960s included a wide range of sexist practices and that its hidden curriculum included sexist beliefs, attitudes, and values. If sexist learning states were not found it is not because they did not exist, but because they were not seen or—if they were seen—because they were not recognized for what they were.

A description of the hidden curriculum of public schooling of the 1960s, or for that matter of the 1970s, written today would most likely draw our attention to its sexist component. But who knows what other components it might overlook! Christian doctrine? Heterosexual bias? Speciesism? The search for hidden curricula needs to retrace its steps, then, because even if a hidden curriculum does not change over time, *we* change. Our interests shift, our knowledge of the world is enlarged, our consciousness is raised, and we therefore come to see and care about things in a hidden curriculum we did not care about, indeed perhaps could not see, before.

One way to determine if we have overlooked important parts of a hidden curriculum is to examine the different aspects or elements of the relevant setting or settings to see what learning states they produce. In other words, look beyond learning states to sources![5] Thanks to a variety of inquiries, many of which Vallance cites in her article, we have an idea of some of the sources of important elements of hidden curricula of schools. Vallance mentions, for example, the social structure of the classroom, the teacher's exercise of authority, the rules governing the relationship between teacher and student (1973/74, pp. 6–7). Standard learning activities are also sources. Who can forget Jules Henry's description of a classroom game of Spelling Baseball or John Holt's account of Twenty Questions (Henry 1963, Holt 1964). In a somewhat different vein, Joanne Bronars (1970) has drawn our attention to dissecting frogs and catching insects. Another source of hidden curricula is the teacher's use of language (Gayer 1970). And, of course, there are textbooks and audiovisual aids, furnishings and architecture, disciplinary measures, timetables, tracking systems, and curricular priorities.

The problem in looking to sources is that it is not clear that a list of sources of the learning states which constitute hidden curricula will have an end, for as new practices, procedures, environments and the like are introduced into educational settings, they become potential generators of hidden curricula. Can anyone doubt that the new classification of students as learning-disabled and the practices which accompany it are generating a hidden curriculum, or rather elements of one? As pocket calculators begin to be used in math and science classes, will they not generate hidden learning states? Just as there are no limits on the subject matter of the learning outcomes which can constitute a hidden curriculum, I think we must conclude that there are none on the elements or aspects of educational settings which can be sources of those states.

There is, of course, a good reason for looking to sources and for recognizing that when limits are placed on the sorts of things within a set-

ting which can generate elements of hidden curricula, they are arbitrary. If our concern is not simply to discover hidden curricula but to do something about them, we must find out which elements or aspects of a given setting help bring about which components of that setting's hidden curriculum. For if we do not know the sources of the learning states belonging to a hidden curriculum, we must either let that hidden curriculum be or do away with the whole setting. But some hidden curricula or parts thereof quite clearly ought not to be left as they are; and on the other hand, if we do away with whole settings, we may be doing away with practices, procedures, physical environments and the like which on balance generate desirable learning outcomes.

Rational intervention requires that we know sources. It requires also that we return to the scene of our interventions to make sure we have not done more harm than good. There is no guarantee that, when we change an educational setting so as to do away with a portion of its hidden curriculum we find abhorrent, we will succeed; indeed, if we are not careful, the changes we make can generate the very learning states we are trying to banish or, for that matter, ones even more unsavory. The learning disabilities movement purports to be trying to end the practice of labeling students because of the hidden curriculum resulting from it, but one wonders if the movement is not in fact promoting the very learning states it claims to reject (see Schrag and Divoky 1975).

Once we recognize that any aspect of an educational setting can have learning states which are not openly intended, that changes in settings can produce such states, that the learning states produced by a setting may be different for every learner and that new learners constantly enter educational settings, then I think we must acknowledge that for any given setting hidden curricula cannot be avoided. We can get rid of a particular hidden curriculum of a setting, but in principle we cannot avoid some hidden curriculum or other unless we abolish the setting itself. I stress this point because educators often suppose that if their reforms are put into practice we will never again have to worry about hidden curricula. As the documentary film "Infants School" unwittingly testifies, this is a terrible mistake, for the most enlightened practices can carry with them an undesirable hidden curriculum.[6] In many ways, the British infants school of the film is a model of school reform, yet if one looks closely one sees traditional sex roles and stereotypes being transmitted. Those of us concerned with educational settings cannot rest on our laurels. It is impossible to do away with all hidden curricula; hence, for any given setting, we must always be on our guard.

4. *Two Kinds of Hiddenness*

That *some* hidden curriculum or other for any given setting is inevitable ought not to be taken as grounds for maintaining the status quo in education.

To say that some hidden curriculum or other is inevitable for any given setting is not to say that a hidden curriculum consisting in learning states we take to be undesirable is inevitable. We need to guard against replacing an objectionable hidden curriculum with a worse one, but although there is always the possibility of our ending up with a worse one, there is no necessity at work here. And there is always the possibility that we will end up with a better one.

I realize that an important part of the message of Illich's *Deschooling Society* is that the hidden curriculum of contemporary public schooling cannot be changed—at least not for the better—by changes in the setting. Hence the need for deschooling. Illich has been attacked on this score by critics speaking from very different points on the educational spectrum. It is all too easy, however, to do less than justice to his claim. He is surely *not* saying that *none* of the hidden learning states produced by contemporary public schooling can be banished or that *no* changes for the better can be produced by changes in the setting. His view of *the* hidden curriculum of public schooling is highly selective, and his claim about the resistance of public schooling to reform that makes a real difference must be understood as holding only for the learning outcomes with which he is concerned. Exactly what these are and whether he is right about them is a topic for another occasion. But whether or not he is right, there is certainly nothing in his remarks which shows reform of hidden curricula to be *in general* impossible. His claim applies only to school settings, and he is the first to point out that nonschool settings also have hidden curricula (1971, p. 48). Some of these latter might be as resistant to real reform as he says schools are, but there is no reason to suppose that all would be.

The inevitability thesis is not a counsel for inaction. Yet inaction is, in fact, one viable alternative when we find a hidden curriculum and wonder what we ought to do with it. I indicated above that we may be forced to let a hidden curriculum be when we find it because we do not know its exact sources. It should be clear, however, that even if we know its sources, we can nonetheless choose not to abolish or even alter them in any way. It may be wondered, however, if a hidden curriculum, once it is found, *can* be left as is. Once we find a hidden curriculum doesn't it stop being hidden, hence being a hidden curriculum?

Our discussion has for too long avoided the question of the hiddenness of the learning states belonging to a hidden curriculum. Suppose a sociologist studies a school or school system and finds elements of its hidden curriculum. Is that hidden curriculum, simply by virtue of being known to the sociologist, no longer a *hidden* curriculum? Surely not. Being hidden, like being north of, is a relation: just as Boston is north of Miami but not north of Montreal, so something can be hidden from one person or group but not from another. When we speak of something as hidden, moreover, we usually have some context in mind in relation to which we make our judgments of hiddenness. In the game Hide and Seek, a player is hidden just so long as the one who is It has not found

him or her; that others know where the player is has no bearing on the player's hiddenness from the standpoint of the game; and when the player is found, that others do not know where the player is also has no bearing on the player's hiddenness.

Education is no game, but nonetheless a hidden curriculum is in this respect like a hidden player in Hide and Seek. Once the learners in a setting are aware of the learning states they are acquiring or are supposed to acquire, these learning outcomes no longer belong to the hidden curriculum of that setting. Indeed, once learning states are openly acknowledged so that the learners can readily become aware of them even if they do not, the learning states can no longer be considered hidden. Until learning states are acknowledged or the learners are aware of them, however, they remain hidden even if sociologists, bureaucrats, and teachers are all aware of them. Thus, a hidden curriculum can be found yet remain hidden, for finding is one thing and telling is another.

There are, in effect, two kinds of hiddenness, and an account of hidden curriculum needs to come to terms with both. Something can be hidden in the sense in which a cure for cancer is hidden or in the sense in which a penny in the game Hide the Penny is hidden. Both academicians who investigate the hidden curriculum of public schooling today and radical school reformers who decry it vacillate on this issue. Some make it sound as if a hidden curriculum is hidden by someone or some group in the manner of the penny in the children's game. Others seem to assume that the learning states of a hidden curriculum have not been hidden by anyone: they just happen to be unknown to us, much as the cure for cancer is unknown to us at the present time.

Whether we are trying to explain why the hidden curriculum of a given setting is what it is or to change a hidden curriculum, we need to take into account this basic ambiguity in the notion of hidden curriculum. For any set of hidden learning states which interests us, we must try to settle the question of intent. It makes no sense to explain a hidden curriculum by means of a conspiracy theory, as some of those writers who point out that the hidden curriculum of public schooling in the United States serves capitalism do, and at the same time describe its learning states as the unintended by-products of schooling. Nor does it make sense simply to tinker with school practices and procedures in order to do away with a given hidden curriculum if it is really the product of intent.

Some readers would doubtless prefer that I characterize hidden curriculum solely in terms of unintended learning states. To introduce intention muddies the waters, they will say. Yet I do not think we have any choice here. It is not only that those writers most concerned with hidden curricula move back and forth between the two kinds of hiddenness. The relevant research on intent has not all been done. We may assume that all the elements of the hidden curricula discovered to date are unintended, but we certainly do not know for sure that they are. A characterization which accommodates the descriptions of hidden curricula we now have is surely to be preferred over one which may require us when the

evidence is in to reject some on the grounds that the learning states they describe were intended although we did not realize it.

Earlier I characterized hidden curriculum in terms of learning states which are not openly intended. The point of that negative formulation was to accommodate the two kinds of hiddenness. That characterization did not, however, take into account the learner's point of view. Although a learning state of a setting is not openly intended a learner can be aware of it, in which case it will not belong to the hidden curriculum of that setting for that learner. Thus, my earlier characterization must be amended. A hidden curriculum consists of those learning states of a setting which are either unintended or intended but not openly acknowledged to the learners in the setting unless the learners are aware of them.

5. *Out of the Frying Pan*

What then can we do with a hidden curriculum once we have found it? This depends, of course, on who "we" are. Assuming we are the educators in a setting and have found both hidden curriculum and sources, there are a number of alternatives open to us.

(1) We can do nothing: we can leave the setting alone rather than try to change it, in which case the relevant learning states become foreseen by us, whereas previously they were not, but they do not otherwise change; in particular, the hidden curriculum remains hidden. This may seem to be the alternative of despair but that is not necessarily the case, for there may be some hidden curricula, or elements thereof, with respect to which we are neutral—we do not positively value them but we do not consider them undesirable either. In relation to such learning states, doing nothing is a reasonable alternative.

(2) We can change our practices, procedures, environments, rules and the like in an effort to root out those learning states we consider undesirable. The radical school-reform movement known as open education has tried to do just this. It has opposed tracking, grading, and examinations, changed the physical environment of classrooms, introduced new learning activities and educational materials, and tried to alter both teacher–pupil and pupil–pupil relationships in order to avoid the hidden curriculum of contemporary public schooling. The free-school movement, while varying in its details from open education, can be understood in this same light.

(3) Instead of changing a setting, we can simply abolish it. This, of course, is the alternative those in the deschooling movement recommend. I say "simply" abolish, but for some educational settings, notably the public school systems of modern industrial societies, abolition is not a simple matter. Abolition of a setting does, however, guarantee abolition of that setting's hidden curriculum, but not of all hidden curricula like it.

(4) It is always possible that we will want to embrace rather than abolish the hidden curriculum we find. There are many today who applaud the learning states of neatness and competitiveness, docility and

obedience to authority attributed to the hidden curriculum of our public schools (e.g., Pursell 1976). They actually have two alternatives: (*a*) they can openly acknowledge these learning states, thereby shifting them from hidden curriculum to curriculum proper, or (*b*) they can intend these learning states but not openly, in which case they remain part of the hidden curriculum.[7]

What *should* we do with a hidden curriculum when we find it? The significance of the question is a function of the quality of the hidden curriculum we find. If a hidden curriculum is harmless, what we do with it will not matter very much. It is when the one we find is not harmless—when it instills beliefs, attitudes, values, or patterns of behavior which are undesirable—that our question takes on urgency. And it becomes more urgent the more undesirable the learning states are. There can be no doubt that when the hidden curriculum we find contains harmful learning states, we must try to root them out. But this is sometimes easier said than done. A teacher can stop using the game of Spelling Baseball as a learning activity, but this will be but a small step toward rooting out learning states such as competitiveness, self-hatred, and hostility toward one's peers. Attitudes and traits such as these seldom have a single, easily isolated source; indeed, those which are most offensive, because very basic, are likely to be products of a complex set of interrelated and entrenched practices and structures. To give up or modify one of these may well accomplish very little.

Large-scale changes, perhaps even total destruction, of a setting may be necessary if a hidden curriculum or some central part thereof is to be abolished. And this, of course, is what the radical school-reform movement in all its variations has been about.[8] The hidden curriculum of contemporary public schooling in the United States has been held to be abhorrent—and rightly so. Drastic changes have been seen—again rightly in my view—as the only hope if its highly undesirable and very deep-seated learning outcomes are to be banished. This is not the place to catalog or assess those proposals, although they need to be assessed in a way they have not yet been. I do, however, want to draw attention to a problem which confronts anyone who tries to change drastically or abolish altogether an educational setting in order to do away with its hidden curriculum—a problem too many radical school reformers have ignored.

Some changes in educational settings involve the deliberate placing of the learners of that setting in other settings so as to break down the barriers between the setting and the "real" world, meanwhile enhancing learning. Thus, for example, schools are encouraged to put students in nonschool settings where they will learn through being apprenticed to master craftsmen and women, through working at a job, through helping others do their jobs or, perhaps, simply through watching and observing. Other changes in educational settings involve restricting its function so as to reduce its power over its participants. It has been proposed, for example, that schools be limited to giving basic skill training (e.g.,

Bereiter 1973, Katz 1971). In this case, even if participants in the setting are not deliberately placed in other settings, the likelihood of their drifting into them is great. And of course there is the total abolition of a setting, in which case the participants may simply be abandoned to other settings. In all three sorts of reform, the risk is real that those on the receiving end of the offending learning states will be taken out of the frying pan only to be sent or allowed to leap into the fire.

It is not just formal educational settings which have hidden curricula. Any setting can have one and most do. When I argued initially that hidden curricula can exist in nonschool settings, I limited the discussion to formal educational settings such as teaching hospitals, private piano lessons, and basic training in the armed services. But learning states occur in settings which are not usually considered educational at all. At IBM and Bell Telephone, at one's local gas station and City Hall, workers learn more than their jobs: attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior are as much the product of these settings as of formal educational ones. It seems not only legitimate, therefore, but theoretically important that we recognize explicitly that hidden curricula can be found anywhere learning states are found. IBM and Bell Telephone are not exempt; neither are one's neighborhood streets, one's church, or the national book club one joins. And what is important to remember is that there is no good reason at all to suppose that the hidden curricula of these and kindred settings are significantly better than the one which is the target of school reforms.

Radical school reformers have been called romantics—this label, needless to say, having derogatory connotations. The source of their romanticism is seen as lying in their view of the child as by nature a happy, curious, creative, and good being who is ruined by school. Perhaps some radical school reformers do romanticize the child, but in general this is a caricature of their position. If the reformers are romantics it is not in their beliefs about human nature, but in their beliefs about the world outside schools. It is as if they bracket their critique of contemporary society when they begin to theorize about education. I am sure that they are as aware as anyone of the sorry state of the outside world. Indeed, they were probably aware of the sorry state of *it* long before they perceived the sorry state of schools. But they forget it in their excitement upon discovering the hidden curriculum of contemporary public schooling. Make the outside world, not schools, the dominant educational setting, they say, and all will be well—as if the world out there were a benign setting, one in which there either are no hidden curricula or in which only worthwhile ones thrive.[9]

A mistake we all tend to make—except perhaps when we are thinking of our own children—is to concentrate on the hidden curriculum *of* a given setting when what matters is the hidden curriculum *for* a given individual or group. To do away with the complex network of practices and structures which in a given setting produce highly undesirable learning outcomes—assuming this is possible, and to some extent I think it is—

may leave the learning states *for someone* unchanged. This may be so because our very reforms send a person, or allow the person to drift, into settings having hidden curricula similar to the one we have been trying to abolish. Or it may be so because the learning states in question were all along the result of more than one setting. Settings can combine to produce learning states. And they surely do. The learning states of docility and conformity, competitiveness and unending consumption, which are said to belong to the hidden curriculum of public schooling in the United States today, are certainly not the products of that schooling alone. Who can doubt that family, church, community organizations, place of work, and the media have all combined to produce them?

The problem I spoke of is really two problems, both hinging on the obvious point that different settings can but need not have significantly different hidden curricula. The one problem is that some educational reforms designed to rid us of undesirable hidden curricula can be self-defeating, because they substitute for the old setting new ones producing essentially the same learning states. The other problem is that the reform of a given educational setting may simply not be enough to do the job if other settings having the same old hidden curriculum survive. It has been pointed out that radical school reform can only succeed if it goes hand in hand with radical societal reform (e.g., by Graubard 1972). That this is so becomes especially clear once we shift our attention from the hidden curriculum of schooling to the hidden curriculum for those being schooled. For it is not just that wide-scale basic reform of public schooling—that is, reform of the whole system as opposed to small units within or alongside it—may not be possible without concomitant societal reform. Supposing it to be possible, it is not at all obvious that the hidden curriculum for those being schooled will be materially improved if the other dominant educational settings in their lives remain the same.

6. *Knowledge Can be Power*

I am not as optimistic as some about the prospects of radical societal reform. But whether one takes these prospects to be good or not, there are two courses of action open to us when we find a hidden curriculum we abhor which we still need to consider. One is part and parcel of many radical school-reform programs. The other is not.

Radical school reformers do not all take learners out of the frying pan and, with no thought of the fire outside, send them to get burned. Both those who advocate open classrooms and those in the free-school movement try to provide their learners with insulation so that the fire, even if it singes, will not burn. They do this by advocating practices and structures which have a dual function: they are intended to do away with the hidden curriculum of public schooling and at the same time to substitute for the attitudes and values of that hidden curriculum ones considered to be admirable. Thus, competition is to be replaced by cooperation while conformity is to be replaced by creativity and initiative. The attitudes

and values espoused by radical school reformers are openly acknowledged by some and embraced not so openly by others. But be they part of the curriculum proper of radical school reform or of its hidden curriculum, they are expected to take hold not just while the learner is in school and until graduation, but in nonschool settings too and for life. If any policy can successfully protect learners from the hidden curricula of the larger unreconstructed society, surely the policy of fostering learning states in conflict with those fostered by the larger society can.

It should be noted that some radical school reformers deplore this aspect of the reform movement. In their view, schools should get out of the business of forming attitudes and values altogether (see, e.g., Bereiter 1973, Katz 1971). It is not clear, however, that schools *can* get out of the business. Even schools whose functions are pared away and minimized through reform will have hidden curricula, hidden curricula which may or may not themselves be minimal so far as attitudes and values are concerned. I am afraid that those who condemn the hidden curriculum of public schooling today, yet want to preserve schools in some form or other without substituting better values and attitudes for the ones to be abolished, are being unrealistic. The question they should be asking of those who try to insulate learners from the fires outside is not whether the schools should do the insulating, but whether schools alone can do it. If the larger society remains as it is, will schools be allowed to foster values and attitudes counter to those of surrounding institutions? And if so, will these values and attitudes "take"; will they really provide the needed protection?

I do not know the answer to these questions, but I am pessimistic enough to want to consider one more thing that can be done with a hidden curriculum when we find it, something which although independent of the course of action just described is compatible with it and indeed could be used to buttress it. When we find a hidden curriculum, we can show it to those destined to be its recipients. Consciousness raising, if you will, with a view to counteracting the hidden curricula of settings we are not now in a position to change or abolish. Not that consciousness raising is any guarantee that a person will not succumb to a hidden curriculum. But still, one is in a better position to resist if one knows what is going on. Resistance to what one does not know is difficult, if not impossible.

The raising to consciousness of hidden curricula can proceed in many different ways. It can take place in informal rap sessions or formal seminars and can be aimed at those in a setting, those about to enter it, or those who once were in it. But whatever form it takes, it will consist in transforming the learning states of the hidden curriculum of a setting into the subject matter of a person's curriculum proper. I do not mean by this that the hidden curricula we find abhorrent are to be openly embraced. Quite the contrary. The point of raising a hidden curriculum to consciousness is not to *foster* but to *prevent* the acquisition of the learning states belonging to it. The method of prevention is to make these

learning states themselves the objects of new and very different learning states.

Most of us never stop to think that the settings we enter have hidden curricula, let alone what those hidden curricula might be. A program of consciousness raising would aim at such simple yet not at all obvious learning states as realizing that a given setting has a hidden curriculum, knowing what that hidden curriculum is, knowing which practices of the setting are responsible for the various learning states of its hidden curriculum, and understanding the significance of these learning states for one's own life and for the larger society. It would aim not only at making the hidden curriculum of a setting an object of a cognitive state such as these, but of skill states, too—for example, being able to spot a hidden curriculum, being able to recognize heretofore undiscovered sources, and knowing how to avoid the learning outcomes one does not want to acquire.

Having knowledge and skill concerning hidden curricula can be a form of self-defense against the onslaught of unasked-for learning states. But consciousness raising, as I understand it, aims at the acquisition of attitudes and values too. Certainly consciousness raising in the women's movement is not thought to be successful if a woman in coming to know the facts about sexist practices in modern society also comes to approve of them. Knowledge of hidden curricula will not provide a defense against them if those subject to hidden curricula do not *want* to resist.

To do its job, consciousness raising with respect to hidden curricula must tend to attitudes and values and feelings while imparting knowledge and skill. In this respect it resembles the program of those who want to substitute cooperativeness for competitiveness and creativity for conformity. But if it, too, is in the business of forming attitudes and values there is a difference, for in consciousness raising the attitudes and values acquired are, or at least are supposed to be, the result of a direct confrontation between learner and hidden curriculum: to see it is to despise it, to want to resist it, perhaps even to want to go out in the world and try to change it. The attitudes and values honored by radical school reformers have perhaps been chosen by them because of their own confrontation with a hidden curriculum, but the students who are to acquire them do not do so as a result of such confrontation.

The consciousness raising I am suggesting would seem to require a knowledge of the hidden curricula of nonschool settings which is not now available. Am I not then proposing a course of action for which we are not ready, one which would require an investment of funds and scholarly energy which is not likely to be forthcoming? Again, we must look to consciousness raising in the women's movement for our model. It has generated knowledge even while relying on it, for much if not all of the important research on women being done now is surely a direct result of it. I would expect the consciousness raising I am recommending to have a similar effect on our knowledge: that it would generate research into hidden curricula, research which in turn produced new sub-

ject matter for it. Thus, although knowledge of hidden curricula in nonschool settings is surely needed, consciousness raising can begin with the little we have, in the expectation that we will soon have more.

Lest there be any doubt, we do have some with which to begin—if nothing else, our own experiences in these settings. We may, however, have more knowledge now than we realize. Our knowledge of the hidden curricula of schools comes primarily from two sources: from those who have worked in schools and those who have done research on schools. To discover the hidden curricula of other institutions we must turn to those who study them: to medical sociologists and to sociologists of family, church, science, sports, and business. We must turn also to those who have taken or given management training courses at Gulf and those who have worked the switchboard at the telephone company. Perceptive practitioners are not the monopoly of schools. Hospitals, businesses, even city halls have their James Herndons and John Holts who see and record hidden curricula for us.

Who should conduct this consciousness raising? Insofar as schools send their students into nonschool settings to learn, one would hope that they would do their own consciousness raising: that medical schools would do it for prospective interns, social work schools for students doing fieldwork, education schools for practice teachers, and high schools for those sent out to learn on the job. One would hope that schools trying to abolish their own hidden curriculum while keeping students within their walls would conduct consciousness-raising sessions about the hidden curricula in the larger society, too. Schools that did this would, in effect, become centers for the critique of social institutions. I believe strongly that schools should serve this function, but perhaps only an optimist would think they could or would serve it as long as they remain public and society remains the way it is. Schools are not the only possible forum for consciousness raising with respect to hidden curricula, however. Victims of a given hidden curriculum can do it for themselves as women have done and Blacks have done.

As I have said, there is no guarantee that consciousness raising will insulate us successfully against learning states we do not want and should not acquire. Certainly we must not view it as a substitute for institutional and societal reform. Yet, as the women's movement has shown, knowledge about what has happened or is happening to one can have powerful effects. I would not count on a single individual whose consciousness had been raised in private, so to speak, to withstand the hidden curriculum of a setting in which he or she is put. But when knowledge is shared and there is strong peer support, consciousness raising may be the best weapon individuals who are subject to hidden curricula have.

NOTES

1. I have taken these labels from Vallance (1973/74, p. 6).
2. It is possible that some states of an individual have no object—for example, a generalized state of despair. Normally, however, the states that constitute

learning states will have objects, albeit very complex ones at times. Thus, although the state of being competitive may seem to have no object, an individual will in fact be competitive with respect to certain situations or types of situations, and those would constitute the object of the state.

3. It will be noted that I have characterized hidden curriculum as what happens (and curriculum proper as what is intended to happen), rather than as statements about what happens (or is intended to happen). Should the reader prefer the linguistic level—that is, a characterization of hidden curriculum as a set of statements about learning states rather than as the learning states themselves—the present account can readily be translated into it.

4. Vallance suggests as much (1973/74, p. 7).

5. As I have characterized hidden curriculum, the sources of the learning states of a hidden curriculum do not themselves belong to that curriculum. Should the reader prefer a broader characterization, one that includes the practices that produce the relevant learning states, the necessary adjustments in my formulation of the problem of finding hidden curricula can readily be made.

6. "Infants School," by Lillian Weber, is distributed by Education Development Center, Newton, Massachusetts.

7. It should be noted that learning outcomes unintended by us could all along have been intended by others, e.g., by those who hired us.

8. For purposes of this discussion I take the radical school-reform movement to include not just open-classroom advocates, free-school proponents, and those wanting to decentralize the control of schools, but also deschoolers and those who advocate minimal schooling.

9. I do not mean to suggest that all radical school reformers romanticize the world outside the schools. Illich does not. Nor does Allen Graubard (1972).

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