

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROMISE AND THE CHALLENGE: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

#### The Promise

Man is like the "tip of an ever-ascending arrow", a tiny scion within which the universe has become conscious of itself -- the only repository of cosmic self-awareness. This self-awareness places man in charge of his own destiny and has thrust upon him a new job: "managing director of the biggest business of all, the business of evolution" (Huxley, 1960, p. 13).

What the job really boils down to is this -- the fullest realization of man's possibilities, whether by the community, or by the species in its processional adventure along the corridors of time. . . .the first thing that the human species has to do to prepare itself for the cosmic office to which it finds itself appointed is to explore human nature, to find out what are the possibilities open to it. . . (ibid, p. 14).

A new vision inspires creative advance when it generates a penetrating sense of destiny that leads into an active exploration of those possibilities and impels the search for a new way. The new way, created and illumined by the new vision, must, however, be trod with practical feet and there is nothing so practical as a good theory, for it makes clear the vision which gives birth to it. The Anisa Model rests upon that vision and that theory; it constitutes a translation of both into practical educational concerns. From an intensive exploration of "human nature, to find out

what are the possibilities open to it," a blueprint for an educational system designed to bring forth those possibilities in the lives of children has emerged.

The new vision affirms the spiritual nature of man and thus provides a principle around which a vast amount of research about how human beings grow and develop may be integrated.<sup>1</sup> Once integrated, research findings can be translated into educational practice and used to achieve learning competence -- the power to extend and create potentiality while perpetually actualizing it. The model provides for the continual translation of research findings into practice; it is a primary source of fresh blood for the educational system and constitutes a main pillar in the institutionalization of self-renewal. Gardner (1965) *outlines the* prerequisites of institutional and societal self-renewal; they are remarkably similar to the definition of learning competence writ large. Self-renewal is to an educational system what learning competence is to an individual. Thus, one of the most promising features of this model is that its structure guarantees its own continual development of insitutional potentiality, thereby keeping alive in the way it functions a constant awareness of its purpose: releasing the potentialities of the child.

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the means by which this vision can make education into more of a science, see Jordan, Daniel C. Putting the pieces together: making education into a science. in Hecht, J. (Ed.) Controversies in Education. W. B. Saunders, 1973 (in press).

### The Challenge

A claim of great promise is justified when it generates a reasonable ground for hope or expectation in successfully dealing with major obstacles and challenges. The new educational system we propose addresses the major challenges facing education; the power of its theory to do so constitutes the grounds for hope. Two monumental problems face the education professions: improving the quality of education in general and equalizing educational opportunity. We have already presented a description of the Anisa Model as an answer to the first problem.

The second problem has deeper roots, historical and cultural. Coleman (1970, p. 13) has examined some of these roots:

In the United States, nearly from the beginning, the concept of educational opportunity had a special meaning which focused on equality. This meaning included the following elements:

1. Providing a free education up to a given level which constituted the principle entry point into the labor force.
2. Providing a common curriculum for all children, regardless of background.
3. Partly by design and partly because of low population density, providing that children from diverse backgrounds attend the same school.
4. Providing equality within a given locality, since local taxes provided a source of support for schools.

This notion of equality of educational opportunity is fraught with a number of unwarranted assumptions which have led to practices that have guaranteed a functional inequality of opportunity. The most obviously erroneous assumption is that equality of opportunity lies in exposure

to the same curriculum. Because of the differences in their backgrounds children are not equally prepared to make sense out of and benefit from that exposure. It will be easy for a few, manageable by some, and will guarantee the failure of others -- even if all have the same degree of genetically determined intelligence. Furthermore, several courts have now ruled that relying on a local tax base to support local schools is not constitutional because it guarantees inequality of opportunity. But the problem is much larger than this. It is related to issues of ignorance, discrimination, and injustice which affect the entire society (Howe, 1970). While the answer to that problem can hardly be resolved by education alone, any educational system contemplated for the future must include active provisions for intervening in the transmission of prejudice from one generation to the next.

We hold that racism is the most endemic suppressor of human potential in our society. The suppression takes many forms. First, discrimination limits development because it restricts opportunities for interacting with diverse environments and blocks access to resources required to meet developmental needs. This is true for the one who is discriminating as well as for the one who is discriminated against. Second, injustice and discrimination are distorters of truth. Institutions or individuals who are racist always give dishonest and therefore erroneous feedback to those against whom they hold prejudicial views. This distorted feedback exerts a deleterious effect on the formation of functional self-images on identities of both those who give the distorted feedback and

those who receive it. Our view of our own selves -- our attitudes and values which constitute our identity -- comes largely from the feedback we get from other human beings about ourselves and about our performance. Erroneous feedback always creates dysfunctional identities.

If the feedback about oneself is a gross under-assessment, both striving and competence may be increased, but confidence will be missing. If there is no confidence, there is little venturing into new situations; awareness of opportunity is dulled and there is a hesitancy and disinclination to pursue opportunities even when they become known or are available. Since moving into new opportunities is fundamental to the release of potential, this kind of distorted feedback is a suppressor. Accurate feedback, on the other hand, enables one to develop a degree of confidence that matches his competence; it provides him with accurate self-knowledge. This is the foundation of responsibility, for such a person won't take on responsibilities which are beyond him without telling others of his assessment of his own capacities in regard to the specific responsibilities. This is a mark of moral competence; it always attracts support and opens up opportunities for future development. Having opportunities restricted not only limits the variety of stimulation available, it also suppresses potential because it causes one to develop a different view of the future. In fact, one could say, no opportunities, no future. When there is a truncated sense of future, there will be an absence of long-range goals. If there are no goals, there will be reduced motivation to undertake new experiences or to persevere through obstacles, both of which help to release potentiality. Furthermore, if there is no future

one has to live in the immediate present, thereby precluding any framework for gaining a sense of direction. The basic criteria for decision-making and behavior will simply be an impulsive movement in the direction of pleasure and an inclination to avoid all pain or displeasure. This will mean that practically no energy will be invested into the pursuit of activities which develop further potentialities.

Distorting feedback in the opposite direction by saying that performance, attitudes, and behavior in general come up to a given standard or are acceptable when in fact they aren't eventually leads to a false sense of effectance. The recipient of this kind of feedback comes to feel confident even though he is incompetent. Providing this kind of feedback is an inverted form of racism which is now seen in many educational institutions and to a lesser extent in industry. Ultimately, the work-a-day world has a hard-nosed reality about it, and such a person who feels himself to be competent when in fact he isn't will be forced to confront the incongruity. Initially, he will feel impelled to consider those who give him more realistic and honest feedback as racists. Paranoia almost always follows in the wake of a false sense of competence; it inevitably directs the attention of its victims away from the real issues and this, in turn, inhibits the release of potential. Paranoia is a dysfunctional perceptual set that decreases effectance because it reduces the person's ability to face the realities in his social relations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Paranoia is a delusion of persecution. In a racist society, victims of discrimination are not deluded that they are being persecuted; they are. However, under such circumstances, it is so difficult not to believe that every negative assessment is discriminatory when in fact it may not be.

Establishing equal educational opportunities necessitates not only avoiding all of those suppressive consequences of racism as outlined above, but it also requires the individualization of instruction in the fullest sense of that word as discussed in Chapter II. Learning experiences cannot be properly individualized if activities and learning tasks do not "connect" with the child's developmental level in terms of his cultural heritage thereby building on the strength of his past. Culture is a fundamental educator of all men everywhere. It prescribes a way of thinking, feeling, and acting; it places limits on the manner with which we interact with the environment. Although we may be able to demonstrate that some cultures may not prepare the people who grow up in them to do certain things, we must be careful to avoid confusing cultural differences with cultural inferiority or deprivation (Baratz & Baratz, 1970). All cultures provide a viable means of interacting with, and surviving in, a given ecological niche. No child is ever deprived of a culture.<sup>1</sup> However, a culture which provides adaptation and viability for a person growing up in one ecological niche will not necessarily prepare him for survival when he is transferred to a different ecological niche. Thus, when a child reared in one cultural setting tries to enter a school system which is predicated upon another culture, he is likely to be at a disadvantage. In the first instance, he will have the burden

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<sup>1</sup>For a well-developed perspective on this issue, see The Myth of the Deprived Child, by Herbert Ginsburg, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

of making adjustments with practically no help from the system. Secondly, he will almost always be disadvantaged in a system where evaluation is based upon his comparative performance with members indigenous to the cultural setting on which the system is based. He will necessarily deviate from the norm and then is very likely to be punished for his deviation from the norm, though there is nothing he can do about it. In other words, when the school system fails to create learning experiences that matches the child's culturally determined internal schemata (to use a Piagetian term) the system sets the child up for a guaranteed failure. This, of course, is bad enough; but adding injury to upset, the system then proceeds to make the child feel responsible for his own failure. Being made to feel responsible for failure when there is nothing the child can do about it destroys the child's identity as a competent learner. The prospects for gaining a sense of effectance within the formal learning situation are thus wiped out. Motivation evaporates; so-called learning disabilities appear. Such a child inevitably becomes a "discipline problem". The discipline he will get, however, rarely helps him and it usually functions as a final link in a vicious cycle of perpetual failure in school. To fail in school in Western society virtually guarantees reduced access to employment, status and prestige; it means fewer opportunities for responsible action as a citizen and an income level hardly suitable for maintaining a stable home within which children can have their needs met. The vicious cycle of racism not only operates in the lives of individuals;



it is also institutionalized. Schools help to maintain it, business and industry control it, the judicial system protects it, and welfare finances it.

It is important to note here a distinction between culture and race. A person of any race can assimilate any culture, any set of values, any language. Race has only one scientific meaning and that is a biological one. It refers to a subdivision of a given species, members of which inherit physical characteristics which tend to distinguish the subdivision from other populations of the same species. Any trait or number of traits that are physically inherited may be used to classify human beings into races. We begin to understand what Ashley Montagu meant by the "myth of race" when we realize that groups will differ depending upon what trait or traits are adopted as criteria for categorization. For instance, if human beings are grouped according to blood type, people of every skin color will belong to each type. Conversely, if persons are grouped according to skin color, all four blood types will occur within any given grouping. The point is that different physical traits are relatively independent of one another in their distributions in a given population. We have no evidence whatever that the genes for skin color are also the genes which are associated with the inherited aspects of intelligence. To presume this when there is no evidence for it is racist.

Thus, it is to variations in culture we must look if we are to find explanations for variations in performances on I.Q. tests rather than to variations in race as defined by skin color. Because the model is

based on process rather than content and emphasizes the developmental universals of man as a species, it is relatively free conceptually from built-in cultural biases which mitigate against equal educational opportunity and which have a depressive effect on I.Q. scores. In other words, the same processes can be strengthened, no matter what the cultural background of the child, using content which matches his cultural background. If, for instance, an exercise to strengthen the process of making an inference is desired, examples, materials, and activities used to strengthen the process can all be drawn from the child's own cultural background no matter what that background might be.

The focus on process and the attainment of learning competence forces a redefinition of compensatory education that sweeps away the foundations of the Jensen controversy (Jensen, 1969). All cultures and all environments are not equal in their power to develop or release human potential. No child is born into a perfect environment with whom his interaction will be guided by a perfect culture thereby causing his genetic potentiality to become fully expressed. In other words, everyone will miss some sensitive periods or perhaps a critical period, will have experiential opportunities come to him at the wrong times, and must undergo various kinds of setbacks or obstacles: anxieties, too permissive parents, overprotective mothers -- the list could be extended indefinitely. Whatever any child seems to have missed by way of experience which he needs to strengthen a basic process germane to learning competence, the educational system should identify and

provide the experience for him thereby "compensating" for what he missed. If, for instance, a child grows up in an environment where the vocabulary he hears is very limited, then he will need experiences which will compensate for that particular deficiency. To take another example, there are vast numbers of children growing up in middle-class white suburbs under affluent circumstances, all of whom share a similar culture which gives them a view of man that is materialistic rather than spiritual. This view, as we have already pointed out, is a suppressant of human potential. Millions of children are growing up believing that to be loved and wanted and have happy marriages, they must be of a certain shape and size, use a certain hairspray, a certain mouthwash, specific deodorants, and a variety of cosmetics. To judge the worth of a human being on the basis of such externals as clothing, cosmetics, and deodorants is to distract millions from what is the true basis of human attractiveness and lovability, namely, courtesy, kindness, helpfulness -- in essence, all of those things which make a character beautiful, few of which are dependent upon all of those externals which Madison Avenue techniques of advertising have brainwashed a society into believing are the prerequisites to a happy and productive life. Children who come out of such environments and cultures are disadvantaged. Not only have they been immersed in a materialist philosophy, but many of them have been spoiled by affluence on the one hand and neglected by their parents on the other. They are in need of some kind of compensatory assistance. They need to be freed from wasting precious energies which are invested in trivia and superficialities. Such an investment functions as a suppressant of potential

because it leads to specific kinds of interactions with specific kinds of environments in ways that do not create effectance. The problem with the Jensen studies is that they do not distinguish adequately between environment and culture. We have no adequate means of measuring environment; we certainly have no way of measuring culture. Yet, it is culture which is a chief determinant of how we interact with whatever environment we happen to be in. One can only secure evidence on the effects of inheritance where intelligence is concerned if both environment (including the social environment) and culture can be controlled and the instruments used to measure intelligence are free from cultural biases. While culture is totally independent from skin color and there is no way that the assumption can be made, in any given study, that culture is automatically controlled just because skin color is controlled, in a society where there is a caste system based on skin color, all members forced into a caste will have a different culture, precisely because many experiences and opportunities will be closed to them. Performance on I.Q. tests depends upon experience. We should therefore expect discrimination, which restricts experience, to have an effect on intelligence as measured by I.Q. tests, particularly when these tests are standardized on the basis of performance of persons free from the effects of discrimination. Low performance on the part of those discriminated against is then cited as justification for the discrimination and the insidious, morally repugnant cycle is complete. But low performance on culturally biased tests on the part of persons whose

opportunities are limited for acquiring the information needed to perform well can in no way be considered evidence for inferior genetic endowment. This is not denying the heritability of intelligence as a trait; it is just that we have no evidence that the genes which determine pigmentation of the skin have anything to do with the genes which determine intelligence.

We do not classify people into races using blood type (an inherited trait) as a criterion for the simple reason that we would have to give everyone a blood test before we would know whom we should discriminate against. We may presume that the genes which determine blood type are independent from the genes which determine intelligence. We would therefore expect no correlation between I.Q. and blood type. There is no way of institutionalizing racism if blood type is a criterion for classifying people into races unless we require those with certain blood types to wear an external identifying mark of some kind. Were we to do that and institutionalize discrimination against those who were forced to wear a certain external marking which revealed a particular blood type, we very shortly would get correlations between low I.Q. and that blood type because of environmental and cultural influences which are limiting opportunity, restricting environments, and reducing effectiveness for those with that blood type. It would then be very easy for many to believe that people who have that blood type are inferior.

Insubstantial research has been carried out on the effects prejudice has on the prejudiced person himself, but it is clear that he is a victim largely of his own creation. We define prejudice as an emotional

commitment to a belief which is erroneous. It is error built into attitudes and values. When the commitment is to an erroneous belief about other people because of inherited physical characteristics, it is racial prejudice. In terms of our general theory of development, it follows that any emotional commitment to a falsehood or error decreases effectance. When a human being tries to relate to his social environment in ways that are based upon a distortion of reality, effectance is reduced and potentiality is suppressed. To be prejudiced where other human beings are concerned is to be morally incompetent. Another consequence of prejudice is avoiding all persons who belong to a given category or categories. This automatically has the effect of reducing the diversity of human beings with whom one will come in contact. To reduce the diversity of human beings among one's associates results in a restricted social environment, and, as we have previously pointed out, any restriction on the richness or diversity of stimuli functions as a suppressant of human potential. In addition, prejudice expressed covertly frequently serves to boost an insecure or shaky identity by designating somebody as "inferior" and therefore deserving of prejudicial treatment. If the overt prejudicial behavior is not checked by social institutions or other responsible agencies or adults, the person will never be called upon to acquire self-knowledge about this distortion and very likely will do nothing about it. Being kept in ignorance of oneself is a kind of deprivation. It is the plight of the bigot who is ignorant of his own ignorance and therefore has little hope of ever knowing himself as he really is so that some conscious effort can be made to examine the error in his behalf and begin alteration of his attitudes and values.

The Anisa Model takes a stand with regard to its definition of moral competence and asserts that fundamental to moral competence is the acceptance of the oneness of mankind. This means that no group of people can be regarded superior or inferior on the basis of inherited physical traits. One of the criteria for staff selection is relative freedom from racist attitudes. Furthermore, the training program for staff includes a thorough immersion in a study of the manifestations of prejudice and racism and the ways in which they are suppressive of human potential. Because of the model's emphasis on diversity and richness of environment, it follows that the school must include as many different kinds of children in terms of racial and cultural background as is possible. The same is true of the staff. Since a great deal of learning in the moral area comes about through modelling, it is essential that staff members be free from every taint of racial prejudice and that all materials and experiences respect and preserve cultural diversity. Finally, an educational system based upon the philosophy we propose cannot function simply as the transmitter of a culture which will maintain the status quo. It reconceptualizes an educational system as the locus of cultural modification and refinement where tradition is perpetually re-examined and innovations which will insure the perpetual development of man are introduced. Thus, both its structure and function serve a philosophy which precludes its toleration or transmission of values based on erroneous beliefs about man. That the model does address itself to the major issues facing the education professions at this juncture in history is reasonable grounds for hope--a promise of substantial dimensions.

## Prospects

"Ripeness," Mumford says, "is the condition for any organic transformation." The events of the 1960s were evidences of a ripeness--a readiness for doing something actively to remove the major suppressants of human potential, racism and poverty. A whole nation was outraged and a Congress moved to do something about education to make it more responsive to the needs of individual children. And in the aftermath of our haste, we have also come to realize that there are no quick answers, that careful planning is absolutely essential and that a "shot-in-the-arm" approach has little or no effect. But if ripeness is not followed by transformation it is followed by decay. We must therefore understand the requisites of the transformation we are seeking:

Every transformation of man except that perhaps which produced neolithic culture, has rested on a new metaphysical and ideological base; or rather, upon deeper stirrings and intuitions whose rationalized expression takes the form of a new picture of the cosmos and the nature of man (Mumford, 1962, p. 171).

To effect a new transformation of man, we must be informed by a philosophy capable of uniting every aspect of human experience, and directing human development through every phase (Ibid, 1962, p. 171).

If life, in its fullness and wholeness, is to furnish our criterion for all development, then our philosophy must respect the main attributes of life, balance and growth, freedom and choice, persistence and variation, adaptation and insurgence, above all, the tendency to self-actualization and self-transcendence (Ibid., p. 174).

Artists, philosophers, scientists, and religious leaders have come to loath the futility of man's struggling against himself and have begun to speculate on his nature and purpose and where he fits into the cosmos. Even the materialistic metaphysic which was predominant until the middle of the nineteenth century began to erode (Murphy, 1958, p. ).



The modern presuppositions of science which were to bear fruit in the great speculative triumphs of the twentieth century took shape gradually with the stepwise abandonment of feature after feature of this materialistic and mechanical picture (Polanyi, 1964, p. 86).

But not only has science begun to abandon its old metaphysic, it has come to recognize that the cosmic hunger of man to find his niche in the universe is a hunger that motivates both science and religion, both of which need each other.

. . . Even though the realms of religion and science in themselves are clearly marked off from each other, nevertheless there exists between the two, strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies. Though religion may be that which determines the goal, it has, nevertheless, learned from science in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set up. But science can only be created by those who are thoroughly imbued with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. This source of feelings, however, springs from the sphere of religion. . . science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind (Einstein, 1950, p. 26).

Out of that kind of synthesis comes a new view, a prospect, a looking forward into a future we may help shape.

Without a fresh vision, there is no way--no integrator around which thoughts can be unified in a belief emboldened with conviction to act. We have presented a new vision, a new way, a new theory and a new system for releasing the potentialities of the child. The challenge is there because it is only a beginning; but the promise is good and the prospects bright.

Man is not the center of the universe as was naively believed in the past, but something much more beautiful--man the ascending arrow of the great biological synthesis. Man is the last-born, the keenest, the most complex, the most subtle of the successive layers of life. This is nothing less than a fundamental vision (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959).