

**WORLDVIEW, MEANINGFUL LEARNING AND PLURALISTIC EDUCATION:
THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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In this paper I attempt to bridge some of the needs and realities of American multicultural educational paradigms in the 1990s and the often ignored educational goals, principles, and assumptions in a liberal democratic society that aspires to pluralism. I will argue that (a) multicultural paradigms are as essential to improving "mainstream" education as they are to furthering the education of different cultural groups and (b) plurality should be concerned with meaningful learning in both a particular and a multiple perspective and worldview.

Using the Islamic² worldview on life and education, I will present, as a case in point, the Muslims of North America (the United States and Canada) to explicate the relation of meaning-making to the learner's perspective. I conclude that utilizing the learner's frame of reference in developing both particularity and plurality might be one of the solutions toward achieving pluralism as intended in the liberal democratic education. Few strategic considerations are proposed to address the need of youths, parents, teachers, and experts.

Schools, and educational institutions in general, have the power to modify the social order; and they are expected to do so to perpetuate liberal democratic values. Educational institutions, however, seem to have failed to reflect the multitude of worldviews and belief systems in education. This is particularly evident during the last three decades, mainly because the order of priorities in policy making have been reversed from the philosophy of public education as expressed by John Dewey:

Under our political system, it is the right of each individual to have a voice in the making of social policies as, indeed, he has a vote in the determination of political affairs. If this be true, education is primarily a public business, and only secondarily a specialized vocation. . . In the conduct of the schools, it is well for the citizens to determine the ends proper to them, and it is their privilege to judge the efficacy of results. ³

But at present, even political affairs, which tend to be separated from social affairs in the liberal philosophy,⁴ are problematic. Special interest groups outweigh the right of individuals to an "equal" vote just as individuals are losing their weight in the decision-making process regarding social affairs. The entire framework of the democratic process in education needs to be reevaluated within the context of meaningful learning process. This reevaluation calls for restructuring ⁵ the educational system by following liberal democratic principles that have no racial, ethnic, or religious dichotomies.⁶

I discuss three paradoxical issues in the way liberal public education is currently practiced. First, how can a pluralistic democratic society, in which educational institutions ideally should perpetuate liberal democratic values without one dominant view, exclude or underrepresent some

worldviews and belief systems from the curriculum? And how can American society continue to claim that liberal democratic values are the goal of education?

Second, how can educators, in a society that should open participation of communities in policy making, ignore the belief systems of some learners and still maintain that they are satisfying the need for pluralism and equity in instruction?

Third, how can an educational program be designed to facilitate communication among many worldviews in the context of the "mainstream" culture while program designers make little attempt to understand the basic philosophies underlying the different belief systems and worldviews in the society.

I propose an approach to pluralism within a liberal democracy that provides solutions for the mainstream educational problems and, at the same time, includes the worldviews of all groups without each group's becoming self-centered. Public dissatisfaction with the mainstream educational system has arisen because public education has not served its primary purpose of helping in the evolution of social values within a liberal democracy. Furthermore, the education system has failed to include the values of different groups, whether ethnic minority or moral majority, beyond what I call a window-dressing approach--the superficial, token representation.

Confusing the principles of pluralism with a superficial multi-representation, often referred to as multiculturalism (rightly or wrongly), defeats the basic precepts of pluralism and poses further contradictions within pluralism's own tenets. Practicing multiculturalism as a means of safeguarding the rights of different groups without realizing that multiculturalism enhances the "majority's" democratic values as well is a discrepancy of the ideals and practices in a liberal democracy. The basic question in multiculturalism is not merely whether or not what is taught reflects "accurately" the different cultural strands in our society. Rather, the more important question is whether or not what is taught makes sense to the different pupils of the "mainstream," as well as the pupils representing all the cultural views of our society and our world.

DIFFERENT FRAMES OF REFERENCE

As educators, we have continued to operate within the old theoretical paradigms even when they do not make sense in the new social context, when their plausibility for providing credible solutions is weakened, and when superficial remedial changes in the educational system have proved ineffective. Abdelmalek Sayad states:

"Minority" should not be confined to mere recording of a given situation, or worse, to the social categorisation it entails. In this it behaves no differently from a whole range of other terms (including "marginality" and "marginalization") one of whose most objective effects is to bring about as naively and naturally as can be (at the same time as putting a name to something in the usual way) what amounts to a form of social classification.⁷

Our present vision of educational structure and content cannot meet the needs of society because we have not made education the public business as Dewey suggested. In Sayad's words, we have not concerned ourselves with the "sign of genuine change in the relationship of the immigration society to itself." For example, the Muslims parents' and youths' perception of Islam and American culture, in general, are considered basic determinants for the adjustment and learning processes of these Muslims. Equally important, an educator working in a community with significant Muslim populations (100,000 or more) must understand how the views of both parents and youth have developed and how Islamic education⁸ concepts are applied in the new American context as perceived by these Muslims of the 1990s. Finally, the image of the Muslim population--which has been to a large extent in the American mind one of fundamentalists and terrorists--does not remain the same, mainly because the society at large is constantly changing, and its image of itself is different from what it was even a decade earlier. This constant change in a particular group's image of itself and its representation by others, and in the society's own image of itself, is what I call particularity within plurality.⁹

The relationship between the practice of multiculturalism and particularism seems to be misunderstood and calls for some analysis. Diane Ravitch's and Arthur Schlesinger's¹⁰ assumption or "fear" that particularism should necessarily lead to ethnocentrism would be avoided if the needs of the particular group were not pushed to the periphery of the social structure or the margins of the educational milieu. Sayad indicates,

Indeed, current usage of the term [minority] is evidence of the struggle for "autonomy" waged by communities who see themselves as "minorities," much as elsewhere the term "culture," and especially "popular culture," was used with different shades of meaning to symbolise a struggle that went beyond a mere quarrel over words (the "dispassionate" crusade for "culture").¹¹

In presenting the case in point of North American Muslims, I shall attempt to explain the effect of the frame of reference on learning, group particularity, and the perception of a liberal democracy and plurality within the different worldviews. This case study is intended also to discuss the discrepancy between the ideals and practice of liberal democratic education, such as limited access to policy making while claiming open participation. In addition, curriculum designers and educators rarely attempt to understand the underlying assumptions of different worldviews and belief systems.

As part of a larger study, a group of seventeen Muslim youths living in the United States and Canada responded to the following statement: "Muslims don't drink alcohol or eat pork because. . ." Their answers varied from "because they are prohibited in the Qur'an" to "because of health reasons."¹² Two of the respondents were a brother and sister, and their response is the focus of analysis here. The nineteen-year-old brother spent most of his formative years in an Islamic environment and the last five years in the secular United States. He stated:

In order to refrain from something, there needs to be self-discipline, and the

inner conscious (Taqwa) is very important here. Unless there is [inner] Taqwa and faith, you probably would think that nothing would be wrong [to drink]. . . . We should always look to the future impact of our behavior, but unless you know that there is something that pulls [one]back, this inner conscious, you will not succeed in [making] people refrain.

The sister came to the United States when she was nine years old. She was fourteen at the time of the interview. She stated:

They have a course in school about [alcohol and] drugs [abuse], but it is not the same as Islam states [about alcohol]. Here, they tell you that it could kill you, but Islam prohibits it [alcohol] because it is harmful, whether you drive or not, and also because it may lead you to other things that are prohibited.

The nineteen-year-old boy, in his answer and later on in the discussion, attempted to integrate three of Islam's basic principles (anyone who is drinking is prohibited from attending worship, alcohol obscures constructive acts, and faith is inseparable from conscious and constructive acts) in the context of the issue of drinking alcohol and its consequences for driving. He emphasized that regardless of whether refraining from alcohol was related to prayer or to harming oneself or others, the decision had to result from faith and the inner consciousness of God as the guide who provides the criteria for right and wrong. Without faith and inner conscious, according to this nineteen-year-old boy, a person will not be able to make on the spot judgments leading to appropriate action. Although he was thinking within the Islamic frame of reference and way of life and according to the Islamic belief system's central concept of Oneness of the Deity (Tawhid)¹³ as the only source of value, knowledge, and authority, he was able to relate this particular concept of consciousness to the general philosophy that underlies the alcohol and drug education curriculum--responsibility for one's action.

The fourteen-year-old, however, having spent most of her formative years in a non-Islamic environment, understood the rationale for not drinking alcohol within the context of the rules of prohibition only. Though she was able to analyze the difference between the Islamic and the Western rules and rationales about drinking, she was not able to connect the Islamic prohibition with Islam's central concept that God is the only source of value, knowledge, and authority, as her brother did. This limitation in her ability to connect between the general philosophy of the course on alcohol and drug abuse and that of the Islamic belief is a result of (a) her inability to relate the particular meaning of alcohol prohibition in Islam to its general implications even in a secular society, and (b) to the fluidity of the guiding criteria for constructive and responsible acts within the secular philosophy of education.

The ability to connect the central concept of the Islamic worldview with Islamic principles and rules will be lost in the practice of the Islamic ideology and culture within the context of the

pluralistic secular society of North America if educators, Muslims or non-Muslims, fail to recognize this essential particularity of the Islamic worldview. From its earliest period, Islam bore a distinct difference from its Jewish and Christian sister faiths in that the Islamic community was a society in which religion was integral to all areas of life: politics, law, and society. Thus, the individual Muslim who lacks the ability to connect between the worldview and the principles and values that direct action may also become confused concerning the criteria for constructive and destructive acts within the Islamic frame of reference vis-à-vis the liberal democratic frame of reference. This lack may eventually result in a continuous conflict between guidance from the Muslim home and that from the secular school, particularly if parents are not aware of or clear about the Western secular philosophy. Some Muslim youth in the United States and Canada have already developed an identity conflict¹⁴ and different perception of Islam as exemplified in the above siblings' understanding of the prohibition of alcohol. Barazangi (1990, 1991) suggests that neither the home nor the school has been able to prevent and resolve the consequent problems because neither is aware of the roots of the conflict.

CONNECTING THE PARTICULAR TO THE PLURAL

Further analysis of Muslims' practice in the context of some paradigms of multiculturalism is in order to explicate the home-school conflict. Muslims, particularly recent immigrants, attempt to teach their children the history of Islam and the principles of the Islamic belief system at home, or by sending them to weekend and/or full-time Muslim schools, thinking that by doing so they will preserve the next generation's ideological and cultural identity in secular North America. Barazangi (1988) indicates that the young generation of Muslims, even those who are attending full-time Muslim schools, are identifying primarily with the secular culture and only secondarily with their parents' social customs and sentiments that are assumed to reflect Islamic principles. In her attempt to lay the groundwork for community-based curriculum development and an integrative Islamic education program within the pluralistic, liberal democracies of the United States and Canada, Barazangi followed the indications of her findings--that any program on Islamic education should be based, first, on a dialogue between the particular cultural group (the Muslim community in this case) and the mainstream culture (the American and the Canadian) to develop deeper understanding of the Islamic perspective beyond mutual respect and appreciation. Although the recommendations by Barazangi (1988, 1990 and 1991) were specifically for Muslims' education in North America, their implications are not limited to the Muslim community nor to religious communities, but to the American education process as a whole. That is, the idea of teaching the history of a particular group by its members to guarantee the group's cultural survival is not a self-centered approach, but an essential approach to preserve particularity as part of the community. However, mere teaching of history and some principles of the group's belief system does not automatically result in developing the particular

worldview among the members of the next generation without understanding the underlying assumptions of the particular group and the larger culture.

Ravitch and Schlesinger argue that the "history taught to the children of the state must meet the highest standards of accuracy and integrity." The two authors, however, "steadfastly oppose the politicization of history, no matter how worthy the motive" and state that "we are also united in our belief in a pluralistic interpretation of American history and our support for such shamefully neglected fields as history of women, of immigration and of minorities."¹⁵ On the other hand, their argument seems to limit the understanding of multiculturalism to the inclusion of the voices of women, of blacks and other minorities and to the broadening the perspective of teachers of history. Ravitch seems to believe that such inclusion constitutes the presence of multiculturalism in the schools.

It is not clear, as some minority group would like to see happening, that the mere inclusion of other voices can change the "Eurocentricism" opposed by minority groups.¹⁶ It is clear, however, that these different voices are not being heard equitably -- to fulfill the premise that public education should provide access to information and conceptualization about perspectives other than that of the perspective of the predominant culture. Even if different voices are included (whether indirectly, such as the Muslims' teaching their children the Islamic history as they know it, or directly, such as the inclusion of a unit on Islamic history in the social studies curriculum and making sure that it reflects the Muslims' perception of their own history), they will remain marginal as long as the worldview in which they are taught remains that of the predominant culture of secular Western society.

In addition, Ravitch and others who argue against politicizing the curriculum seem to have forgotten two important points. First, the entire educational process and curricular objectives are based on political decisions.¹⁷ That is, the perpetuation of the governing social and political values of the liberal democracy in the next generation through public education is a process of politicizing the citizens. Second, Americanization through public education has not been a fully liberal democratic process that prepares the citizens for life in a pluralistic nation, in which the learner preserves and treasures his or her cultural heritage as a base for identity development and a holistic personality. This unrecognized aspect of "American" education is evidenced in Schlesinger's statement:

The U.S. escaped the divisiveness of a multiethnic society by the creation of a brand-new national identity. The point of America was not to preserve old cultures but to forge a new, American culture. The new American nationality was inescapably English in language, ideas and institutions.¹⁸

WORLDVIEWS IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Marginalization is the concomitant problem to the window-dressing approach to multiculturalism in American education. In other words, Alexis de Tocqueville's notion of

"equality in conditions" has been driving the American educational system despite his warning against individualism in democratic nations. He noted the tendency of democratic nations to make individuals less and less distinguishable from one another, "to reduce them to a mass of 'sameables' under an increasingly powerful and impersonal government."¹⁹ De Tocqueville was more concerned about the danger in the notion of "natural isolation" of the individual under conditions of equality, "an isolation which rendered him [the individual] dangerously powerless, although it was an isolation which the individual chose for himself."²⁰ De Tocqueville identifies the central paradox, evidenced in the history of American education and in the "melting pot" notion, that the social conditions and psychology of an individualistic society tend to produce conformity at the expense of individuality. Therefore, writes Sayad:

All other things being equal (as if they could be), one gets the idea that the only possible criteria for separateness, that is to say, self-identity, are derived from a few distinctive traits or speech or behavior (so-called, cultural differences) or from ethnic considerations. Like various other words that confer identity, status, social rank, and simultaneously (merely, some would say) indicate, the term "minority" is not a neutral word: it serves both as a cause and a weapon.²¹

The "nonassimilability" of some distinct characteristics of one group of immigrants (or of indigenous people) should not be cast in the classification of "ethnicity," "minority," or "religious fundamentalism." These characteristics are not inherently fixed to all people of the same origin, nor are they static and unchangeable. Worse yet, Sayad laments, "this kind of labeling brings about more separatism, that may or may not represent particularism, and further perpetuation of a fixed identity."²²

Were the issue of marginalization and, hence, the struggle for legitimacy and autonomy not being forced on the different cultural groups, the domination of the "minority" concept would be diminished. Finally, variations in observable characteristics do not necessarily represent variations in the underlying assumptions and worldviews that govern particular individual and/or group behavior.

In solving the questions that arise for Muslims in presenting their own educational values within the context of the Western educational systems of North America, four assumptions about the dominant Western worldview seem to be relevant:

(1) Western ideology assumes secularism--the separation of religion and government--a concept that is alien to Islam. In multicultural societies, decision makers are not supposed to recognize one religion or belief system over another, even though their personal views and epistemology might be based on a particular belief system.

(2) God, Lord, or Creator may be considered by many Americans to be a religious entity that can be separated from other aspects of life and epistemological assumptions. These

epistemological assumptions contradict the basic Islamic assumption that God is not only the Creator but also the source of value, knowledge, and authority.

(3) The human being is the master of nature or himself and has full authority on earth to practice his or her functions in isolation from God.²³ This idea also contradicts the basic Islamic proposition that the purpose of education is to understand natural laws so that the individual can serve as God's (Allah's) vicegerent on earth (Qur'an, 2:30).

(4) Rules in Western ideology are the rules of humans (whether of the individual or the society); and authority is that of a human being over others, at least as practiced in institutions and in legislation. Rules are drawn by policy makers on the basis of assumptions made by the political founders of secular institutions or by a philosophical view that ignores metaphysics and belief systems.²⁴

In the Islamic system, humans are only executors of interrelationships based on laws stated in the Qur'an (1:1-7). The basic assumptions that underlie Islamic thought and its view of human knowledge and morality are in sharp contrast to the dominant Western worldview. First, human knowledge is the product of human rationality plus revealed knowledge; and second, human learning, conception, and valuing should be guided by Allah (God) as stated in the Qur'an and according to the laws of nature. These two assumptions represent the basic difference between the religious view--in the wide sense of the word-- and the secular view with regard to the relation between the belief system and knowledge.

CREATING MEANINGS FOR MUSLIMS

Ethical philosophy and the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam are used here to articulate the religio-moral-conceptual dimension of Islamic rationality. The intention is to explicate the metaphysics and epistemology of the youth, the parent, the teacher, and the "expert"²⁵ with their interpretations of Islamic principles in the context of the secular liberal democracy. The question of who the experts are in curricular development of a particular subject matter (Islamic knowledge in this case) is at the heart of multicultural issues. This question is particularly meaningful within a pluralistic curriculum. The educational implications of academic and communal debates that attempt to address this question, therefore, should focus on practical solutions and not be a theoretical intellectual exercise. The pressing need here is how to assist the above-mentioned four categories of people who play a role in the educational process of North American Muslims.

First, Muslim *youth* need to understand the relationship between the religio-ethical dimension of Islam and the secular-ethical²⁶ dimension of American society. The nineteen-year-old boy in the case study above seems to have achieved this relationship when he stated that regardless of the rationale behind the prohibition of alcohol, the main issue is the criteria or values by which the individual measures his or her own behavior. This variation in the criteria for decision making is the base of particularity within the pluralistic society. The criteria should be understood only within the frame of reference (the Islamic worldview in this case) of the particular group to make

sense of the behavioral manifestations among members of the same group (the Muslims of North America). Otherwise, it could easily be misinterpreted as "fundamentalistic" or "ethnocentric" behavior.

Second, the individual Muslim *learner*--parent or youth--should become aware of the relationship between his or her own beliefs and the principles of the Islamic belief system. This awareness may lead to understanding the philosophy of the discipline, Islam, and connect it to the learner's psychology in the new context, the Western vis-à-vis the Muslim. In the case study above, the fourteen-year-old girl was not able to make such a connection mainly because her frame of reference was not the Islamic but the secular Western philosophy and view of education, which emphasizes the utility of values and individual responsibility for the consequences of one's action (for example, it can be dangerous to drink and drive). Though the fourteen-year-old girl's psychological makeup seems to have been formed within the Islamic faith, she deviates from the Islamic worldview because she only understands the Islamic prohibition of alcohol by relating to the immediate consequences of drinking. Therefore, her "consequences" argument seems to be a Westernization of Islam, and she was not able to relate the psychology of the Islamic faith to the central concept of the Islamic belief system as a whole (the One God, who provides the principles and concepts about human life and the norms that guide it). This inability to relate the psychology to the philosophy of a belief system (or the epistemology of a piece of knowledge) results in viewing the Islamic rule of prohibiting alcohol as similar to the Western rule that sets the drinking age. In public schools the main objective of teaching about the dangers of drinking and driving is to prevent harmful consequences. Both Islamic and Western rules of alcohol drinking, however, are perceived as similar by the fourteen-year-old girl because they both form a base for avoiding harmful consequences. Yet, this young girl does not realize that harmful consequences, as viewed in the Islamic philosophy, extend beyond drinking age and drinking and driving. This perception may eventually lead this fourteen-year-old, as it has led some other Muslims, to rationalize that drinking a toast is not a violation of an Islamic tenet -- the complete prohibition of alcohol because it is a directive of God who is the most knowledgeable about alcohol's effects on the mental ability). This kind of rationalization is due to two shortcomings in the process of educating this young girl: the parents' inability to explain Islamic principles in the new context, and the inequitable access in the educational system to meaningful learning within particular and multiple perspectives.

Third, *teachers* or educators should realize the relationship between their own conceptual ecology and that of the learner within the various cultural, social, and ecological settings. The father of the two siblings in the case study above, for instance, may protest that teachers lack sensitivity toward Islamic culture. He may protest not because of the teachers' prejudice or their exclusion of "proper" instructional materials on Islamic culture/heritage but because of the teachers' inability to realize that their conceptual ecology differs from that of students such as his own children. This problem does not belong mainly to the teachers, nor is it exclusive to Muslim parents. Rather, it is a problem in the educational system as a whole because teachers are not

trained to recognize these differences, in addition to their poor knowledge of Islamic culture and of other cultures. This marginalization of the Islamic culture produces sketchy understanding and often misconceptions about Islam and Muslims' behavior. As a result, teachers focus on behavioral expositions (social adjustment) as the lead factor in evaluating learning instead of focusing on creating meaning (conceptual adjustment)²⁷ and self-realization and actualization of the learner.

Fourth, the "experts" (whether Muslim community members or specialists in Islamic area studies) should realize how the applications of concepts within the Islamic system become transformed in space and time. Orientalists who study Islam as a religion, meaning faith and rituals, may not be able to appreciate the subtle discrepancy between the rationales of the nineteen-year-old boy and his fourteen-year-old sister. The same could be true for Muslim "experts" who do not understand the Western philosophy of secularism and of education and its fundamental difference from the Islamic philosophy. These Muslim "experts" cannot realize that the mere teaching of Islamic history and principles to the next generation of Muslims will not necessarily produce an Islamic worldview in the Western, secular context. Even when Islam is taught in Muslim schools that have different environments from that of the larger society, the general philosophy of the rest of (non-religious) curriculum is imbedded in Western secular assumptions. Thus, meanings of Islam and Islamic history and culture become modified in the new context.

CONCLUSION: THE LEARNING PROCESS IN A PLURALISTIC SETTING

The case in point of North American Muslims examines issues of pluralistic education for the particular group and gives a broader understanding of the North American cultural needs. It symbolizes the central educational issues of pluralism. The Islamic worldview is only one of the "different" worldviews to be accommodated in North American education, such as other Eastern cultures represented by Hinduism and Buddhism.

If we, as educators, do not understand the effect and the variation in the frame of reference--the worldview of the learner--we have failed to provide meaningful learning for all pupils, and not only for those of the non-mainstream cultural groups. Our inability to give meaning to schooling appears to be the core of the problem of American education, particularly during the last three decades. Educators, especially those of us who are in the position of effecting policies and trends, have failed to modify our philosophical paradigms, the goals of education, and the curricular and instructional objectives so as to take into consideration the diverse social, anthropological, and conceptual needs of the society. These needs (the awareness--felt or recognized--of belonging to a group related to a conceptual, territorial, linguistic, economic, ethnic, religious, cultural, and political historical or mythical past) have been, at best, marginalized.

From the "mainstream" cultural viewpoint, as educators we have, in the name of pluralism, slid into accepting plural expressions of ideas, thinking that this is the way to celebrate

differences. Yet we have failed to realize that we accept these expressions only when they conform to one set of ideas and within the frame of reference that is considered "standard" or the "norm."

As specialized professionals we have set the educational paradigm by reversing the order of priorities in public education, ignoring communities' input, and disregarding social and conceptual needs. Regardless of what we call this single frame of reference, "Western," "American melting pot," or the "American milieu," and regardless of the individuals, this frame of reference has become solidified and more dogmatic. This solidification calls for a change because the existing paradigm has lost its ability to provide lasting solutions the society as a whole currently faces.

Classroom implications of the above analysis represent only one complementary step to this article. Future work, by this or any other author, need to explore community-based curricular and instructional design, teacher and administrator in-service-training, and textbook writing.

NOTES

1. This paper was conceived during the author's 1990-1991 residency as a Visiting Fellow at the Department of Education of Cornell University. The author wishes to thank those who contributed directly or indirectly to the consummation of this topic, especially John J. Chiment, of Cornell's Mathematical Sciences Institute, for his suggestions towards shaping my ideas into a practical approach to the problem.
2. Islam is viewed here as a belief system that constitutes a philosophical foundation of thought and action, incorporating religion (in the narrow sense, and as understood by the secular view). Religion has five different definitions in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (1972). I will use the first definition to denote the meaning of religion in the narrow sense: "the faith in, service and adoration of God or a god as expressed in forms of worship." I will use the fifth definition to denote belief system: "an awareness or conviction of the existence of a supreme being, arousing reverence, love, gratitude, the will to obey and serve, and the like; as man only is capable of religion." This definition is closer to the meaning of the construct "belief system" and to the Arabic word (*al Din*), denoting a worldview and a way of life in reference to Islam.
3. Dewey, John, Moral Principles in Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), v-vii.
4. Kenneth A. Strike, "The Moral Role of Schooling in a Liberal Democratic Society," in Gerald Grant, ed, Review of Research in Education (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association 1991), 415, states that one central problem of liberalism is to find a principled way of separating life into a public sphere where the state may exercise authority and a private sphere where the state may not. The need for such a way to separate public from private life is, in my view, what makes the present practice of the liberal education problematic, because it tends to neutralize its diverse meanings for the different individuals and groups, and, hence, the public become apathetic toward it.
5. Advocates of school and curriculum restructuring for true multiculturalism, such as Carlos Diaz, ed, Multicultural Education for the 21 st Century (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1992), provide important insights; but unless the need to restructure the philosophical approach is realized, restructuring educational practices may not be as effective.
6. See Charles R. Kniker, "Accommodating The Religious Diversity of Public School Students: Putting the 'CARTS' Before the Horse" Religion and Public Education, 15, no. 3 (Summer 1988):304-20, for the five purposes of common (public) schools and how teachers can deal with religious subjects within the parameters of these purposes.

7. Sayad, Abdelmalek, "From 'Immigrants' to 'Minorities'" in Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), Multicultural Education (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 1987), 125.
8. Islamic education means "Islamic intellectualism, for it is the essence of Islamic higher thought that must provide real criterion for judging the success or failure of its educational system." Fazlur Rahman, Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition; (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, No.15, 1982), 132.
9. See Nimat Hafez Barazangi, "Does Particularism Require Separate Religious Education? The Islamic Perspective." (In review)
10. Diane Ravitch and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Remaking New York State's history curriculum." A Letter to the Editor by the Committee of Scholars in Defense of History, New York Times, (August 12, 1990); and Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism Yes, Particularism No." The Chronicle of Higher Education (October 24, 1990), A44.
- 11 Sayad, "From 'Immigrants' to 'Minorities'", 133-34.
12. Nimat Hafez Barazangi, "Perceptions of the Islamic Belief System: The Muslims in North America" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1988). The context of the discussion, here, was a focus-group interview, expanding on the dissertation's survey questionnaire item: "Muslims do not drink alcohol and eat pork because...." During the interview, the author/investigator asked the Muslim youth as to how they can practice these teachings in a society that allows such practices. When the course on alcohol and drug abuse was mentioned, the author asked the youth to explain if there is a difference between what is taught in the course and what is taught in the Qur'an.
13. "Tawhid" means unity of God and humanity, which entails unity of belief with all aspects of life and unity of one's personal value system with the understanding of Islamic concepts. (al Faruqi, Ismaíl R., Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life. [Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1402 AH/1982 AC]).
14. Barazangi, Nimat Hafez, "Islamic Education in the United States and Canada: Conception and Practice of the Islamic Belief System." in Yvonne Y. Haddad, ed, The Muslims of America. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 157-77; and "The Education of North American Muslim Parents and Children: Conceptual Change As a Contribution to Islamization of Education." The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 7, 3 (December 1990): 385-402.

15. Diane Ravitch and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Remaking New York State's History Curriculum," op. cit..

16. New York States, A Curriculum of Inclusion, Report of the Commissioner's Task Force on Minorities: Equity and Excellence (Albany, New York, July 1989), 111

17 Henry A. Giroux stands out in discussing the relationship of political and social discourse to curriculum development and to pedagogy. See, for example, Giroux, ed., Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics: Redrawing Educational Boundaries (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), particularly "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Feminism: Rethinking the Boundaries of Educational Discourse," 1-59 and "Postmodernism as Broader Pedagogy: Redefining the Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity," 217-56; H. A. Giroux and A. N. Penna, "Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum," in H. A. Giroux, A. N. Penna, and W. F. Pinar, eds., Curriculum and Instruction: Alternatives in Education (Berkeley: McCutchen, 1981), 209-30.

18. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "The Cult of Ethnicity, Good and Bad," Time, (July 8, 1991), 21; and "Report of the Social Studies Syllabus Review Committee: A Dissenting Opinion." in One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of cultural Interdependence, The Report of the New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee (Albany, NY, June 1991).

19. Cited in Jack Richon Pole, American Individualism and the Promise of Progress, an inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 14 February, 1980. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 4.

20. Ibid.

21. Sayad, "From 'Immigrants' to 'Minorities'", 134.

22. Ibid.

23. See M. Arkoun, "The Islamic Consciousness: A Cultural Profile," Cultures 4 (1977): 66-93, in which he adds that in the early twentieth century the human heart transformed the "God of Worth" into the "growth of mind" as the goal and "social worth" as the criterion.

24. See K. A. Strike and G. J. Posner, "Types of Synthesis and Their Criteria." In Spencer A. Ward and Linda J. Reed, eds., Knowledge Structure and Use: Implications for Synthesis and Interpretation, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 350, in which they state:

"Empiricists from Hume to twentieth century logical positivists have cast considerable doubt on the possibility of doing metaphysics. On the other hand, empiricism has had much of the flavor of a worldview, generating not just views of knowledge and science, but of psychology, ethics, and politics as well".

25. "Community 'Experts'" refers mainly to community religious leaders and parents who may have professional qualifications and experience in different fields, though not necessarily in the field of education, and who have had formal or informal training in Islamic religious studies as taught in the Muslim world and are active in community affairs. These "experts" usually become the decision-makers, appointed either by the community or through the recommendations of outside community supporters and donors. "Area Studies 'experts'" refers mainly to non-Muslim area studies professionals who have had their training in Islamic studies as a discipline within the Western system of education.

26. "Secular" and "secularism," as derived from their definitions in the Random House Dictionary (1968), are intended to refer to the ideology that assumes the separation of spiritual and mundane life. This ideology is in reference to the institutional level and not to individual practice in the North American societies, specifically the United States and Canada. Though the Canadian Constitution does not explicitly state the separation of church and state, the general practice of government and institutions indicates that authority rests with the legislatures who set the criteria for public institutions and individual behavior within these institutions.

27. See Nimat Hafez Barazangi (1989), "Arab Muslim Identity Transmission: Parents and Youth" Arab Studies Quarterly, 11, 2 & 3 (Spring/Summer 1989): 65-82, for discussion of the difference between social and conceptual assimilation and accommodation.