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## Two Book Reviews

**Abstract:** This issue of the *Education Policy Analysis Archives* comprises two book reviews: An essay review of [R. G. Brown \*Schools of Thought\*](#) by Craig Howley and Aimee Howley, and a review of [Ernest R. House, \*Professional Evaluation\*](#) by Kent P. Scribner.

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### Lower Literacies for Hire: How the Politics of Discourse Shapes *Schools of Thought*

A Review Essay of Rexford G. Brown's *Schools of Thought: How the Politics of Literacy Shape Thinking in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. 1991. \$28.95 (Hardcover) \$14.95 (Paperback)

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This is an ungenerous review of a very generous book, a book in which people concerned with the intellectual tenor of schooling will find much to approve. At the same time, the book will make sense to people who consider that the most important national project is international economic preeminence. Strange bedfellows, we think. Still, at the outset, we advise: Read this book.

*Schools of Thought* takes on a challenge rarely met, an interpretation of policy making from the vantage of, and really on behalf of, literate discourse in classrooms. The chief virtue of the exposition is the sort of literacy imagined, which Rexford Brown and his colleagues call a

"literacy of thoughtfulness." This is not a literacy of profitable skills, the certitude of facts, or the safety of truisms. Instead, it cultivates meaningfulness, attentiveness, and engagement in the human conversation as the entitlement of everyone.

Fundamental to this entitlement is a conception of social justice that derives from faith in human potential. For the sake of juridical fairness, however, American schooling has chained human potential to procedural due process (in this case procedures governing the provision of "equal opportunity"). Brown believes that human potential, realized through a true education, is at odds with the formal entitlements (and constraints) of procedure. Substantive fairness requires more than rear-guard policy action. It depends on faith in children's inherent curiosity, and it encompasses communities of learning, rich classroom environments, articulate teachers, work that makes sense, good questions, and plenty of talk about things that matter.

### **Entanglements of Policy and Practice in Schooling**

In *Schools of Thought* Rexford Brown interweaves two themes--both about the fate of "higher literacy" in US schools. One theme centers around the interactions of children and teachers in the culture of classrooms. It contrasts the sort of teaching and learning that take place in most classrooms in the United States with an alternative sort. The other theme concerns politics. Illustrating the ways that conventional politics orchestrated an "old" (and impoverished) literacy in basic skills, Brown calls for a more thoughtful politics to shape a new literacy.

The new literacy ... goes beyond mere reading and writing ability ... and beyond the current requirements for a high school diploma. It now includes capacities once demanded only of a privileged, college-bound elite: to think critically and creatively, solve problems, exercise judgment, and learn new skills and knowledge throughout a life time. (p. xii)

This worthy end can, according to Brown, be achieved through changes of a moderate degree and a manageable sort in the schools that we now know. What we need to do in order to create such "schools of thought" is to honor in discourse and in practice--both political and instructional--what Brown takes to be the fundamental premises of pedagogy: learning is active, literacy engages meaning.

Accomplishing this goal, however, requires that policy makers and educators act on the liberal rather than the authoritarian impulses implicit in our cultural ethos. Their political actions and professional practices must take root in "schools of thought" (pp. 239-240) that put faith in human potential and democratic participation. The alternative, based on the desire to "restrict our potential for evil" (p. 240), results in practices of schooling that Brown views as "wasteful," "prejudiced," and incapable of fitting in with the "economic and social realities" of the times (pp. 250-251, passim).

### **The Cultivation and Diffusion of a "Higher" Literacy in America**

The central thesis maintains that these liberal "schools of thought" lead to and come from certain habits of mind. Such habits, grounded in Enlightenment reason and encompassing the celebratory pluralism of the postmoderns, constitute a "higher literacy," which Brown tentatively defines in Chapter Two of the book and illustrates elsewhere.

He calls upon other commentators, with perspectives peppering an impromptu continuum from scientific realism to critical theory, to help elaborate a definition of "higher literacy." From their myriad views, Brown extracts two common features of what he terms "a literacy of thoughtfulness": it involves "a process of making meaning," and it requires negotiating meaning

with others (p. 35).

Much of the rest of the book spins contrasts between policies and practices that cultivate a literacy of thoughtfulness and those that do not. Important in these comparisons are the details of classroom discourse, which Brown and his research associates construe as direct representations of the sorts of learning that are taking place. For example, we are introduced to Ms. Bledsoe and other aficionados of the recitation method:

Ms. Bledsoe says, "This is to help us improve our written and oral what?" The class isn't sure, and so she says, "Speech, our written and oral speech" ... "What does a predicate adjective do?" she asks. (pp. 38-39) Ms. Burden asks, "What do you notice about Houdini and Boudini?" The students make some guesses, and finally one says, "The words sound alike," and she says, "Yes, they rhyme." She says, "Someone who does a trick is a ..." and the students all chime in at once: "Magician." When she gives directions, she says, "Do you have any questions?" The class replies in unison, "No, ma'am." (p. 17)

The author compares this type of discourse to the more rare, but clearly preferable, discourse of thoughtfulness, which asks students to draw inferences, pose and solve problems, examine ideas, and construct meaning from a variety of experiences. Thoughtful discourse places students at the center of the instructional process, eliciting from them performances that are relevant personally as well as culturally. According to Brown, educators know how to cultivate discourse of this sort:

There are no secrets here. If you want young people to think, you ask them hard questions and let them wrestle with the answers. If you want them to analyze something or interpret it or evaluate it, you ask them to do so and show them how to do it with increasing skill. If you want them to know how to approach interesting or difficult problems, you give them interesting or difficult problems and help them develop a conscious repertoire of problem-solving strategies. If you want them to think the way scientists or historians or mathematicians do, you show them how scientists and historians and mathematicians think, and you provide opportunities for them to practice and compare those ways of thinking. (p. 232)

This perspective recalls the faith of progressive educators. Instruction for a literacy of thoughtfulness must animate students, placing them in charge of their own learning:

Something about the way we teach literacy is betraying the very spirit of literacy: the power to make meaning ... The trick is simply to put children in charge of their own literacy, in charge of writing and telling and reading their own stories for their own purposes. Let them feel the power of it firsthand. (p. 90)

With the progressives, Brown imagines a broader context and purpose for the literacy of thoughtfulness. This context serves as the link between the events of classroom and public life. In this way the literacy of thoughtfulness inspires not just individual sense-making but also, and probably more importantly, the collective sense-making that undergirds a democracy. The connecting fiber is community; its method, dialogue; and the outcome, "schools of thought" that enable the sorts of policy making and leadership that "get good things done" (p. 249).

## **Policy and School Change**

*Schools of Thought* bears the subtitle "How the Politics of Literacy Shape Literacy in the

Classroom," suggesting several features of the author's approach to policy making. First, it advertises his reluctance to endorse the technocratic account of policy making: policy making that pretends to neutral expertise comes at a price too high for a nation that wishes to remain democratic.

Second, Brown represents the political realm as pluralistic ("politics" is plural). Various "schools of thought" engage in reasonable dialogue through democratic institutions. In this context, more careful thinking will surely improve policy making, and hence, schooling itself.

Third, and most clearly, Brown holds to the view that, however life in the modernist world forces itself into policies, what politics does (i.e., "make laws" [p. 58]) is extraordinarily influential in schools. Brown, in fact, uses the term "overdetermination" (p. 162) to highlight the extent of this influence.

How policy influences school practice. Policy makers design policies to influence matters directly: language stipulates thus-and-so, so be it, and so it is. Lyotard (1984/1979) refers to such speech as "performative," with the speech and the act coinciding by virtue of the speaker's authority. Nonetheless, laws, judgments, and executive orders of various sorts comprise very complicated communications. And it would be foolish to regard their pronouncement as causing the earth to move.

No; what policies do is exact performances from reality, over time, by establishing an ought-to-be. Performances determined to be out of step with such an ought- to-be are exhorted to change. Whatever the fate of particular policies, the fate of policy making depends on a public that believes that a certain kind of discourse-- policies--can produce improvement.

Brown's analysis focuses on the rhetorical force and limitations of policy making rather than on the power relationships that determine the substance of policy.

The language of legislative and board policy is everywhere the same ... [It] suggests ... a world in which people and things can be controlled and measured ... This is an extremely important way of thinking and talking about the world but it is not the only way. We do not talk to our children or our loved ones or our friends in this way; we do not talk about art in this way, or about history or literature. We do not discover or learn in this way. (p. 157)

Why, then, should policy making be necessary? The public nature of schooling is the circumstance that engenders the need for policy making:

Public schooling, precisely because it is a public responsibility, will always involve a conflict between the laws of the land (which create the institution) and the laws of learning (which are the core of the practice that the institution houses). (p. 148)

The contradictions of policy and learning emerge in this analysis with the force of metaphysical necessity.

Though Brown does not say that policy making causes what he and his colleagues observed so widely (a schooling to deaden the minds of children), policy language makes a clear appearance in classrooms. The author and his colleagues call this language "talkinbout," and they claim it dominates classroom discourse:

In most schools, the language of the classroom is primarily a language about the process of teaching something, it is not itself a language of learning. "Talkinbout" is ... an adult reconstruction after the fact of an experience that the student is not allowed to have firsthand. It is a rumor about learning. (p. 234)

Parents routinely observe the effects of talkinbout. They ask their child, "What happened in

school today?" And the child claims, "Nothing." A little probing will usually elicit some answer: "Well, tell me what you did in math today." The answer: "Chapter seven." Further query: "And what was chapter seven about?" Further answer: "I don't know--math, what do you think?"

Talkinbout is an evasion. It does not entail explication. It denies mystery. It starves, rather than feeds, curiosity. It dwells on the rules for completing "work," but the work itself is a kind of detritus sloughed off by children and teachers and, certainly, administrators in the process of showing up for endless (i.e., pointless) labors at school.

Despite the ubiquity of talkinbout, good teachers exist everywhere. But a good policy for school reform is much harder to find (p. 246). Brown is keenly aware that both the performative language of bad policy and the thinking it embodies ultimately wend their way into classroom discourse and thinking, thereby, with considerable irony, fostering thoughtless, bad practice.

How policy should influence practice. The alternative for Brown is to fashion policy that takes better account of the nature of learning. He suggests that the nature of learning is pretty much self-evident. Learning is individualistic, it happens in surprising ways, and attempts to regiment it inevitably end up frustrating it. Policies therefore need to create rich environments in which learning can thrive. A few more desiderata combine to create the conditions for success: community (cf. Sergiovanni, 1993), excellent leadership, and willpower (p. 251).

Brown finds the model of this rich environment facilitated by good policy in Canada. The penultimate chapter examines Ontario's policy and practice in considerable detail. It is as Chance the Gardener (Kosinski, 1970) avers: "All is well in the garden, so long as the roots are not severed." There, inquiry, whole-language learning, creativity, critical thinking skills, experiential learning, self-esteem, responsibility, multicultural respect, and care for the earth nourish a healthy pluralistic society. The book's appendices include excerpts from the relevant Ontario policies.

It does seem, to a US citizen, a bit too good to be true. The impression is not dispelled, as Brown provides no compelling explanation for how the prevailing ethos in Ontario has yielded such a feat. Leadership, willpower, and community do not seem sufficient.

### **Severed Roots, Depleted Soil**

It is a mistake to suppose, as Brown seems to, that policy making and politics--whether partisan politicking, political philosophizing, or the actual organization of society--are nearly identical. In particular, Brown's analysis ignores the possibility that either the political economy or the cultural ethos may operate so as to determine both educational policy and practice, good and bad. In this case, the concordance of policy and common, thoughtless practice would be not so much a story of communicative blundering but of clear translation of political will in the things that are done and the motives for doing them.

There is less doubt than ever about what such things and such motives may be. For a full decade we have heard about international risks to US business, the security interest represented by "competitiveness," and the importance of being Number One. We have national goals that enthrone mathematics and science over other ways of knowing--and the reason lies not in their intellectual worthiness but in their presumed value to profit-making. These rumors of value represent a material reality; they are not just rhetorical errors.

And yet, this is the ideological climate in which Brown suggests that failure to cultivate a literacy of thoughtfulness is an oversight that leadership, willpower, community, and good policy will remedy. Unfortunately, the American polity does not provide a soil well suited to such a venture (which is, perhaps, why social justice in general fares better north of the border).

In the classic vision of the American polity, the intention of policy (executive order, statutory and case law, and a vast opus of bureaucratia, existing at all corporate levels, public and private) is to restrain harmful action. Ample profit requires this vision, and so we play the golden

rule close to the chest: Don't undo your competitor in ways that you don't want to be undone yourself. (The spiritual version is: Avoid the appearance of evil.)

The idea that we might nurture public institutions for a positive public good, though often asserted in theory and mainly by academics (cf. Bateson, 1989), gets an inhospitable reception in the US. It is considered unworkable, philosophically and spiritually unwise. If humans possess an evil nature, after all, avoiding the appearance of evil is about as much as we can reasonably expect. There is no reason, under this regimen, to expect that we can convince powerful interests to ask for a literacy of thoughtfulness. Better to harness greed.

Herein is the dilemma of public education, not in the vagaries of how, when, and why policy is made, nor in the words of which it may consist. Public schooling serves as an inoculation against public disorder. As Brown notes, schooling's chief virtues consist of uniformity and efficiency. Even the "thinking-skills curriculum" represents to students a reality quite different from one they encounter when engaged by "more thoughtful instruction." Thinking- skills instruction is founded on the national interest curriculum, so that certain views of history, society, the arts, religion, and human aspiration must prevail. The values that inhere are definitely not those of the "pluralistic society" that Canadians seem willing to hazard.

Brown appears not to appreciate the significance of the unremitting instrumentality of the aims to which Americans aspire in their schooling. Even when corporate entities (public or private) bless a school system with ample resources, devotion to an instrumental vision will necessarily frustrate the development of a literacy of thoughtfulness. Brown seems oblivious to this essential contradiction. Yet this contradiction confounds an optimistic reading of educational policy making.

### **The Sky Above and the Mud Below**

Although *Schools of Thought* takes a generous view of policy making and the American political economy, it is less forgiving of actual teachers. One is not always sure what to make of the narrations about teachers. For instance, Ms. Francis, the excellent teacher in the troubled urban district of Chapter Four, is presented in a such a way that many readers are sure to overlook her virtues. The African- American educators in the very poor "Daviston" district (in Chapter Two) come off even worse; somehow, perhaps in the oblivion of their nature, they have embraced an outdated, snowflake curriculum.

Brown's propensity to forgive policy making, while at the same time faulting individual teachers, may represent a kind of epistemic sleight of hand. We think this shortcoming proceeds from two features of the argument-- its unwitting position on human nature and its intentional optimism.

Brown examines in great detail the conditions of thoughtless education and misguided policy making, but he is reluctant to acknowledge a material reality that would explain these conditions. Despite his progressive rhetoric to the contrary, this reluctance inevitably devolves to the view that human beings possess an immutable nature in which evil lurks, awaiting the moment for havoc. This evil need not be beastly, just stupid. Brown has no choice: He must conclude that individual teachers, administrators, and policy makers-- most of them thoughtless--are personally responsible for current conditions.

This conclusion would, of course, prove troublesome to his argument if it were brought to the surface, since Brown is counting on these very individuals to effect change. But if it is human nature to languish in stupor, then to cultivate a literacy of thoughtfulness must surely be a mission of arduous, perhaps impossible, redemption. Yet Brown assures us it is a simple matter.

And herein lies his optimism, which is clearly asserted in the last chapter: "We know how to develop a literacy of thoughtfulness" (p. 232). This assertion presents difficulties even to the faithful (among whom we would count ourselves). What "know-how" pertains? Which of us

possesses it? And where does it come from?

In fact, the policies, practices, and kinds of research that prevail stand as contradictions to the assertion. Though *Schools of Thought* demonstrates well the connection between policy making and practice, it could just as easily demonstrate a similar relationship between research and policy making. There is no basis to believe that each discourse has a direct or invariable effect on the other. As a result, the "know-how" of a thoughtful literacy might be tangential to its practice. More pointedly, it is unclear where or how such know-how might arise in isolation from its routine practice. How to develop, widely, a literacy of thoughtfulness remains an open question.

But prevailing opinion about such a literacy is well known: Americans have never thought it wise or feasible. If we are beginning to find it expedient, then a literacy of thoughtfulness is in trouble. It is troublesome indeed that some people and some entities, having discovered an economic value in problem-solving and creativity skills, now affirm the value of a "higher" literacy as a feature of schooling, when they did not previously.

All higher literacies are not created equal, as *Schools of Thought* makes very clear; and a literacy of thoughtfulness cannot be designed to serve instrumental ends. Such a teleology destroys thoughtfulness, principally by putting off-limits certain objects of critique. If instruction disrespects the mind and its power of free self-development and elaboration, it will not constitute a literacy of thoughtfulness. Instead we will have computer literacy, information literacy, and creativity literacy--a proliferation of lower literacies that may elevate the language of "talkinbout" to new heights but must inevitably detour meaning.

## **Bait and Switch**

Nevertheless, the book sabotages its own argument by tolerating an instrumental teleology. This is indeed a flaw, and one fatal to the book's credibility. If the solution to a mindless system of education is a thoughtfulness engendered by community, then such a solution cannot come to us ready-made. Either we have a democracy that chooses the premises on which it constructs nationhood (and education for participation in that nationhood) or we have something other than a democracy that responds predictably to the vicissitudes of a world economy. We simply cannot mix and match. Yet, Brown's argument suggests we do just that, taking the agenda of business (i.e., an instrumental literacy of problem-solving) and using it to cultivate a thoughtful literacy that promotes the democratic ideal.

We suspect, however, that Brown's error was formal, not substantive. He seems to have made the unfortunate choice to subordinate the logic of his argument to a compelling rhetoric. After all, his goal was to do something other than preach to the choir. Yet the rhetorical device he used--bait and switch--was particularly discordant in a book whose ostensible message was the developmental import (in both a personal and social sense) of thoughtful dialogue. Bait and switch is just not thoughtful discourse. Rather, it imposes a social epistemology of "thinkinbout" that bypasses the heart of the matter in much the same way that "talkinbout" obscures what is essential about learning.

## **Ethnography as Rhetoric**

In the end, Brown's discourse of "thinkinbout" affronts the reader in ways that belie his central thesis. This is a book that not only shelters the reader (and itself) from the critique that it ought to be making but one that uses language to misrepresent its purposes. Just when we come to the conclusion that we are about to encounter the results of an ethnographic study, we find ourselves face to face with the interpretive comments of one of the researchers. What can we make of the claim that the study summarizes findings from 650 hours of interviews and

observations when we are presented with a teacher who is "very dapper and intelligent" (p. 45) and a principal who is "always on the prowl"? (p. 79). How can we evaluate an argument, like the one below, that pits kindergarten children against policy makers?

While the state tries to reform schooling by imposing new mandates, the kindergarten people aim to reform schooling from within. They envision children so empowered by their early education experiences that they will not tolerate minimum-focused instruction in the later grades. This is an interesting idea. Which side will win--the basic-skills curriculum, or the kids who have already gone beyond it at an early age and will not settle for the old routine? (p. 11)

In the gap between rhetoric and ethnography this book loses both its explanatory power and its force of conviction. Stories that compare what is with what ought to be usually compel passion, but not this one. Here, in an inoffensive telling, the loyal opposition provides demurrals and commentary; we are told that these will suffice. As sympathetic readers we have few options. Either we abandon our own critical sensibilities and swallow what Brown tells us, or we dismiss his thesis along with his antics.

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**Review of Ernest R. House**  
***Professional Evaluation:***  
***Social Impact and Political Consequences***

Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1993 \$24.95

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Evaluation has evolved from part-time work for college professors to a full fledged profession. The 3,000 member American Evaluation Association sees formal program evaluation playing a central role in policy making in the future. Ernest R. House, Professor of Education at

the University of Colorado-Boulder, in *Professional Evaluation: Social Impact and Political Consequences*, tackles the complex contextual and philosophical issues that promise to shape the future of the field.

In the opinion of some, evaluation is an idealized problem-solving sequence. Evaluators are expected, according to this view, to a) identify a problem, b) generate and implement alternatives, c) evaluate these alternatives, and d) adopt those results that promise a solution, or at least amelioration of the problem (Shadish, Cook and Leviton 1991). Although evaluation is often characterized by such academic or even scientific roots, it has evolved, in the past thirty years, from a purely academic pursuit into a field with many of the trappings that attend other professions (Austin, 1981). Not fully professionalized, evaluation operates with many economic and social constraints characteristic of professions such as law and medicine.

It is this characterization of evaluation as a science with its consequent prescriptions for social problem solving with which House takes issue. Evaluators attempt to find definitive solutions, or to solve social problems through the practical application of scientific or quasi-scientific techniques have been a disappointment, according to House. House offers evaluators a different aspiration. "At its best, the evaluation of educational and social programs aspires to be an institution for democratizing public decisions by making programs and policies more open to public scrutiny and deliberation" (p.1).

Prior to 1965, evaluation was a sideline activity engaged in by academics as extra-mural consulting (p.15). With the Great Society education legislation (ESEA 1965), mandated evaluations were required of most government funded programs, and formal evaluation as a profession was launched. The form of evaluation mechanisms changed dramatically since 1965. In theory, though not necessarily in practice, evaluations have moved toward "multiple methods, criteria, measures, perspectives, audiences, and interests" (p. vii). As the need for evaluation grows, so does the notion of evaluation itself.

Today, evaluation, broadly defined, stretches from internal evaluation offices in large bureaucracies to special evaluators hired and attached to a program. Evaluation has, in fact, become an integrated part of everyday life in large organizations. The rapid growth of the field forced early evaluators to confront the many structural and contextual dilemmas embedded in their work.

House's assertion that it is impossible for evaluation to escape the divergent value systems at work in any organization is widely held by later stage evaluation theorists. He favors generating evaluation questions and issues of interest by actively engaging the program's stakeholders. House rejects the notion that evaluations are commissioned by purely rational interests and carried out by an impartial third party. He holds that evaluation can be neither value free nor devoid of political effects. Instead, it is argued, evaluation is a function of the context in which it exists. Evaluation does not stand above politics, judging with impartial objectivity; it is a part of politics itself. In this light, House's argument that developments in evaluation coincide with the development of advanced capitalism becomes quite intriguing.

House argues that advanced capitalism has broken down the major traditional institutions of society : the church, the family, and the local community. These traditional frameworks, which have historically served as the basis for personal and public decisions, have become weakened. Hence, in place of the legitimating power previously afforded by such traditional institutions, society at large has looked to the profession of evaluation, with its aura of scientific authority, to legitimate and inform government actions. A pluralistic and non-traditional populace seeks the legitimation of actions that can no longer be judged by reference to common religious beliefs or shared values. Formal evaluation then, is a new form of cultural authority, providing "objectivity" to decisions. Decisions arising from evaluations are believed to be based upon scientific or scholarly authority (p. 19). Governments, in turn, legitimize an evaluation by designating it "official."

Providing legitimacy to a system of power enhances the system's order, stability and continuity. According to House, maintenance of the system is evaluation's fundamental role. As House put it, "Although governments are capable of making decisions based on their own political authority, justified by elections and backed by force of arms, it is much easier to govern through voluntary acceptance of the populace attained by persuasion" (p.18). Evaluation then, provides widespread demonstrations of governmental impartiality and fairness in adjudicating competing interests.

*Professional Evaluation: Social Impact and Political Consequences* provides the reader with considerable historical and contextual background of the field. Chapter One, "Trends," outlines structural and conceptual changes in the field. Chapter Two examines "Evaluation as an Institution and Profession." In Chapter Three, House describes the relationship between "Government and Evaluation." In Chapters Four and Five, House provides a working example of evaluation in higher education in which he addresses higher education accountability, strengths and weaknesses of program reviews, and public accountability. House then examines "Evaluation as a Discipline," the authority structure of disciplines, disciplinary change, and evaluation as a possible "transdiscipline."

House continues by acknowledging the supportive relationship with the social sciences enjoyed by evaluation in the United States. He describes how evaluation has had the institutional support, ideas, and research methods provided by the U.S. social sciences and has incorporated their strongest, healthiest qualities as well. "U.S. evaluation would not be nearly as effective and powerful as it is without its social science foundation" (p.113).

In Chapters Seven and Eight, House examines the inescapable interaction between "Social Justice" and "Methodology." House, a leader in issues of social justice within the field of evaluation, asserts that "No problem is more difficult and complex than that of how values are embedded within the research methodologies that we employ" (p.127). The importance of these issues is reinforced in Chapter Nine where House examines the difficulties in conducting "Evaluations in Multicultural Societies." House discusses the interplay between nationalism and ethnicity, minority rights and stakeholder evaluation in terms of the liberal democracy in which we live. He identifies the liberal multicultural ideal as a balance between respect for different cultural identities and for the common bond that makes them a society (p.151).

Finally, House provides the reader his interpretation of "Professional Ethics" in evaluation. The most alarming ethical fallacies, according to House, are those of ". . . clientism (overwillingness to please the client), contractualism (following the written contract absolutely, whatever the situation), managerialism (taking managers of programs as the sole beneficiaries of the evaluation), methodologicalism (in which following acceptable research methods is believed to be sufficient for ethical performance), relativism (the collection of data from participants in the study and acceptance of everyone's opinions equally) and pluralism/elitism (presentation, in the study, of opinions and values of participants in some unspecified way)" (p.168). In general, House takes issue with evaluations which fail to adopt a democratic stance. He emphasizes that evaluations must solicit the "... opinions and criteria of those not powerful and make sure that these are included as well" (p.170). House views the inclusion of the interests of all as the evaluator's most fundamental ethical obligation.

House provides the reader with a rich study of the evolution of the field and the governmental and economic structures which promise to shape its future. Evaluation itself is described as a powerful social force with great potential for influence. House warns that society before evaluation is not the same as society afterward. He contends that frequently many relevant interests are not represented in an evaluation. It is this, "... frequent disregard for the public interest," which leads House to conclude that a program evaluation gone awry is worse than no evaluation at all (p.171).

House introduces the book with a sort of executive summary of the major points which he

later explores in detail. In a field awash with opaque and flaccid prose, House consistently produces the most limpid exposition to be found. He illustrates many of the major points of his work by drawing on his broad experience. While some may argue that House overstates the importance of the social and political context in which evaluation takes place in his arguments, others, this reviewer among them, will applaud his ability as a practitioner and theorist to construct a rich and convincing intellectual history of the emerging profession of evaluation.

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