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The Sociology of Home Economics with Particular  
Reference to the Economic Status of Women

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## Summary

Through a socio-historical analysis of Home Economics<sup>1</sup> in British education it is argued that the subject has been both victim and vehicle of conflicting social ideologies, particularly those relating to the economic status of women. Consequent upon the power of elite groups to determine the social disposition of knowledge on a socio-sexual basis, the true educational potential of the subject has been masked.

An analysis of the role of examinations in Home Economics defines the original function as the perpetuation of social class differences and the solution of perceived societal needs. Currently examinations are, unintentionally, equally divisive. Advanced studies in Home Economics are shown to be inhibited by issues surrounding 'A' level acceptability.

The dichotomy between the educational potential and the prevailing reality within the subject is examined in relation to the core curriculum. It is posited that as an educational medium its potential superiority lies in its comprehensive and realistic nature. Its synergistic quality, which embraces the capacity for reflexive learning, is shown to enhance its value at both the personal and societal levels.

Various hindering factors pertaining to the subject are analysed: problems of image and nomenclature are shown to derive from an insecure identity. Similarly, the idealization of womanhood and the family effectively prevents the subject from achieving a realistic approach with which the majority of pupils can identify.

A three year empirical research indicates that the prognosis for the subject is poor. The attitudes and philosophy of new entrants to the profession are depressingly regressive, a problem exacerbated by the age-structure and sexual basis of the teaching force.

In conclusion it is suggested that the potential of the subject will only be achieved through practitioners' enhanced educational perspectives. Essentially this must entail a radical reappraisal of content and pedagogy.

1. Home Economics embraces all the Domestic Subjects including Needlework.

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Abbreviations

A.T.D.S.	Association of Teachers of Domestic Science
B.J.Ed.Psy.	British Journal of Educational Psychology
B.J.S.	British Journal of Sociology
B.O.E.	Board of Education
C.P.D.R.	Committee for Physical Deterioration
C.S.E.	Certificate of Secondary Education
D.E.S.	Department of Education and Science
G.C.E.	General Certificate of Education
H.Ecs.	Home Economics
Hsc.	Housecraft
I.F.H.E.	International Federation for Home Economics
J.M.B.	Joint Matriculation Board
L.E.A.	Local Education Authority
Min. of Ed.	Ministry of Education
N.W.C.D.P.	North West Curriculum Development Project
O.U.	Open University
R.O.S.L.A.	Raising of the school leaving age
Sh. Univ.	Sheffield University
S.T.	Sunday Times
T.E.S.	Times Educational Supplement
T.H.E.S.	Times Higher Educational Supplement
T.P.	Teaching Practice
Tr. in Ed.	Trends in Education



## Introduction

" ... instead of assuming that every subject taught today is taught for a reason ... (we) should begin from the reverse premise: nothing should be included in a required curriculum unless it can be strongly justified in terms of the future. If this means scrapping a substantial part of the formal curriculum, so be it."

Alvin Tofler.  
Future Shock.  
p.370

This study is an attempt to assess the sociological factors which have influenced the course of the Home Economics in the school curriculum in Britain, and to elicit an explanation for its continued low evaluation. It is felt that the development of the subject has been considerably hampered by traditional perspectives on women. The educational potential of the subject however is such that, given certain changes, it could attain much greater respect, even to constituting the core of the curriculum or at least a major constituent element.

From a societal perspective, the contribution of the subject is incalculable in terms of the physical and mental well-being of the population and hence the enhanced performance of the work force. However, the subject appears to be dominated by social ideologies which mainly relate to the evaluation of women and centres on their economic status. A paradoxical situation therefore exists: it is one the domestic subjects could, if willing and conscious of the fact, rectify.

Its major problem would seem to be that those in the most powerful positions are themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, the carriers of these ideologies. Consequently the subject is rejected by many who might otherwise effect change as well as by those in the teaching profession who equate it with low academic worth.

Much of the difficulty lies in the insecurity of the subject itself, in terms of self-definition. The subsequent lack of an adequate philosophy stemming from the confusion over its identity makes it a weak runner in the curriculum stakes. It is the tenet of this study that until the subject relates to the new image of woman and is seen to be a human discipline, concerned with the problems of humanity at large, it will continue to decline.

In order to gauge the present and possible future of the subject, this study was divided into four sections. Part I traces the effect of ideologies in education generally and the domestic subjects in particular. Part II examines pedagogy and knowledge in the curriculum with particular reference to the domestic subjects. It is suggested that there is a considerable lag between the domestic subjects and the rest of the curriculum in this regard. The function and effect of examinations is considered since they reflect the image of the subject to the outside world. The social influences are assessed in both the constructional and consequential contexts.

Part III investigates possible developments, noting the hindering effects of social ideologies and professional practices. It is suggested that the domestic subjects could constitute the core curriculum for at

Part IChapter IIdeology in Education

The persecution of individuals, groups or classes has been justified on ideological grounds which may stress what people believe rather than what they do.

L.B. Brown  
Ideology. p.113

Introduction

The education system in Britain has been the vehicle of social ideologies since its inception. Even before the official establishment in 1870 the curriculum of both the private and public sectors was indicative of social values and divisions in society. The noted relationship between education and the economy<sup>1</sup> tends to mask the role of social ideologies, particularly with regard to their influence on curriculum subjects. It could well be argued that the domestic subjects have been more prone to such influences than other subjects. The major difference between the domestic subjects and the (traditionally accepted) 'academic' ones is that the influence of ideologies has had a devastatingly negative effect on them. Within Mannheim's concept of 'total' and 'particular' ideologies<sup>2</sup> the relationship of the education system and the domestic subjects becomes specific. If the system itself represents the 'total' ideology in relation to society then the domestic subjects can be said to be the 'particular' ideology which in effect 'gives the lie' to the 'total'.<sup>3</sup> The reality of this paradoxical situation will be revealed in an analysis of the role of ideology in both areas. However, the concept of ideology is itself confused.<sup>4</sup>

### Towards a definition of Ideology

The apparent confusion surrounding the concept of ideology rests in the problem of definition. This stems from the different perceptions as to its function. It can be construed, with hindsight, to analyse and interpret past behaviours : alternatively it can be used as a platform for future actions. For the purpose of this study however the concept of ideology as a 'link mechanism' will be employed : it will be regarded as the 'carrier' which links belief and action.<sup>5</sup> It will be seen as the crystallisation of norms and values into a coherent pattern which offers a point of departure for practice and a means whereby the needs of both society and individuals are rationalised, whether they be real or merely perceived to exist. In this way the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic ideologies in relation to the domestic subjects will be highlighted.

### The nature of Ideology

Ideologies are, by definition, transient: they stem from the belief system(s) of society and therefore, as the social context changes, new ideologies inevitably arise. As responses to stresses in society ideologies are a means of activation between the recognition of the existence of a problem and its solution. Indeed, they are the banners of social movements.<sup>6</sup>

Mannheim claims that ideas are rooted in social groups and require carrying groups to achieve effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> The suggestion that ideologies act as a cohesive force in society however is problematic though plausible. It is possible for an ideology to embrace a total

society especially if it is threatened by an external phenomenon, for as Sherif demonstrates, conflicting groups can only be united by a common need which is transcendental to all the groups concerned.<sup>8</sup>

The mechanism for the transmission of ideas however is the impacting of ideas into an 'ideology'. This may correspond to Berger's notion of 'intrinsic' links,<sup>9</sup> for the elements of an ideology may be so disparate that it is only by being part of a 'package' that the ideology can be anything more than an abstract formulation of ideas.

Normally an ideology can at best represent a distorted reality<sup>10</sup> since it signifies the development of awareness.<sup>11</sup> It follows therefore that in an organic society<sup>12</sup> with its multiple groupings, awareness will be unevenly developed. Factors which give rise to ideologies are rooted in the individuals' reality. But reality is only ever the truth as it is perceived by the individual(s) concerned. Since this is itself the outcome of his own socialisation it is axiomatic that it can only stem from a less-than-total perception of society. This may be seen as the causal factor of the discrepancy which often exists between the ideological levels of ideas, their implementation and effect. The successful implementation of an ideology rests not only on the availability of the right physical resources (i.e. a monopoly over one or more resource, such as finance) but on the interpretation of one man's reality through the medium of another's reality. Definition and re-definition of situations involves a process fraught with the possibility of misinterpretation. It also facilitates the manipulation of ideas and explains the effective combination of manifest and latent functions within an ideology. This is most noticeable when the

manifest function is a promotional one and the latent one protective, as was the case of the domestic subjects. Thus Plamenatz's contention, that ideology nearly always refers to a " ... particular sphere of thought, not thought generally"<sup>13</sup>, may in reality indicate only the manifest strand as having been activated whilst the latent one remains dormant. From this it can be seen that what is sometimes regarded as an ideology is in fact only part of a total ideology, the remainder possibly existing only in the mind, perhaps as a 'social code'. Given this notion, the claim that ideology has often afforded a " ... more honourable and dignified complexion to social conduct which might otherwise have been somewhat dubious"<sup>14</sup> is apposite. It also explains the grievous chasm between the intended and actual outcomes of various educational (and other) policies and even between theory and practice within the educational system.

Thus ideologies are frequently Janus-headed: they act as a cohesive mechanism for certain individuals within a society, but equally they may thereby constitute a divisive one for society itself. This dichotomy arises because groups form on the basis of various criteria and implicit in the nature of group formation is the group identity which represents the *raison d'être* of the group. Consequently the polarisation of viewpoints between the group and society or group and group is likely to ensue. A group may invoke an ideology to support and justify the exercise of power (as in the case of an elite).<sup>15</sup> Alternatively it may be utilised to depress a section or even the whole of a society.<sup>16</sup> Both elements will be shown to have existed in relation to ideology in the domestic subjects.

Since ideologies are almost invariably group-dependent, it is inevitable that there will be both supporters and opponents. Individuals who subscribe to an ideology strengthen both their self identity and their public image.<sup>17</sup> In the domestic subjects this accounts for the 'formidable ladies' who could be said to constitute Mannheim's 'carrying group'. Self awareness however can both result from and give rise to ideologies. It is for this reason that much of the early career of the domestic subjects can be ascribed to individuals such as Miss F.L. Calder<sup>18</sup> and Mr. Berridge<sup>19</sup> each of whom developed their work on the basis of strong, specific beliefs.

The domestic subjects have also acted as a 'carrying group' within Mannheim's concept : they have frequently been used as the vehicle of social ideologies in terms of planned change<sup>20</sup> as well as personal ideologies, often in the guise of altruism though in reality for the preservation of the status-quo. By examining the history of the domestic subjects in the curriculum, the effects will show that the ideologies have been both 'widespread' in that they have been supported by a wide sector of the public and 'comprehensive' in that they have affected far more than the immediate area of influence.<sup>21</sup> It will be shown that the latent ideologies have been far more powerful than the manifest.

The whole concept of the domestic subjects is really a microcosm of the educational system, which is itself a microcosm of society : ideologies on which society is structured are strongly reflected in the school curriculum and notably so in the domestic subjects. The

education system of any society can be seen as a transitional stage : pupils, already shaped to a considerable degree by their socialisation - even perhaps to the degree of ossification,<sup>22</sup> experience a range of behaviours, norms and values outside the family situation. These experiences, whether they conflict or are congruent with other simultaneous or past experiences, all help to mould the individual. The curriculum is a major mechanism of social change potentially, not least because it offers the means of social mobility. Equally effectively however, it can inhibit mobility. It will be argued that the domestic subjects have been a non-mobility subject, acting only as a status passage<sup>23</sup> for the vast majority of girls. The curriculum mirrors the perceived functions of education.

### Functions of Education

Much has been written on this subject but it is outside the scope of this study to analyse these in detail. Summarising however, it could be said that the basic function of an education system in a society is to contribute to the solution of two problems :-

1. The inculcation of ways of perceiving and thinking about the world.
2. The process of equipping people with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform adult roles to which they are allocated ... to locate people in relation to positions of power and subordination<sup>24</sup>



Ideologies arise regarding the solutions of these problems - the type of knowledge required and the means by which they should be achieved. Thus the functions of education can be seen as political, economic, and social, within the context of a given culture.

These ideologies form the basis of educational policies which in turn are reflected in the curriculum both in its content and structure, as well as the pedagogy. Today the curriculum is in a state of flux: debates about a common curriculum could be seen as a major conflict of two ideologies<sup>25</sup> - both in reality supporting the concept of elitism as will be illustrated. The role and value of the domestic subjects either way is grossly underrated in terms of its value to society<sup>26</sup> : it is undervalued because it does not afford a source of social mobility. This perhaps is the crux of the matter, being closely linked to the question of politics.

### The Political Function

The political function of education is concerned with social cohesion. By shaping the future members of society into the beliefs and behaviour considered appropriate to the particular society, it is anticipated that a cohesive society will result. But who defines 'appropriate' is crucial. Power to impose the criteria largely rests on the degree of centralisation<sup>27</sup> and whether the ruling political group exercises its power over the education system in order to inculcate specific political beliefs. Political and educational elites are not necessarily one and the same group of individuals : where they are it is much easier for political indoctrination to occur and conformity to be ensured.<sup>28</sup> Where they are not, the

ideologies of the elite group(s) will be transmitted through the education system either through pressure brought to bear on political parties or through their ability to control access to knowledge.<sup>29</sup>

Socio-political forces which have shaped the educational provision in Britain are the aristocratic, bourgeois, democratic and proletarian.<sup>30</sup> Through these four forces however, one may still identify the power of the social elite. With the exception of the 'democratic' force the ideology of education for stratification, for superordinate and subordinate positions, is very apparent. Even Midwinter's argument<sup>31</sup> for a curriculum based on the sub-culture of the locality is really this same principle, albeit inverted, masquerading as a 'relevant' curriculum. As Lawton acidly remarks, '... relevant to what?'<sup>32</sup> - to their status which will not challenge the elite?

The political function then of education is to ensure the allocation of individuals to positions, work and status, with the least possible disturbance to society. The domestic subjects have served just such a purpose. Education for status has been one of the most potent forces in the domestic subjects. It has ensured the political castration of women most effectively, thereby avoiding conflict which would inevitably arise if the half of the population so subordinated was to become politically aware. Manipulation of the subject to effect political desires is shown in the nature of the official support given in comparison with the requirements of the labour force.<sup>33</sup> It has always rested on economic, not educational

criteria, often constituting a latent function in relation to the overall economic strategy.

### The Economic Function of Education

Viewed from an economic perspective, the education system may be seen in terms of investment for and by the individual.<sup>34</sup> It is however, somewhat surprising that the cost-benefits of the domestic subjects has not yet been adequately analysed in similar vein. That the health aspect is now being acknowledged in educational circles is an important step forward: yet it is totally unrelated to the domestic subjects,<sup>35</sup> even at degree level.<sup>36</sup>

The physical and mental health of society is jeopardised by malnutrition - both in terms of underfeeding<sup>37</sup> and obesity.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the loss of man-hours in industry through avoidable ill-health is a serious investment loss to society. Only now are health factors, originally associated with poor living and hazardous work conditions (e.g. mill work) and heredity, being credited to possible dietary causes.<sup>39</sup>

Educational under-achievement, long correlated with hereditary,<sup>40</sup> environmental factors<sup>41</sup> or parental attitudes,<sup>42</sup> is now being causally related to diet.<sup>43</sup> The question of pre-natal maternal diet is only now being examined in connection with foetal brain growth.<sup>44</sup> Similarly the true cost of malnutrition in infancy has yet to be assessed. Life-chances are probably more at risk through inadequate diets than has ever been considered possible. The chance to attain maximum brain growth would, at least initially,

appear to be class biased, as is the prime factor of mortality risk in infants.<sup>45</sup>

The answer may well lie in the social and educational attitudes towards the subject. Unfortunately investment in knowledge is only regarded as valuable when the knowledge has scarcity value: the question of 'investment return' to society by the domestic subjects appears to be equated at best in terms of 'good wives and mothers', not of public and private health for society, for this would bring it into the economic sphere, where women and their work are discounted.<sup>46</sup> Knowledge connected with everyday life does not merit 'high status' knowledge<sup>47</sup> - even though much of it in the domestic subjects is very far from every-day knowledge in reality. To suggest that the perpetuation of attitudes towards the domestic subjects constitutes social engineering through the curriculum for somewhat nefarious purposes invites the retort that this is exactly the case now in reverse - to the cost of both the individual and society.<sup>48</sup> Ignorance breeds ignorance, but ignorance in some areas of knowledge is disproportionately costly to society.

Investment in the domestic subjects has almost invariably been at the minimal level, both by education authorities and official bodies (e.g. the Schools Council).<sup>49</sup> But perhaps the most 'expensive' element is that of social mobility.

### The Social Mobility Function

In relation to social mobility, education is normally seen as enhancing the individual's life-chances.<sup>50</sup> However, when pupils

are assigned to certain educational routes<sup>51</sup> they are ascribed to a virtually permanent state of social non-mobility. The domestic subjects are not avenues to higher education except in perpetuation of themselves.

Ideologies regarding the social hierarchy in Britain are reflected in the pejorative support for the domestic subjects. By subscribing to their desirability for less-able pupils they have clearly become socially stratified subjects at a very low level: research indicates that streams in school reflect the social classes.<sup>52</sup>

Denigration of the domestic subjects was in effect supported by psychological 'evidence' which was officially rampant during the twentieth century. Tests 'proving' different types of ability were developed on the basis of which children were assigned to specific educational routes,<sup>53</sup> thereby virtually sealing their life-chances. Since these tests and the resultant educational policies accorded with the dominant ideology in society about the social hierarchy, they received approbation by those in powerful educational positions.

Thus ideology can be seen to affect the non-elite subjects to a great extent. But to suggest that they "enjoy high status"<sup>54</sup> with the pupils because they are related to their occupational future is not only somewhat ingenuous but also delusory. If this was the case then the subject would, by definition, appeal to all pupils regardless of sex or ability. In reality, the

domestic subjects 'appeal' to pupils on the same grounds as any other subject - namely the degree of success achieved. Within this context are the many contributory factors such as range of knowledge experienced within the subject, the pedagogical relationship and external influences such as the attitudes of parents etc.

It is surely naive to suggest that 'A' and 'B' stream pupils enjoy non-elite subjects in the early secondary school years yet as they approach their 'occupational future' it becomes merely the prerogative of the lower streams. Research would suggest that the vast majority of girls see marriage as their occupational future and adjust their achievement motivation to meet this.<sup>55</sup> Certainly through the successful socialisation by the constraints of the curriculum social mobility for girls is restricted. Thus on the basis of this criteria the argument is fallacious, and can be said to mask other social ideologies regarding the value of women and their work.<sup>56</sup>

Where a socio-academic hierarchy of subjects obtains a major variable of influence is the timing of differentiation and specialisation.<sup>57</sup> Hopper's analysis of rejection fails to take into account either class bias or the effects of teacher expectation. The general assumption that ....

"The higher the degree of early formal differentiation and specialisation the greater the probability that a 'suitable' person will be rejected because the selection procedures are too stringent .... (and that) the lower the degree, the greater the probability that an unsuitable person will be accepted because the selection procedures have been too lenient" 58

is a 'selective' view, although it contains a fairly strong element of truth. Grammar school results indicate that a substantial number of 'unsuitable' persons were accepted on the basis of fairly stringent conditions (11+)<sup>59</sup> whilst an even greater number were accepted mistakenly when the major yardstick was the Headteacher's Report.<sup>60</sup>

What Hopper's analysis fails to account for is the pre-school effects of parents and the subsequent effect of teachers. Social mobility starts in the home in the pre-school years. It may be accelerated or retarded by school experiences, of which selection is but one. The philosophy of the headteacher and the quality and range of the education given are two major variables. These can be effected through the medium of the formal and the 'hidden' curriculum.<sup>61</sup> Teachers' attitudes and their expectations in relation to their pupils will also considerably affect a child's social mobility prospects. Inasmuch as it is now being admitted that a school does have a considerable influence<sup>62</sup> then it seems feasible to suggest that the ethos of the school engenders attitudes in other areas of activity, not least that of pupils' future expectations.<sup>63</sup>

Whilst the macro-educational route (i.e. the type of institutions one goes to) is of major importance, there is an almost equally important micro route - the internal one. However children come to be allocated in schools in the state system, their educational routes are even more finely circumscribed by the curriculum experienced. This can, and frequently does, severely limit the pupils' opportunities.<sup>64</sup> Particularly is this so where subjects

are academically stratified as is the case of the 'practical' subjects, which at the middle and upper ranges are invariably relegated to the lower ability streams.

Societies develop 'ideologies of legitimation' in order to cope with problems of organisation and order.<sup>65</sup> It is necessary for members of a society to be able to justify their position both to themselves and to others. Where this is achieved through a concept of 'preordination', as it was in Britain, then 'proof' of the 'inevitability' of the order is not required. If this concept is challenged however, and the traditional order is shown to be based on fallacies then social turmoil is likely to erupt. Once the possibility of social mobility is appreciated and the means recognised (i.e. education) then control over the disposition of knowledge, through the curriculum, will be sought by the aspirers.

In a stratified society a dominant elite has necessarily to obtain the compliance of other less powerful groups. To achieve and maintain this it is likely to devise schemes whereby the potentially able (and therefore 'dangerous') leaders from subordinate and competing groups are assimilated. In Britain the examination scheme ostensibly offers 'achievement-through-contest' thereby 'legitimising' the exclusion of many. But 'contest' often masks 'sponsorship'<sup>66</sup>: children start unequal owing to their family background, and the degree of sponsorship varies.<sup>67</sup>

Selection processes appear to centre on either a universalistic or a particularistic ideology.<sup>68</sup> Which one obtains rests on whether



the society operates on a basis of ascribed or achieved statuses. Thus, whether a knowledge-based skill or social skills are the more important to society will constitute the basis for selection.<sup>69</sup>

The universalistic quality suggests maximum opportunity exists to acquire the skills and qualities previously open to only a certain section of the populace: the particularistic quality embraces the concept of elitism par excellence. In this latter instance, there is a system of ascribed characteristics and learning opportunities which is strictly limited to specific groups. Thus the opportunities for social mobility depend upon the basis of selection, whether it is social, meritocratic or a synthesis of both.

From the ideological qualities of universalism and particularism, the 'Aristocratic' and 'Paternalistic' ideologies arose. The former saw privilege as being justified on the basis of diffuse skills and ascribed characteristics (rooted in the subjective criteria of social class.)<sup>70</sup> The 'Paternalistic' ideology justifies selection and allocation on the basis of society's needs and in their fulfilment. But inevitably the reality of 'needs' depends on who defines them.

If social mobility is defined on the basis of male achievement (and thereby the family) rather than on an individual basis then only his work and personal qualities will be considered. From this it can be seen that women and their work are of minimal importance in the eyes of society, in terms of its 'needs'. Therefore the education offered will reflect this assessment. Hence the low evaluation of the domestic subjects : they are not a potential source of social mobility. Cultural factors are of immense consequence in this evaluation.

### The Cultural Function of Education

It is suggested that the cultural function of education is to inculcate a congruence of norms, values, behaviours etc. in relation to the particular society. It is round this point that the question of the cultural basis of the curriculum revolves. Whether 'high' or 'common' culture should constitute the curriculum framework is currently being considered in the light of past failures.<sup>71</sup> It is argued here that the polarisation is, in the final analysis, misdirected if not irrelevant, for there are inherent dangers in both. A 'high' culture based curriculum risks excluding many individuals by virtue of their alienation whilst a 'common' one is in danger of being equated with 'local' culture.<sup>72</sup> The relevance of this for the domestic subjects is that a 'high' culture-based curriculum would be likely to exclude even the most advanced forms of them whilst the common-culture based curriculum might well limit them to the sphere of 'cooking' only. Culture is not merely to do with a " ... traditional body of human achievement",<sup>73</sup> which appears to be the normal curriculum interpretation: it has to do with " ... a total pattern of a society's life."<sup>74</sup> In this respect the importance of the domestic subjects is manifestly relevant.

Some would maintain that culture represents " ... a social consensus."<sup>75</sup> To say this though is to ignore the power structure in a society. What perhaps could be said is that it constitutes a residual of past conflicts concerning 'culture' and consequently derives from 'dead' social structures.<sup>76</sup> Therefore an educational

system is likely to base its cultural function on past visible successes.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, past culture could be said to be manifestly the individualistic values of specific patrons (e.g. in Music, Art etc.) and thus have been subject, not to true artistic evaluation, but to the whims and fancies of socially powerful people - as is indicated by 'fashion' in composers, artists etc.<sup>78</sup>

If, as Davies argues, the manifest function of education is the management of knowledge, one must ask to what end and with what effect? The management of knowledge<sup>79</sup> is itself concerned with social stratification and hence inequality. Since these are themselves encompassed by ideologies, then by definition, as Hopper states, "All knowledge is shrouded in ideology."<sup>80</sup> When a latent ideology is combined within a manifest ideology then indeed the knowledge becomes subservient to the ideology. Such is the case of the domestic subjects.

### Ideology in the Domestic Subjects

Ideology is endemic in the domestic subjects. Taylor argues that teachers decide the 'what' and 'how' before the 'why' when planning courses.<sup>81</sup> At first sight this appears to be the case, but it ignores the power of ideology to structure the 'why' before courses even reach the planning stage.<sup>82</sup> Failure to consider the 'why' in relation to content before the other factors is perhaps a major drawback to the development of the subject. By constructing courses in terms of content before aims and objectives the status quo is preserved. This would itself appear to be the latent aim of the domestic subjects.

Most subjects have been clearly governed by the ideology of the 'cultivated man' in that they were acceptable for entry to universities. With the domestic subjects this has not obtained. In the Victorian era, influenced by the ethics of Utilitarianism and Evangelicism,<sup>83</sup> the ideology of 'respectability' dominated the domestic subjects.<sup>84</sup> Encapsulated within this was the work ethic which maintained that the disciplined worker was the successful worker. Coupled with the ideal of 'morality' - preached if not practised, the danger of these virtues being synthesised into vices rather than virtues was very considerable. The residual effect is to be found in the domestic subjects: the insistence of unremitting diligence could be transformed into an unwholesome obsession with work for its own sake.<sup>85</sup> Yet this ideology is still to be found in considerable abundance. Similarly, the course of the domestic subjects reveals the pervasiveness of social ideologies through the content, methodologies and examinations.

One of the most accurate reflections of a subject is in its examinations, in the content and value in terms of affording access to power and to other knowledge levels, as well as to social mobility. Whereas with most subjects the content, and almost by definition the pedagogy too, was determined by external examinations by virtue of their power to confer access to universities,<sup>86</sup> in the case of the domestic subjects these will be shown to be in an anomalous situation.



Thus the question of 'Power' and 'Authority' becomes central. The degree to which the domestic subjects' development has been affected by 'social crises' or the 'chance emergence' of highly influential, almost charismatic individuals is more marked than in any other subject.

### Defining the field of Power and Authority

Mannheim's concept of 'carrying parties'<sup>87</sup> as being essential for the effectiveness of ideologies, does not perhaps incorporate the notion of individuals. Yet such is the case in the domestic subjects. Usually women, these individuals' power rather than their authority had quite a traumatic effect.

By distinguishing between 'Power' and 'Authority' it becomes possible to explain the directions which the domestic subjects have taken over the years. 'Power' implies the ability to influence the actions of others even against their will.<sup>88</sup> 'Authority' on the other hand is the likelihood of persuading others to conform, but which, in the final analysis, cannot be enforced.<sup>89</sup> Thus the former entails the notion of sanctions : the latter infers the existence of choice - to conform or not, without fear of sanctions being applied. This definition of 'Authority' likewise embraces the concept of charismatic leadership or 'the highly influential individual' who arises.<sup>90</sup> The charismatic authority of the early founders was fairly rapidly transformed into power - a necessary concomitant for the successful implementation of their ideologies.

Charisma itself evaporates once the routinisation required to effect an ideology is activated.<sup>91</sup> Authority within this framework is likely to achieve the attitude change which was essential in order to accomplish these individuals' ideals: the use of power through the medium of 'rewards' is insidious but effective. Thus the power of the Principals was total. Perhaps this was necessary at the time since Domestic Science colleges depended on subscriptions etc. to finance all their courses,<sup>92</sup> but it did lead to a monoperspective. A closer examination of the history of the domestic subjects will afford insights into the effects of ideology within their domain.

### Conclusion

Ideology is subtle and pervasive: it manipulates, cajoles and commands. In the school curriculum it can be seen to operate at three levels:-

1. the education structural system
2. the curriculum - both formal and 'hidden'
3. the individual - professional and client

Societies seek to legitimise each facet of an education system and the more segmented it is, the greater is the potential for conflicting ideologies to arise. The ability of dominant groups to retain their influence rests in their capacity to transpose and thereby mystify their ideologies. Thus the perpetuation of inequality in society and the irreversibility of archaic attitudes towards, and knowledge of, the domestic subjects. The pervasiveness of values with regard

to the socio-sexual hierarchy in Britain rests on the continued avoidance of contest from half the population. The domestic subjects have thus been effective indeed as a vehicle of social ideologies.



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## Chapter II

### The History of the Domestic Subjects

"It is more essential for a nation to produce vigorous offspring, than to educate girls to the highest standard. By the highest physical education girls can be rendered strong, comely, and well proportioned; while by the highest mental culture (without this physical basis) they may be transformed into mere 'blue stockings' or neurotics, or a combination of both."

source: 'School Hygiene' Lyster. (1926)

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#### Origins

The earliest records of domestic subjects as an area of formal study appears to be in relation to competitions held in the Aeolian Islands over two thousand years ago. Here, in contrast to other contests which were usually an imitation of boys' education, there were competitions in specifically feminine subjects such as Beauty, Moral Poise and Domestic Science.<sup>1</sup>

As an area of regular study however, the domestic subjects can be traced back to the curriculum recommended by Plato for both boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> He considered that knowledge of hygiene and diet was essential for personal well-being, but related this to 'gymnastics' rather than domestic knowledge or skills. The curriculum recommended was however, only for the elite upper classes: the practical domestic skills of weaving, spinning, sewing and cooking were still to be passed on in situ from mother to daughter.

There were schools of cookery for the purpose of professional training (e.g. of cooks) but little is known about the students or courses. It seems however, that a minimum course of ten months was recommended<sup>3</sup> - a noteworthy point in view of the three months deemed to be adequate for British schools of cookery later on.

It was perhaps through the influence of Aristotle which first imbued the domestic subjects with the contempt which still frequently obtains towards them today.<sup>4</sup> He distinguished between 'liberal' and 'illiberal' studies. The former were, he decreed, suitable for the upper classes, whilst the latter, which included the arts and crafts practised by slaves, were suitable for the other classes. Aristotle also maintained that mechanical, wage-earning occupations 'absorb and degrade the mind'<sup>5</sup> and the domestic skills were classified within this context. Such a view ignored the organisational skill which was but one facet of domestic skill.

The domestic skills, which today are synthesised into one overall category, were originally seen as two distinct competences; management was an upper class occupation while execution was a lower one. The social evaluation of women was in fact based on the concept of the upper classes although writings tend to infer a homogeneity, frequently casting all women within one group.<sup>6</sup> In the Grecian era, women of the upper classes were regarded as the equals, indeed the superiors of men<sup>7</sup> : they were valued for their competence in war and statesmanship as the writings of Socrates makes apparent.<sup>8</sup> Thus the domestic subjects were circumscribed



with the ideology of a distinct, inviolable, hierarchical social order.

During the Roman era the social evaluation of women changed. The cult of masculinity, which emanated from the ideology of Imperialism, relegated women to the home. The division of labour became sexually based - men to the farming and military life, women to the domestic skills. The patriarchal Roman society, in which the role of wife and slave gradually began to fuse, paved the way towards the ideology of feminine domesticity. With the development of Christianity as well, the status of women bifurcated: on the one hand they were spiritually exalted through religion and socially as the result of the notion of chivalry. Yet on the other hand they were degraded in that they were seen as a source of evil, of temptation to man<sup>9</sup>, and became physically, emotionally and psychologically dependent on man.

The education of girls came to be seen as relevant only to the fulfilment of man. This attitude remained for centuries. Even as late as the seventeenth century Fenelon's ideas regarding the education of girls was to equip them with the attributes pertaining to motherhood including high levels of competence in household management and the social arts.<sup>10</sup> This ideology of the feminine role was to be perpetuated for over three hundred years when it was reiterated in Lyster's Report on school hygiene.<sup>11</sup> Likewise Rousseau (1712-1778), for all his forward thinking on education, envisaged that of women's as being related only to the needs of men.<sup>12</sup>

Eighteenth Century

Whilst Rousseau was propounding his views on education and his observations on the role of women, British writers<sup>13</sup> of the period were also concerned with the domestic capabilities of women - or rather, the lack of them.<sup>14</sup> Initially however, this was only insofar as the upper classes were concerned.<sup>15</sup> Thus what comprised 'domestic subjects' in the private schools were mainly the skills required to manage large households and numerous servants. The forward planning, necessitated in an age when dealing with merchants who bought in foreign markets was the norm, had demanded considerable expertise.<sup>16</sup> These skills were seen to be in decline as shops proliferated with the growth of the entrepreneurial class of the industrial era. Private schools and Mrs. Beeton arose to provide the knowledge and skills required for the changing situation as well as to preserve the past skills such as breadmaking.<sup>17</sup>

Concern also developed regarding the domestic skills of the working class. However, this may be seen as the middle-classes seeking to preserve the source of their servant class rather than altruism on their behalf. The enthusiasm for the domestic subjects then in the nineteenth century may be seen as existing on two distinct levels, reflecting conflicting social ideologies. The manifest ideology was concern for the education and quality of home-life of the working classes but the latent one was the preservation of the status-quo. A third reason, which falls within Berger's notion of 'package' in relation to processes of modernization,<sup>18</sup> was the need to relieve the boredom of the

lonely lives of the middle-class women. This enthusiasm however was not to benefit the domestic subjects per se since a different attitude of mind was invoked by those who indulged in them without actually having to do them.<sup>19</sup>

### Nineteenth Century developments

#### Social order and social orders

In the nineteenth century a 'hierarchical community'<sup>20</sup> existed in Britain. The social structure was bound up with tradition and stability. Two social ideologies prevailed during this epoch - social Darwinism<sup>21</sup> and Liberalism.<sup>22</sup> The former ideology envisaged man as fundamentally intractable and the social order as inviolable. The latter ideology embraced the concept of the 'educated man', the intellectual mind

" ... filled with the prospect of a loftier notion of educated leisure"

and of "knowledge ... acquired and enjoyed for its own sake"<sup>23</sup>

Although education for the masses gradually became a reality in this century the 'liberty' ideology was not extended to the lower social orders: their education was curtailed sufficiently to support the continuation of the social hierarchy by ensuring that their education only allowed them to appreciate, not question, their station in life.<sup>24</sup>

In the first decade of the century, only a very small proportion of children received any lengthy or regular education. By the final decades a state system had been established and free, compulsory education - albeit part-time still for many - from the age of five. The nature of the education was however strictly ideologically circumscribed.

#### Control over knowledge (nineteenth century)

The social disposition of knowledge in society is a crucial factor in social mobility.<sup>25</sup> Therefore control over access to and types of knowledge is essential to those seeking to determine its direction. In the early decades of the nineteenth century control lay with three groups: the local rate-payers (landowners, professionals and other 'men of means'), the clergy and the academics (the universities). Their power lay in the financial monopoly they wielded - an essential prerequisite to effect an ideology.<sup>26</sup> These three social groups could afford to buy their own children's education and, by means of subscriptions to various institutions (e.g. the Mechanics Institute) and Voluntary Societies (e.g. workhouse, schools etc.) to support the education (such as it was) of the labouring classes. A 'monopoly cycle' in fact operated: through possession of financial means they bought knowledge which was not available to the poor. This assured them of access to occupations which afforded high incomes, high status and power positions in society in turn this gave them power over the education system.

Very gradually this monopoly was challenged. The assertive group comprised the new middle classes, merchants, business men etc. Their ideology was that of the 'self-made man' and contained the notion of the accumulation and reinvestment of capital.<sup>27</sup> This challenged the aristocratic ideology of 'the English Gentleman' although in effect the two ideologies together dominated the British social scene and order.

The dual ideology (aristocratic and bourgeois) existed at the time of the establishment of the compulsory state education system in 1870. It became even more marked with the introduction of what are known as the 'Domestic Subjects' - Cookery, Housewifery and Laundrywork. Although the manifest ideology of education was to raise the knowledge level and social condition of the labouring poor the disposition of knowledge was socially determined, socially stratified and gender based. The 'lower orders' were restricted to a diet of the four 'R's - reading, arithmetic, writing and religion, with the addition of 'special' subjects, history, geography and science for the boys, the domestic subjects for the girls. Whilst it may be maintained that this accorded with the needs for a more literate society in an industrial era, the restriction of girls' education to what was not only vocational but status limiting was in effect a double-bind ideology, that of social status and sexual inferiority.

Industrialisation had led to the ideology of 'feminine domesticity'. This had promoted the concept of woman's work and

a gender based division of labour. Thus the domestic subjects were doubly vocational - low-evaluated occupation and sexually based inferiority. The ideologies prevalent in the Victorian era were the result of accelerating social change. A constellation of ideologies, religious, social, sexual etc. were centralised and focussed in the educational system, notably the curriculum, especially as it related to girls.

### The Victorian Ethos

The turgid Victorian social scene spawned a range of ideologies which are suggestive of a five-class system rather than the more traditional one of three classes.<sup>28</sup> A multiplicity of groups asserted their 'solutions' to social problems : some, such as that of the Evangelists were 'Religious', others were directly related to the economic scene (e.g. Utilitarians) whilst others combined the two in an indirect manner through social norms which were essentially 'class' based. In this context there existed a social euphemism: norms about sexual behaviours were an integral part of the capitalist economic ideology.<sup>29</sup> The ideology of 'Respectability' which embraced the concept of thrift was transferred from the economic scene to the personal one. As such it was contained within the domestic subjects where, for example, sewing was to induce attitudes of mind, habits of work and physical endurance which would stand them in good stead for their future roles.<sup>30</sup>

Social and moral rectitude were deemed by the Evangelists to be due to bad homes. Concerned as they were with public morality they saw it as depending on private virtue.<sup>31</sup> Consequently they were determined that (working-class) women must be made virtuous - she must become a good home maker. It seems that the appalling living and working conditions of these women, which were beyond their control and which left them bereft of time or energy to indulge in homemaking skills, were of rather less concern. This is reflected in the writings of Sillitoe who talked of working class women " ... living weakly in a groove" which thereby passed on this moralistic denunciation in the annals of the domestic subjects history.<sup>32</sup>

The apparent lack of understanding portrayed by the domestic subjects teachers in those early days may be seen as merely reflecting the general insensitivity to the social conditions of others' plight. The view for example, expressed by Yoxall, regarding thriftlessness is indicative of the middle-class perspective :

"In most cases it was not poverty that starved the family so much as the wife's thriftlessness and slatternly habits; knowing nothing of food values and wasting money on comparatively expensive and un nourishing food, she would serve it up, ill cooked and thoroughly unappetising, to a family at once brutalised and weakened by the dirty and unhygienic conditions of its daily life." <sup>33</sup>

Nowhere in either Yoxall's or Sillitoe's writings is there any recrimination against those who, knowingly, perpetrated many of the 'unhygienic conditions' on the working classes: the infected, diluted milk which was unreported<sup>34</sup> or the extremely poor but expensive water supply<sup>35</sup> which barely provided enough for cooking

purposes let alone household or personal cleaning. Nor do these writers refer to the psychological plight of working class mothers which results from the unremitting struggle against impossible physical odds: individual deprivation plus social neglect lead to a loss of morale.<sup>36</sup> The concept of 'family mindedness' was a luxury afforded to the middle and upper classes only. The notion that they were '... the most family minded generation in history'<sup>37</sup> illustrates the ability of a dominant group to perpetuate their ideologies through the possession of a monopoly; economic means enabled their families to be recorded through photographs, novels etc. The nearest many working class members had ever been to a real family was as a servant. Yet it was this 'family' concept which was to dominate the domestic subjects. The ideology of social differentiation was acknowledged in these subjects by the nature of the courses offered (e.g. 'Artisan' cookery; 'Household'; 'High Class').

The social evaluation of the 'self-made man', epitomised through his property, lay beneath 'family mindedness'. The middle-class Victorian family projected the image of the 'man of property'; wives, children, servants and other visible signs of paraphernalia were a measure of 'success'.<sup>38</sup> Recent exposés of middle-class Victorian morality has somewhat dented this image of family mindedness.<sup>39</sup>



These values were conveniently supported by the educational theories of the day - although it might be argued that they merely adapted to the prevailing social conditions. Through the narrow, vocational curriculum the dominant groups (aristocrats and bourgeoisie) were able to implement a latent 'protective' ideology whilst manifesting a 'promotional' one.

It was in this social climate that the domestic subjects came to be officially incorporated into the state curriculum (1875). By the turn of the century the subjects were fairly well established. In 1875 Cookery was defined as a 'Specific Subject'.<sup>40</sup> However, the ideology of 'Utilitarianism' also prevailed. This envisaged the education system, like the economy, as a self-perpetuating, closed system in which in-put and out-put were always in balance.<sup>41</sup> Since Local Authorities were responsible for financing cookery classes they were reluctant to introduce the subject and by 1885 less than fifty per cent had in fact done so.<sup>42</sup> Nor was the subject viewed sympathetically by headteachers - on account of timetabling difficulties, or ordinary teachers who regarded it as a 'freak subject'.<sup>43</sup> Although it was said that this reaction was due to the fact that it was out of the hand (control?) of ordinary teachers, it could be that class ideologies were operating. The attempt to get ordinary teachers to take up the teaching of domestic subjects was only partially successful. The move was made on account of the 'questionable character' of the teachers being produced by the Domestic Science schools.<sup>44</sup>



It is said that the limited success was due in part to the fact that teachers had difficulty in attending the classes provided for this training.<sup>45</sup> Yet at Berridge House they were '... highly successful'.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the voluble disapproval of cookery teachers by parents on the grounds that they were " ... bigotted about fingernails" and overconcerned with the arrangement of hair,<sup>47</sup> may well have influenced many 'ordinary' teachers not to take it up. Yet where already qualified elementary teachers did do so, they were 'exceedingly successful',<sup>48</sup> because they were able " ... to bring one lesson to bear upon another", thereby making the pupils feel that it was " ... part and parcel of their ordinary work."<sup>49</sup>

Opposition was no less from the parents. The 'Artisan' cookery which was being foisted on the working classes was in marked contrast to that recommended for the middle classes. It was therefore seen, in all probability, by the working classes as a challenge to almost the only area of their lives where they could exercise a degree of autonomy. It was probably interpreted as an attempt by the middle classes to make the workers accept their socially inferior position. Methods and recipes put forward with the intention of developing thriftiness in the working classes (e.g. stews, boiling rather than frying) were totally alien to them. Teachers harangued pupils about meat but failed to teach vegetable cookery although the diet of the working classes contained little of the former and much of the latter.<sup>50</sup>

Social class values stem from the reality of existence, which as Marx stated, determine an individual's consciousness.<sup>51</sup> It seems though that the parents did not want their children's consciousness determined by their existence: they objected strongly to their daughters doing "such dirty work",<sup>52</sup> such as blackleading grates. This may have been because protective clothing was not worn in the early days and this type of work involved extra laundering on the part of already hard-pressed mothers. The parents' neat inversion of the teacher's reality (re 'dirty work') offers an interesting psychological defence mechanism utilised by the working class. In retrospect it might be suggested that the working classes had adopted the manifest educational ideology of the furtherance of life-chances through enhanced educational opportunities and therefore resented this apparent attempt to inhibit progress. The insensitivity of many cookery teachers to the realities of their pupils' existence was perhaps the root cause of the antagonism which was to affect the domestic subjects for so long. However, there were those who saw the need for teachers to be aware of their pupils' background (e.g. F.L. Calder).<sup>53</sup> For this reason 'Social Science' was introduced into the training scheme. Unfortunately the effects of this move have not been so marked as the 'practical' aspects of cookery: there is still an apparent lack of appreciation of the realities of working class life and the consequent real demands of the subject.<sup>54</sup> Not until 1905, when women Inspectors "with great practical experience"<sup>55</sup> were appointed, were the domestic subjects enhanced and Sir Robert Morant's Report (1907)

memorandum gave significance to them.<sup>56</sup>

### Twentieth Century: early decades

The turn of the century may be regarded as something of a water-shed in the history of the domestic subjects. Public awareness of the state of British society and the social conscience were aroused by two phenomena:

1. Reports on poverty by Booth and Rowntree<sup>57</sup>
2. The condition of the Boer war recruits<sup>58</sup>

It is more likely that the latter was the flashpoint for action since it demoralized the self-image of society which prided itself on its military prowess. The emaciated appearance of the recruits stimulated concern for the quality of the soldier material being produced by the working classes. Once again, the spectre of racial degeneration evoked more reaction than had done the work of social reformers who were attempting to solve the problem of London's residuum of casual labour.<sup>59</sup>

The clash of ideologies regarding the nature of help, whether state or self-help ensued. A minority Report by Beveridge which accompanied the Royal Commission on Poverty Report (1908) invoked the ideology of a 'caring society'. This assertive ideology however did not prevail against that of the established one of 'self-help', despite the fact that this was not available to all.

Potential assertion of the new ideology was effectively deflected by two means:-

1. political measures which effected social control through welfare rather than direct political measures.
2. the enhancement of an apparently meritocratic society through the education system.

Measures such as the provision of school meals and medical examinations in schools together with the emphasis on physical training were gestures towards the solution of the problem. The Report on Physical Deterioration (1907) even outlined exercises designed to aid digestion.<sup>60</sup> The disregard for the importance of education in nutrition and health, despite the warnings of H.M.Is<sup>61</sup> was to have profoundly disturbing repercussions for many decades.

Welfare measures instituted prior to the first world war acted as palliatives to those who asserted the ideology of societal support. The deflection of the 'uneasy classes'<sup>62</sup> was achieved through the establishment of a statutory examination system (1918)<sup>63</sup> after several years of apparent deferment.

In reality this enabled the elite to perpetuate their domination of both the education system and the social hierarchy: by facilitating the self-advancement of the potential challengers they absorbed them into the elite, they not only effectively emasculated their danger but also legitimized the success of the elite through the apparent competitive system. The numbers were

strictly limited, not least by the relatively few Grammar school places available.<sup>64</sup> In the examination system the ideology of self-achievement was subtly entwined with that of the 'cultivated man'<sup>65</sup> since the knowledge which counted was not the modern scientific body of knowledge or even mathematics : the 'Greats', Latin etc. were the ones which warranted academic reward, regardless of their utility to society. Such was the hypocrisy of education: utilitarianism applied at the one level, not at the other.

The ideology of differentiation on a hierarchical basis of social worth gained support from the 'evidence' of psychologists in terms of intelligence inheritability.<sup>66</sup> In turn this was given 'official' blessing in Reports such as Hadow (1926) and (1931) and the Spens Report (1938). This 'evidence', now openly questioned and seemingly discredited,<sup>67</sup> proffered a comfortable rationalisation of the existing social order by virtually equating intelligence with social status. This was despite the noted 'artificial and often mistaken selection line'<sup>68</sup> which divided pupils into 'ability' groups which were then restricted to a type of knowledge defined as suitable by the powerful elite.<sup>69</sup> Thus education was structured yet again on an apparent 'total' ideology, that of 'individualism', although in reality it was the 'particular' ideology of a powerful minority.

Within the tripartite system which emerged from the selective system arising from these psychological revelations, the domestic subjects were openly recognised as being suitable

for the 'more practical' pupil. The concept of 'educational compensation' was a panacea designed to 'gentle the masses'. Support for the domestic subjects could once again be seen to be ephemeral. To parody Lowe, if they were not academic, they were at least to be 'practical'.

During the first world war (1914-1918) the domestic subjects were reputedly enhanced by Government support. Closer examination however reveals that this was only a neat manipulation of ideologies to meet the demands of society. It has often been assumed that the need for cooks led to an increase in the teaching of the domestic subjects. In reality though, it is suggested that it was the fact that many of the teachers themselves went into the field kitchens which made this appear to be the case. The schools were 'devastated' by each of the two world wars in fact.<sup>70</sup>

'Competent practitioners' replaced the teachers: and it is this fact which was so detrimental to the image of the subject - making it appear that it did not require the competences of 'ordinary' teachers.

#### The Inter-war years (1920-1940s)

During the post first world war decades (1920s - 1930s) it could be said that ideology in education and society was Janus-headed, inasmuch as the dominant groups were 'legitimised' by the subordinate orders through the belief that their interests were being catered for.

Merton<sup>71</sup> suggests that under such circumstances the 'lower orders' are themselves being ideological. But this apparent compliance may mask existing reality which could be one of the following :-

1. inertia - through not perceiving any need for education
2. despair - due to feeling of inability to affect the course of events through lack of access or time
3. ignorance - of how to participate in either formulating or opposing ideologies
4. rationalisation - appraisal from a personal perspective leading to a decision that action offers no advantage

Whatever the reason, in the absence of any contra-ideology being asserted, a dominant group is able to sustain its influence. Effective assertion against prevailing ideologies was not really achieved in education until the second half of the century.

Support for the domestic subjects after the first world war was based on social not educational criteria. With the return of men, women were required to relinquish the posts they had successfully filled in time of need because the economy did not expand sufficiently to create jobs for all. Therefore the ideology of feminine domesticity was once again resurrected. This was a complete reversal of the war-time situation when women's domesticity had ceased to be a masculine convenience. Then they had been



admonished for adhering to the ideology: Walter Long, a Conservative MP, argued that " ... where women believe their place is in the home, that idea must be met and combated"<sup>72</sup>.

Emphasis on feminine domesticity was again given in the Hadow Report (1926). This time it was combined with emergent psychological 'evidence' concerning intelligence levels. In this Report the need for a 'practical and realistic bias' for non Grammar secondary school pupils was stressed. This would, it was argued " ... help their probable future occupations."<sup>73</sup> For girls this inevitably meant their roles as wife and mother: other opportunities were severely limited. Thus the domestic subjects attracted support not on educational grounds, which H.M.Is<sup>74</sup> had stressed, but for male social convenience which stemmed from ideologies regarding sex and role status.<sup>75</sup>

#### The era of the second world war

During these years (1939-1945) the domestic subjects were once again ostensibly promoted. But this was again on social not educational grounds. For example, the practice of make-do-and-mend which would be a useful skill under any circumstances, not least that of economic decline, was quickly dropped after the war. Stress on economy recipes and methods, again important in terms of small-budget management, was reduced immediately after

the war and reports on the extravagances in recipes since has been noted.<sup>76</sup> In contrast to the original ideology underlying the domestic subjects, as epitomised by its proponents (e.g. Miss F.L. Calder), the response to the consumerist age was marked by an extravagance quite contrary to the concept of combatting poverty.

### Post second world war (1950-1960s)

The Norwood Report (1943) had advocated the ability grouping of pupils for educational purposes.<sup>77</sup> It embraced the concept of 'natural compensation' by suggesting that children who were not 'academic' were naturally more 'practical'. This damaged the domestic subjects considerably: it did not enhance them as is sometimes maintained. It virtually equated them with low intelligence for as in the Spens Report, they were advocated for the Secondary Modern pupils. The ideology of the 'cultivated man' still dominated; the doctrine of feminine domesticity was reactivated to suit the demands of the capitalist system which required the supportive feminine role to enable males to fulfil the time-consuming and total dedication demanded by industry.<sup>78</sup>

Despite platitudes regarding classlessness, wartime experiences had highlighted differences in social group values. As people gradually became more aware of these contrasts a consciousness grew that inequality was frequently man-made and

therefore avoidable. New ideologies were born, old ones challenged. The most important assertive ideology was that relating to 'equality'. A growing awareness of the effects of social inequality in terms of justice culminated in attempts to restructure and reform the education system. This was regarded as the key to the equalising of life-chances

After the initial flush of enthusiasm for equality however the realisation that this posited an egalitarian society, and thereby threatened the status quo, led to a fairly rapid volte-face. By 'semantic fluctuation'<sup>79</sup> the very obverse of equality, equal opportunity (to be unequal) obtained.<sup>80</sup> Through this redefinition, the ideology of the dominant group prevailed: the ideology of a social hierarchy, superiority and the 'cultivated man'. This illustrates the ability of a dominant group to manipulate through redefinitions the original meaning of an ideology. By means of such adaptations assertive ideologies may be effectively counteracted.<sup>81</sup> Where a new ideology is successfully asserted, through the use of 'power' rather than 'authority'<sup>82</sup> and therefore does not involve an adaptation or masquerade,<sup>83</sup> then a dichotomy between reality and ideology may well lead to open confrontation with totally unintended consequences.<sup>84</sup>

In the post-war years the assertive ideology successfully if slowly challenged the cherished beliefs of the existing, dominant

ideology, not least through the work of sociologists. The efficacy of the eleven - plus to achieve the stated aims was disproved.<sup>85</sup> Theoretically, educational routes became less defined<sup>86</sup> and the effects of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' recognised. But the challenge to the fundamental premise of differentiation did not benefit the domestic subjects as much as might have been expected. This was despite supportive 'evidence' from a report on 'Early Leaving'<sup>87</sup> (1954). In this report the accolade of approval was accorded to the domestic subjects by pupils in terms of their relevance and interest.<sup>88</sup> Thus the report was a superlative twist of the socio-educational knife, since implicit in it was the ideology of a knowledge hierarchy. The 'practical' subjects were being equated with the 'failures' of the system. Consequently, although reputedly the report was taken to be a welcome impetus for the domestic subjects, it in fact diminished their already precarious standing. While other subjects benefitted from the upsurge of curriculum development and new subjects such as 'Environmental Studies' and Sociology<sup>89</sup> etc. became accepted as University entrance qualifications, the domestic subjects failed to do so. The prevailing insatiable public appetite for paper qualifications therefore depressed the subject's value even further despite very considerable advances in the type and depth of knowledge which was entailed.<sup>90</sup>

However, some benefit did accrue from the report. Physical resources for the subject improved and increased lip-service was paid to its value. However, the noted improvement of provisions

was part of the general educational development which was effected in an era of relative affluence. The latter was perhaps more a salving of the public conscience which could be afforded in the generally favourable economic climate. Allowances for education were increased, not least for the middle and upper classes: therefore they were able to afford the extension of their ideology to include some all-round improvement. As a subject it remained undervalued: it was related to non-work<sup>91</sup> and non-success. It benefitted from the revelations concerning the unequal distribution of educational resources at various levels.<sup>92</sup>

Other Reports which ostensibly supported the ideology of equality were in reality maintaining the ruling ideology. The Newsom Report (1963) in referring to the curriculum of the pupils in the lower categories demonstrated somewhat patronising beliefs in their support of embroidery etc. and the vocational nature of the domestic subjects.<sup>93</sup>

Although in this report the committee was at pains to avoid the concept of 'below average' being equated with 'inferiority',<sup>94</sup> the two terms became synonymous in the eyes of the public and the teaching profession who will always latch on to a key word which will encapsulate, simplify and thereby resolve dissonance.<sup>95</sup> 'Newsom kids' became equated with 'Newsom courses' and the 'easy, practical, relevant' subjects:<sup>96</sup> 'recipe knowledge' generates recipe solutions.<sup>97</sup> By such means was social and sexual

discrimination perpetuated, using the domestic subjects as the 'carrier'. From this it can be seen that Mannheim's concept of 'a carrying group' may be an unwitting, passive group as well as according with Berger's notion of 'intrinsic links'.<sup>98</sup>

The comprehensiveness of the middle class ideology<sup>99</sup> was expanded through further 'evidence' of psychologists and educationists under the guise of the theory of 'maternal deprivation',<sup>100</sup> a theory only recently challenged by the Clarkes.<sup>101</sup> Once again, a theory relating to feminine domesticity, that of motherhood, was utilised for male convenience and support of the capitalist system. This theory, which stressed the importance of mothering, was used to support the concept of motherhood. By means of a fear-arousal approach (as to the consequences of maternal deprivation) together with the increasing emphasis on educational achievement notional support was given to the domestic subjects. Child-development and Mothercraft courses proliferated - all too often lacking the underlying theory, thereby trivialising the work and undermining the potential of the domestic subjects.<sup>102</sup> Once again, by skilful manipulation of ideology, knowledge access was denied to many pupils as the result of their timetables being filled with 'practical, relevant' material.

Similarly, increased time was allocated to the domestic subjects when the school leaving age was raised (R.O.S.L.A.) (1972). In practice this almost inevitably resulted in 'more of the same' or merely more time for the same: courses were rarely expanded in either knowledge base or application.<sup>103</sup>

From this it can be deduced that the process of ideological implementation itself involves ideology; indeed this may be more important than the original ideology itself in terms of outcome.

### Ideology of Implementation

The means of implementation are of paramount importance because they constitute and define the avenues of interpretation. Thus who defines, and within what context, the means of implementation itself gives rise to ideologies. Political decisions are therefore inevitable; decisions which may accelerate, retard or even decimate ideologies. It is possible to divide the implementation process into two levels, the internal and the external, the micro and macro levels respectively. These levels may conflict or complement each other, for as Burgess and Platt remark

"... a perilous and largely uncharted maze intervenes between public statements of policy and their implementation".<sup>104</sup>

#### (i) the 'external' level

Ideology can be officially implemented through the physical structure of the education system : the nature and number of institutions permitted will determine educational routes available at any time.<sup>105</sup> Social awareness of the importance of educational routes lay behind the assertion of the Comprehensive ideology; yet official policy allowed for few adequate buildings to be constructed.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, although the dominant class appeared to conform to the

new ideology they were often able in practice to adhere to their former one on the grounds that Comprehensive education had 'failed'.<sup>107</sup> The domestic subjects became no more available to any other pupils than the lower streams initially. Together with the rising demand for qualifications and the increased size of schools it eventually transpired that the domestic subjects in fact became even lower down the hierarchy of subjects, except in instances where genuinely committed headteachers were appointed to new Comprehensive schools.<sup>108</sup>

Divisions within and between sectors of the education system are indicative of the ability of an ideology to be sustained or even expanded. The growth rate of the tertiary sector in Britain could be regarded as a means whereby the elite (social and educational) were able to retain their dominant position. Expansion of Universities and Polytechnics in the nineteen-sixties facilitated the amelioration of potential conflict by absorbing academic aspirers. This expansion of the elite's ideology of self-determination through achievement forestalled the danger that against competition they may in fact have forfeited their place. The 'cost' of this policy is only now being questioned.<sup>109</sup>

Challenge to the reigning ideologies was manifested in the youth ferment of the sixties.<sup>110</sup> The power of the elite was confirmed however with little alteration to their concepts of 'education'.<sup>111</sup>

At the other end of the age range, the nursery/pre school sector, is manifested the problem outlined above, namely that the implementation of an ideology is perhaps more important than its creation. Little has been achieved.

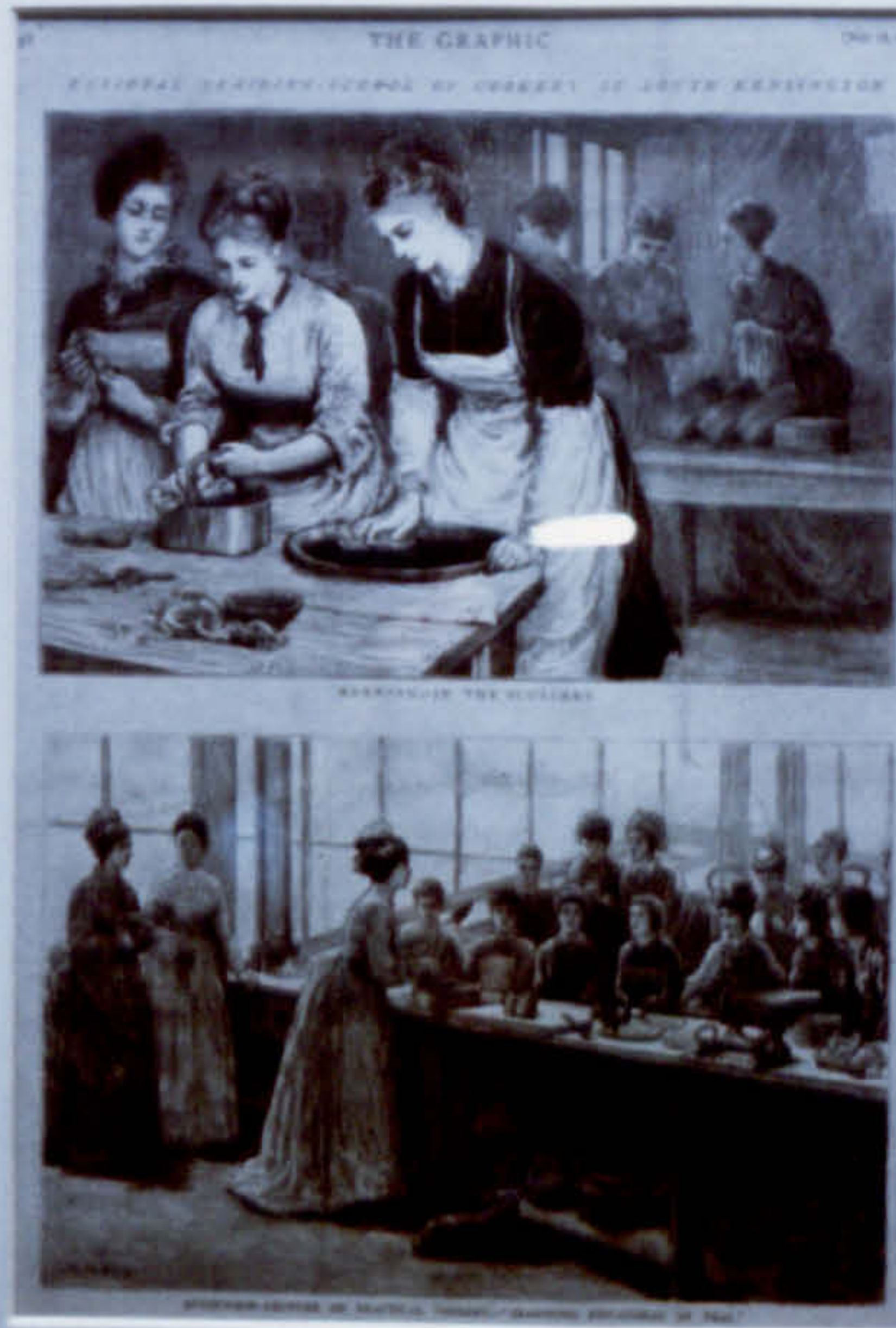


Regardless of the structure however, the 'internal' implementation is perhaps even more crucial.

(ii) The 'internal' level

It is at the 'internal' level that ideologies are often thwarted. It will be at this point of implementation that individuals' ideologies may clash. For example, the appointment of a Principal or Headteacher to an institution does not guarantee conformity to prevailing social ideologies<sup>112</sup> although it will be more likely to occur. Commitment on the part of others however may well depend on the conditions surrounding their engagement. The degree of centralisation may be of particular consequence: where this is high, it is possible for a dominant group to determine the curriculum and pedagogy (e.g. Russia and Germany). Where centralisation is low however, the autonomy of the Headteacher will prevail, as for example in Britain.<sup>113</sup>

The interweaving of ideologies and the interpretations of others' realities play a significant part in the implementation of ideologies. The power of the dominant social and educational groups is very marked in education. It is for this reason that the domestic subjects have continued to be depressed in real terms and their potential denied, even in an era when the ideologies of reconstruction and parity of esteem prevailed. They have been subject to social ideologies regarding sex, status and knowledge, all of which together comprise a 'package'<sup>114</sup> which constitutes girls' education.



In the early days  
several pupils  
would each carry  
out one part of  
a process

(photograph by  
courtesy of  
Surrey University)



In modern times each pupil executes a complete  
programme herself.  
(photograph by courtesy of Hope Valley College,  
Derbyshire)

least the vast majority of pupils whom the traditional curriculum has failed. Following an analysis of the fundamental concerns of the core curriculum the potential contribution of the domestic subjects is posited. It is stressed however that the current form and practices of the subject would require drastic revision and restructuring, but that nevertheless the subject has a very valid claim to make for a much more important, if not central position in the curriculum.

The likelihood of attaining this from the subject's own perspective is examined in Part IV through the medium of an empirical research which consisted of a three year programme of questionnaires and interviews. The future is not bright if the findings are indicative in any way. To paraphrase Marx, the subject contains the seed of its own destruction - unless a 'revolution' occurs.

Finally, it is pointed out that while it is unlikely to ever be seen as the core curriculum, given the power of social ideologies and the problem of attitude-lag, at least the present low evaluation is entirely erroneous in terms of its educational potential and societal investment.

The International scene

Although some countries are perhaps more forward in 'Family Studies' others have been somewhat dilatory concerning the introduction of homemaking studies. A major argument against the establishment of practical subjects in schools' curricula was that further additions would lead " ... either to lower standards or to an overloading of the pupils".<sup>115</sup> Therefore, as in the Grammar and Private schools of Britain, where a subject was not directly related to University entrance, there was very little support from teachers.

Another considerable deterrent to the inclusion of the practical subjects has always been the cost involved. This is perhaps particularly applicable in the case of countries where mass illiteracy is the major problem. There is strong opposition to manual occupations where social classes are widely separated, as in South America and East Asian countries.<sup>116</sup> In endeavouring to offer their citizens a modern existence the authorities are probably conscious that any activity which appears to be steeped in the past will not be acceptable as forward looking.<sup>117</sup>

These countries appear to believe that the domestic skills are 'naturally acquired'.<sup>118</sup> This may be so when the children are reared in an on-going context of home-making where the level of technology is low. However, with the increase in technological knowledge and the introduction of formal education which effectively

removes children from the home-making environment, the acquisition of these skills is not easily achieved. This is particularly true when the pace of change is escalating at an astronomical rate. It is only when mechanical aids fail that the realisation that the basic skills of survival are not naturally acquired is manifested. Such was the case during the industrial dispute of 1974 when the commonly accepted mass services of British society were severely disrupted. Necessary knowledge was then dispensed through the medium of television : it is a matter of speculation as to what might happen if that too failed coincidentally. Manifestly then, there is a need for basic domestic skills to be taught within the formal education system, but this must necessarily be in a manner relevant to each prevailing generational context.<sup>119</sup>

Some other countries, such as the Scandinavian ones, have reassessed their curricula with particular reference to basic human needs. Denmark for instance is concerned with the type of future adults and parents deemed desirable for their society. The Folkschools' duty is therefore seen as providing an education for life and not having one eye on examinations.<sup>120</sup> In contrast to the British experience, which essentially paid lip-service to this same ideology, Housecraft is taught to all girls as from their sixth year of schooling - approximately thirteen years of age, which is the time at which most of their British counterparts drop it. Similarly Needlework is learned during the first five years. 'Family Knowledge' is also an integral part of the

curriculum for all pupils, while in the 'New Gymnasium' (1960) a study of 'Society' is deemed to be essential. In Britain this is accorded only to the pupils of lower ability usually (C.S.E.).

In Sweden, Domestic Science forms part of the core curriculum for all pupils, not only in the Lower Department of the new Comprehensive schools (grades one to three) which is the equivalent almost of British Junior schools, but also in the Upper Department, where Domestic Science is one of the 'common and compulsory' subjects in grade seven.<sup>121</sup> This is seen as central to the concept of the new Comprehensive schools where the " ... right of every person to an all-round development of ... personality, talents and interests" is seen to embrace the practical subjects on an equal footing with those traditionally accepted as being more theoretical. The concept of 'boys' and 'girls' handicrafts has by governmental edict been eliminated from the syllabus. Consequently in the Middle Department, both boys and girls experience some branch of Handicraft for four periods a week, of which, one may be substituted by domestic science<sup>122</sup> (in grade six). The subjects concerned are woodwork, metalwork and textiles.

In the Upper Department final year (grade nine) however, Domestic Science forms part of one of the five major streams<sup>123</sup> (Theoretical, Social, Technical-mechanical, Economics, plus Aesthetics where desired). In this arrangement Domestic Science

is one of nine overall Options and falls within the second 'stream', Thus it is no longer a compulsory subject which had been the case in grade seven. In grade nine however, 'Family and Social Studies' constitutes a major Option as well.<sup>124</sup>

Since parents and pupils, not the school, take decisions concerning subject choice, it would seem that the hierarchical evaluation of subjects is less evident than in Britain. Consequently, there is a tendency for pupils to choose according to interest : this has led to an increase of pupils with a high general ability to opt for courses which are 'practical' rather than purely academic.<sup>125</sup>

In Norway all schools " ... must have ... materials for Handicraft and Domestic Science" and much attention is given to the teaching of theory to underpin the practical work.<sup>126</sup> Where pupils opt for a vocational training per se, the 'Workshop' school offers a year of practical and theoretical education in a chosen field.

Germany appears to have progressed even further in the matter of education for life in some respects.<sup>127</sup> In the Intermediate schools, Needlework is taken by all pupils for two periods a week for six years.<sup>128</sup> In the final two years, Domestic Economy is taken for three periods per week. The care of infants and the rearing of children is also a major theme of the curriculum. In the Modern and Mathematics and Science Gymnasium, Domestic Economy is compulsory for one period per week in the first six years.

levels, thereby rendering valuable status to it through its insistence that all teachers of secondary school programmes must be of degree status and have completed four years' training which was to include Home Economics.<sup>134</sup> This was feasible since the first University programme for Home Economics had been initiated at the University of Illinois in 1874. Other Universities incorporated the subject into their curriculum during the two subsequent decades, Alabama 1893, Tennessee 1897 etc. By 1960 there were over four hundred institutions granting degrees in Home Economics, although about half of these were private bodies. Not unnaturally, the image and status of the subject is much higher in the U.S.A. than it is in Britain where the lack of academic status demeans the subject in the eyes of teachers, pupils and parents alike. In the U.S.A. it is taught by 'highly qualified professors of both sexes'.<sup>135</sup>

#### Degrees in Home Economics

Apart from America, the opportunities for taking degrees in Home Economics have been very limited indeed.<sup>136</sup> The picture is changing slowly. In Britain one source of development has been the Bachelor of Education, in which it is possible to take Home Economics as a Main Subject in the Teacher's Certificate Course, although where courses have been end-on, at least the final year, the actual degree course has necessarily had to be via an allied



subject such as Sociological Studies.<sup>137</sup> New developments are taking place as Colleges of Education diversify: the trend however is to the more traditional areas of Food, Nutrition or Household Science.<sup>138</sup> Of themselves, these do not constitute 'Home Economics' for the social side, family life etc. is not central or even a major component.

Although there are 'pioneering efforts' at Queen Elizabeth's College in areas of study which other institutions identify as 'Home Economics',<sup>139</sup> the only clearly identifiable Home Economics degree is that of Surrey University, (introduced 1970). Opposition to the establishment of Home Economics degrees has ranged from a denial of its potential for in-depth study to objections to its inclusion of the word 'Economics'.<sup>140</sup> The first argument can easily be contradicted: Home Economics is an eclectic degree in that it embraces a wide knowledge base which requires very considerable indepth study plus the application of knowledge as against mere regurgitation of 'pure' knowledge. The contention that it is not a 'specialist' study area can be counteracted, as has Lawton done, with the classic example of non-specialisation, the Oxford Greats.<sup>141</sup>

What really seems to be operationally effective are the ideologies of elitism and feminine domesticity. This would explain the opposition on the grounds of the title, which effectively acts as a vehicle for attitudes.

In Europe generally the picture has also been poor. Since the second world war however, both Finland (1946) and the Netherlands (1953) have offered degrees in Home Economics. In America degrees are obtainable at both first and higher levels at several Universities, notably Iowa and Tennessee.

In Pakistan it is possible to take a Master's degree in General Education within which Home Economics constitutes a possible option in the second part of the degree.

Although comparison of degree content and standards is always difficult it is nevertheless a fact that opportunities exist in other countries to take advanced levels of Home Economics which are not available in Britain. A somewhat tautologous situation appears to have arisen. The British Universities claim that there is no demand for such degrees.<sup>142</sup> Yet the noted gap between Examination Boards and the University bodies<sup>143</sup> suggests that communications are not always accurate. Applications for existing courses which are within the sphere of Home Economics indicates a very considerable demand.

Much of the difficulty would seem to lie in the lack of academic value attributed to the subject at University level. In turn this is so entrenched in social ideology relating to gender and the division of labour within the economic system<sup>144</sup> that change will only be wrought slowly. It is suggested that Teachers' academic expectations fail to meet the requirements of the

University body:<sup>145</sup> perhaps the real problem lies in the different definitions of what constitutes 'Home Economics'. It appears that the validating body perceives the course content as necessarily conforming to their current patterns whereas new ones are sought by the proposing body. To argue that change takes time<sup>146</sup> is to ignore the flight of time and the consequences to society that such an important area of knowledge is not developed to its maximum.

### Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the role of ideology in the 'traditional' domestic subjects. It has been shown that historically, social ideologies have had a major effect on the course of the subject(s) culminating in its low evaluation. Ideologies tend to be effectively posthumous: they live on despite contextual changes in society and technology. Such is the case of the domestic subjects. Their lowly status commands little reappraisal as is exemplified by the scant attention paid to them in an era of explosive curriculum development. The Schools Council has awarded little financial support until very recently:<sup>147</sup> this is despite its centrality to everyday life<sup>148</sup> and its relevance to society - qualities cited as essential to the curriculum by various bodies.<sup>149</sup>

It has been elicited that support has largely been ego-centred on class and sexual criteria and has been subject to discrimination in terms of a knowledge and a social hierarchy resting on these phenomena.

An examination of the history of Needlework will show the even greater effects of ideology.

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20. Easthope, G. (1975) Community, Hierarchy and Open Education p.5 R. & K.P.
21. Open University E282 (units 5 to 8) The Social Organisation of Teaching and Learning p.39
22. Watson, G. (1973) The English Ideology p.1 Penguin/Allen Lane
23. loc. cit.
24. National Society (1812) Annual Report p.19 cited in R. Hooper (ed) (1971) Curriculum; Context, Design and Development Oliver & Boyd
25. supra chapter I p.13
26. Scotford-Archer, M. & Vaughan, M. (1971) Domination and Assertion in E. Hopper (ed) Readings in the Theory of Educational Systems p.58 Hutchinson
27. Neale, R.S. (1972) Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century p.124 R. & K.P.
28. ibid. p.3 Introduction
29. ibid. p.123
30. Johnson, R. (1976) Notes on the schooling of the English Working Class, 1780-1838 in R. Dale et al (eds), Schooling & Capitalism (O.U.) R. & K.P.
31. Altick, D. (1973) Victorian People and Ideas p.181 Dent & Sons
32. Sillitoe, H. (1933) The History of the Teaching of Domestic Subjects p.29 Methuen

33. Yoxall, A. (1912) A History of the Teaching of Domestic Economy p.8 Portway
34. Report on Physical Deterioration (1907) paras. 1249;1263;1266. H.M.S.O.
35. Midwinter, E.C. (1968) Victorian Social Reform pp.11-12 Longmans
36. Coates, R. & Silburn, R.(1970) Poverty the Forgotten Englishman p.38 Penguin
37. Burnet, J. (1969) A History of the Cost of Living p.243 Penguin
38. Altick, D. op. cit. p.133-4
39. Pearsall, R. (1969) The Worm in the Bud Penguin
40. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.30
41. Neale, R.S. op. cit. p.127
42. Mrs. Pillow's Report (1896) Domestic Economy Teaching in England H.M.S.O.
43. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.36
44. 1907 Report p. XV
45. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.44
46. Kelsall, H. (1957) Berridge House, Who's Who p.6
47. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.37
48. *ibid.* p.38
49. Mrs. Pillow (1896) op. cit. p.164
50. Burnet, J. op. cit. p.258-266
51. Marx, K. (1895) A Contribution on the Critique of Political Economy (Preface)
52. Mrs. Pillow's Report para. 158/9
53. Scott, M.E. (1967) A History of F.L.Calder College of Domestic Science 1875-1965 ch.1
54. (i) Research finding of Questionnaire C. (Q.3 a/b) p. 383  
Table CIV(a) a/b 1.2  
(ii) Hinde, C. (1970) Teaching Tomorrow's Living Today  
Hsc. Vol.43 no.2 p.43

55. B.O.E. Annual Report 1905/6 p.9
56. B.O.E. Annual Report 1907
57. Booth, C. & Rowntree, S. Reports on poverty in London and York 1902 -4
58. Contemporary Review LXXXI January 1902 : cited in G.Stedman-Jones (1976) Outcast London, p.78 Penguin
59. loc.cit.
60. Report on Physical Deterioration: Appendix 1 point 4 1904
61. Mrs. Pillow's Report 1896 op.cit. p.165
62. Neale, R.S. op.cit. pp.6-23. The 'uneasy classes' were the '...middling new, emerging groups who were aspiring to climb the social ladder'.
63. School Certificate : forerunner of G.C.E. 'O' level.
64. Floud, J.E. (1959) Social Class and Educational Opportunity Rep.1973 Greenwood
65. Evetts, J. (1973) The Sociology of Educational Ideas pp. 37 ff. R.&K.P.
66. e.g. Sir Cyril Burt (1976) v. L.Kamin : The Hole in Heredity, New Society 2.12.1976
67. Clarke, A. & A.D.B. (eds) (1976) Early Experience : Myth and Evidence Open Books
68. Spens Report (1938) para 140 H.M.S.O.
69. e.g. the Tripartite system
70. Scott, M.E. op.cit. p.43
71. Harris, N. (1968) Beliefs in Society p.23 Penguin
72. Cole, G. & Postgate, R. (1969) The Common People p.153 Methuen

73. Hadow Report (1926) Introduction pp. xix-xxii H.M.S.O.
74. e.g. Mrs. Pillow & H. Sillitoe
75. It is noticeable that all the committees appointed to examine educational problems (e.g. Crowther, Newsom etc.) were predominantly male: therefore their support for the domestic subjects would be tempered by their own socialisation patterns which would have determined their attitudes towards the Domestic Subjects. (Woman-conscious ideology - L.B. Brown p.111).
76. v. p.149 Cost of Examinations. Comments elicited in the empirical (qstr.D) referred to the need for "more practical dishes, not smoked salmon cutlets".
77. Norwood Report (1943) ch.1 pp.1-15
78. Many modern occupations require the absence of the male from the home for varying periods of time. Consequently, the presence of the woman (as mother) would necessarily be required.
79. Harris, N. op. cit. pp.27-28
80. ibid. p.24
81. Scotford-Archer, M. & Vaughan, M. op. cit. pp.65-66
82. This may be a reassertion of a former ideology : essentially however, the concept here is that of political power being wielded (e.g. Tameside 1976)
83. It is suggested that a dominant group will sometimes masquerade under a banner (e.g. middle-class support for Comprehensive education in some cases) because it suits them to do so. In reality this is akin to Goffman's 'putting on a front' in order to implement an ideology which is beyond their personal realisation. Thus, where Grammar schools were in short supply, support for the Comprehensive system may have been seen as a means of ensuring preferential treatment in a pseudo Grammar structure.
84. e.g. after many years of attempting to persuade local authorities to respond to 'authority', the Government necessarily invoked 'power' through legal measures to ensure compliance (1977)
85. Islip, J. op. cit.
86. E. Hopper points out that the earlier the selection process begins the more defined are the educational routes. E. Hopper (ed) Classification of Educational systems in Readings in the Theory of Educational Systems no.5 (1971) Hutchinson

87. Report : 'Early Leaving' 1954 H.M.S.O.
88. loc. cit.
89. in terms of school subjects
90. In-depth interviews at schools and Colleges as well as a Polytechnic support this: students report the discouragement afforded by Headteachers and Careers Guidance teachers. They all recorded that the only knowledge advisory persons had was of the 'cookery' aspects of the domestic subjects.
91. infra. ch.IX
92. Jackson, B. & Marsden, D. (1969) The Education of the Working Classes Pelican
93. Newsom Report (1963) para. 388
94. Newsom Report (1963) Half Our Future para. 6 H.M.S.O.
95. The 'labelling' theory indicates that once categorization has taken place labelling ensues. The categorization is in effect taking a decision which thereby reduces or resolves dissonance according to Kelman.
96. Newsom Report op. cit. Principal recommendations. ch. 5 para. 391-393
97. Alfred Schutz defined 'recipe knowledge' as the everyday means of coping cf. The Stranger; no. 5 in School and Society (1971) O.U.
98. Berger, B. & Berger, P. & Kellner, H. op. cit. p.91 Penguin
99. This term embraces the range of ideologies obtaining in the middle classes (e.g. as to life-style, education etc.)
100. Bowlby, J. (1953) Child Care and the Growth of Love Penguin
101. Clarke, A. & Clarke, A.D.B.(1976) Early Experience: Myth and Evidence Open Books
102. It is on these grounds and the lack of synthesis of theory and practice that some L.E.As. oppose such courses (e.g. Derbyshire)
103. Hutchinson, V. (1976) Home Economics in the Middle Years Newsletter no.2 p.13 (4 ed)
104. Burgess, T. & Pratt, J. cited in D. Smith, Assumptions underlying Tripartite Systems of Education, in E. Hopper (ed) op. cit. p.243



105. Hopper, E. (ed) op. cit. no.4
106. Split-site working is fairly commonplace even to the extent that some miles exist between component parts necessitating the institution operating at two or more levels (e.g. lower and upper schools)
107. e.g. Blackpaperites
108. A frequent practice has been to appoint Headteachers from the Grammar school in a 'merger' situation (often for the 'prestige' of a degree). Thus he is likely to wish to perpetuate his former ideology of academic value at the expense of the Comprehensive ideology.
109. The problem of being 'educated out of Industry' is a major current concern in Britain (1976)
110. Forstenser, T.R. & Husain, M.A. (1973) The Impact of the Youth Ferment of the Sixties: in The Universities and the Youth Culture of the 70s.  
U.N.E.S.C.O.
111. Some Universities met the challenge, at least partially, by adapting existing courses or introducing new ones. But the power of the Universities was eventually acknowledged after several years of turmoil and the students returned to their 'beer and books' (Guardian) Sept. 1974
112. The ability to 'put on a front' (Goffman) at interviews is not unknown but the power of appointing committees to ensure the furthering of their ideologies even against the prevailing social one(s) is very considerable.
113. Hopper, E. (ed) op. cit.
114. Berger, B. & Berger, P. & Kellner, H. op. cit. p.91
115. U.N.E.S.C.O. Report (1961) p.137
116. *ibid.*
117. v. I.F.H.E. Report 1974 pp. 14-15
118. *ibid.* p.13
119. Bantock, G.H. (1971) Towards a Theory of Popular Education in R. Hooper (ed) op.cit. p.251 ff.
120. Dixon, W. (1965) Society, Schools and Progress in Scandinavia p.79 Pergamon
121. Four periods a week out of thirty five are devoted to the domestic subjects apart from Handicrafts.

122. B.O.E. Sweden The New School in Sweden p.17
123. Orring, J. (1961) Comprehensive School and Continuation Schools in Sweden p.75.  
Kungleckska Akademien, Stockholm
124. B.O.E. Sweden op. cit. p.40
125. Orring, J. op. cit. p.174
126. *ibid.* p. 122. Although it would not be unreasonable to suppose that a considerable difference might exist between theory and practice (the two levels of ideology) it would appear from a personal interview with a Swedish lecturer (ex schoolmaster) that very serious attention is paid to the subject.
127. Resident Housewifery schools were held at the turn of the century : the aim was not only to train them as capable housekeepers but to arouse an interest in social questions. (Interim Report on the teaching of Housecraft in Girls' Secondary Schools. 1911. App.B.p.70)
128. U.N.E.S.C.O. Report (1961)
129. I.F.H.E. Report (1974) p.12
130. *loc. cit.*
131. *op. cit.* p.13
132. *op. cit.* p.15
133. I.F.H.E. pp. 11-16
134. Encyclopaedia Britannica vol. 11 p.621 William Benton edn.1964
135. 1903 Interim Report on the Teaching of Housecraft in Girls' Secondary Schools. Appendix B. p.57
136. Sheffield University is said by A. Yoxall (p.42) to have recognised the Domestic Subject as a University subject; research can only establish this as being in connection with the Diploma of the Sheffield School of Cookery and not with a degree in the Domestic subjects *per se*.
- Surrey University is to date the only University operating a clearly defined Home Economics degree in its own right.
137. e.g. Totley-Thornbridge College of Education, Sheffield
138. e.g. Elizabeth Gaskell College of Education, Manchester

139. Appendix A1.p.2
140. e.g. Sheffield University
141. Lawton, D. (1973) Social Change, Educational Theory and Curriculum Planning. p.106  
(3rd.imp. 1975) Hodder & Stoughton
142. The invitation to establish a Chair of Home Economics was rejected by several Universities although Surrey University accepted with alacrity.
143. Appendix A2 p.1
144. vide ch.IX
145. Appendix A1 p.3
146. ibid. p.4
147. A one year feasibility study, completed 1968 commanded a grant of £4,442 compared with one for Handicraft Research and Development Project which received £60,850. (Schools Council Year Book 1969)
148. Whitfield, R. (1971) Disciplines of the Curriculum  
p.233. McGraw Hill
149. e.g. Newsom Report (1963) Half Our Future p.135 para 388.

### Chapter III

#### Needlework

"Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!  
In poverty, hunger and dirt.  
Sewing at once with double thread  
A shroud as well as a shirt."

Thomas Hood: Song of the Shirt,  
Punch 1843

#### Introduction

Although needlework is not strictly classified as a 'domestic subject' it is in fact the 'parent craft' of the domestic subjects domain.<sup>1</sup> It is arguable that attitudes towards the whole gamut of domestic subjects stems from those directed towards needlework. Social ideologies have determined the content of needlework syllabi and the teaching methodology even prior to its official incorporation into the state school curriculum.

Originally, needlework was an 'Art' (i.e. 'Art Needlework'). It comprised embroidery of an exceedingly elaborate nature and offered a professional occupation for both men and women in the fourteenth century. Later bifurcation indicates the effectiveness of social ideologies as society became more industrialised and stratified.

During the middle-ages there had been little call for sewing skills since garments of both men and women had been very simple: men wore a form of garment based on the Roman toga whilst women wore long, shapeless dresses. But feudal Lords, returning from

crusades, introduced luxurious silks and damasks to the British market. This led to a demand for more complicated garments.<sup>2</sup>

Changes of fashion were marked in both male and female attire. They were, with exceptions such as the Puritan costume, very complicated in style and adornment until the late eighteenth century. Then a fundamental change occurred. Simplicity of style and fabric replaced the complicated creations. This may, at least in part, have been due to the development of the sewing machine, since to make intricate garments on the inadequately developed machines would inevitably have slowed production down.<sup>3</sup>

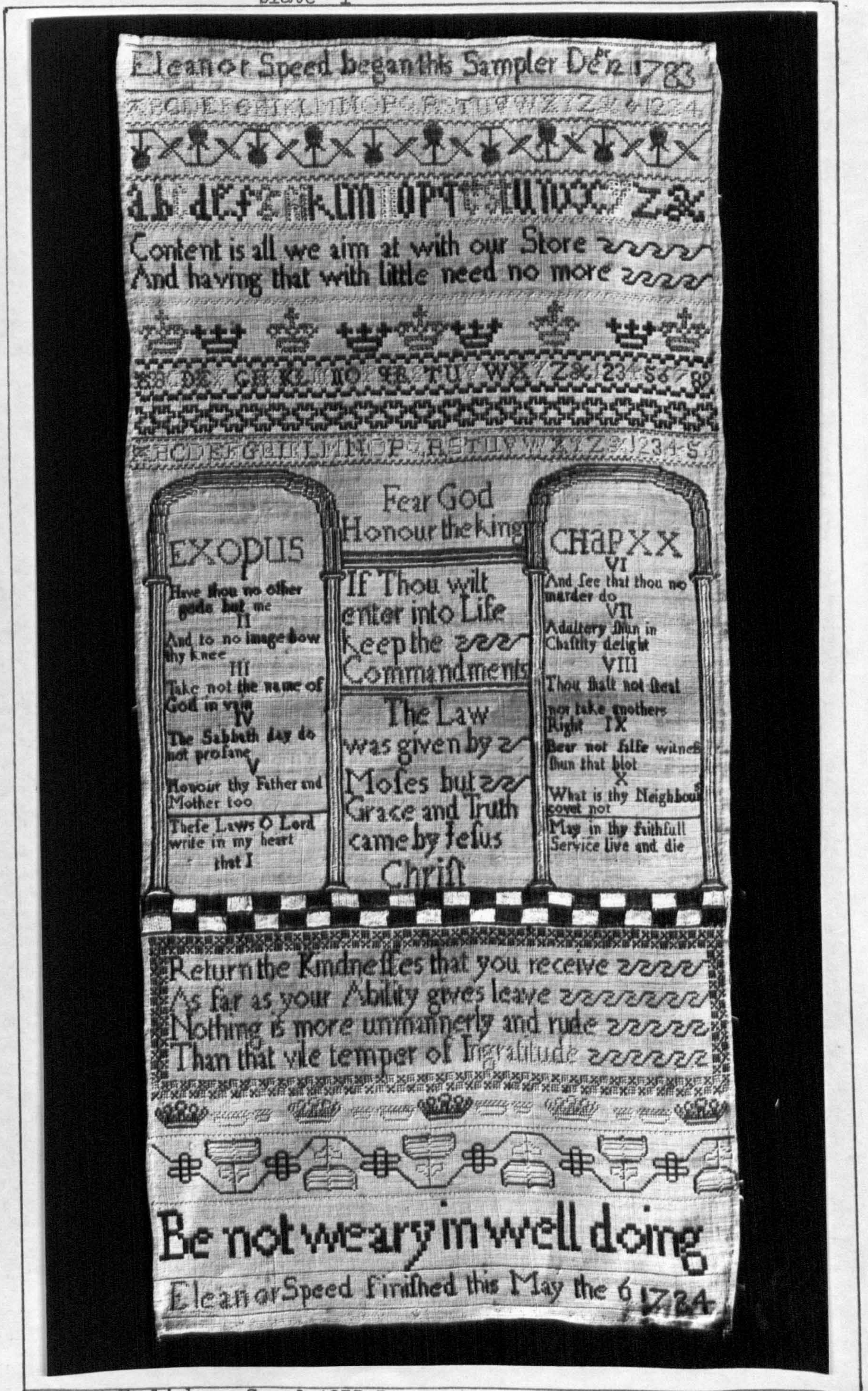
Social ideologies were noticeable in fashion: the upper classes, through the medium of Sumptuary Laws, were able to ensure their notion of superiority by the complexity of their garments.<sup>4</sup> The lower orders were forbidden to copy the styles of the upper classes and they certainly could not afford to buy them. The intricate sewing entailed in the clothes of the middle and upper class ladies required seamstress en masse. Thus the introduction of 'Plain Sewing' into the school curriculum was a vehicle for the ideology of social stratification. This was a major departure from the embroidery which had hitherto been taught.

### Art Needlework

This consisted of elaborate embroidery and was taught in the private sector of education. Here is constituted one of the 'accomplishments' which were much sought after by parents who were

seeking to make their daughters " ... the most agreeable" so that they might catch a husband.<sup>5</sup> They were prepared to pay dearly for such expertise since the social constraints of the day and the imbalance of the sexual structure of the population made the ideology of feminine domesticity somewhat difficult to achieve.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this, teachers of these subjects (music, needlework, singing etc.) were often 'far superior' to those who taught the 'solid subjects'.<sup>7</sup> This is perhaps not surprising inasmuch as it was possible to employ only the best teachers within those subjects: an interesting contrast with later developments.

The association between embroidery and leisure and the ideology of feminine domesticity was to remain for several centuries, until the introduction of 'creative embroidery' in the nineteen sixties.<sup>8</sup> Embroidery was a means whereby women could acquire 'private property'<sup>9</sup> which was otherwise denied them. For both the professional embroiderer and those who indulged in it as a hobby, the 'Sampler' was a major means of learning the required skills. Originally, samplers had been a means of recording patterns from large scale works, engravings etc. as well as being used for furnishings and personal objects such as purses.<sup>10</sup> Since their function was to record patterns the shape of the sampler was a lengthwise oblong. During the seventeenth century the shape changed to square. This denoted, as did the new style content, a change of function.<sup>11</sup> By the eighteenth century samplers clearly showed evidence of social ideologies being transmitted through them. The main one was that of social differentiation:



English : Speed 1833-34

Christian name and date subsequently altered

Source : Victoria and Albert Museum, London



English 'Spot' sampler (no name) 1745





English 'Map' sampler Ann Rhodes 1780



pupils were to learn to appreciate their social position - in the 'lower orders' and the concomitant attributes. Thus the biblical verse was to induce submissiveness, the ubiquitous alphabet, worked in cross stitch, to learn 'marking' for the mistress' linen and the border patterns for embroidering the future employer's garments.<sup>12</sup> Creativity was not involved since all the patterns were copied, although a degree of choice in the arrangement of motifs (in the 'spot' type of sampler)<sup>13</sup> and the colours was occasionally allowed at the discretion of the teacher.

It seems that some teachers were aware of the poverty of girls' education for there are samplers which suggest that an attempt was made to make them educational if the almanack and map samplers are any indication.<sup>14</sup> Soon however the ideology of feminine domesticity was transmitted through the sampler: houses and flowers appeared in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

### Plain Sewing

Plain Sewing consisted of stitches which could be used to form seams (i.e. to hold two pieces of fabric together). Stitches such as running, faggoting, blanket stitch etc. fell into this category before the sewing machine took over. After this, some of the stitches themselves became classified as 'embroidery'.

Although 'Plain Sewing' was officially recommended for inclusion in the elementary school curriculum only in 1840<sup>16</sup> teachers were being appointed to teach 'Plain sewing, knitting and Marking' as early as 1825.<sup>17</sup> The manifest function of this subject was to afford the 'lower orders' a means of acquiring a source of livelihood through skills they were no longer able to learn at home.<sup>18</sup> The latent function was rooted in the ideology of social stratification. Had this not been so, the pupils would have been allowed to learn the total skills of dressmaking thereby enabling them to improve their marketability. Instead, they were, despite the protestations of the H.M.Is. deprived of the opportunity to learn the art of pattern making, cutting out and assembling garments.<sup>19</sup> Only the laborious, lengthy seams were their lot. By this means they were to acquire knowledge which would not evaporate later on through lack of use<sup>20</sup> yet which would teach them their place in life. In addition they were to develop the attitudes of submission, servitude and endurance.

These attributes were also inculcated through embroidery which mainly constituted 'Samplers',<sup>21</sup> so that the social indoctrination of girls into their future occupational and sexual roles was inevitable.

Plain sewing was a popular subject with school Managers and Governors. This was for several reasons. They were faced with compulsory education which was to be provided at minimal cost. Imbued with the ideology of capitalism the education system was to operate

likewise; capital investment was to be matched by output and mass production methods were to maximise production. The response to Lowe's dictum<sup>22</sup> that if education was not efficient it should at least be cheap, was amply met through the domestic subjects. As a subject needlework required no investment of capital such as books or other materials which would decline with age. Needlework was self-supportive. All materials were provided by the parents or, if supplied by the education authority were sold as completed articles.<sup>23</sup> The attractiveness of needlework to teachers was enhanced by a sleight of hand in the payment-by-results era. Needlework was an 'obligatory' subject within the tripartite classification of the curriculum: this grouped subject into 'obligatory' which included the three R's and needlework; 'Specific' which included the domestic subjects (Home Economy) as the counterpart to boys' Science, etc. and 'Class' subjects within which needlework could be included but not in addition to it as an 'obligatory' subject. Thus as a class subject it could attract virtually the equivalent of the first Class subject without much cost.

	s	..	d	
Fixed grant	4	..	6	
Merit grant	1	..	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	
Needlework			2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Singing			8 $\frac{1}{2}$	per head
Elementary subjects	7	..	1	per annum
1st. Class subjects	1	..	6	
2nd. Class subjects	1	..	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Specific subject (cookery)			1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	<hr/>			
	17	.	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	<hr/>			

(source: Report of the Committee of Council on Education 1885-1886  
British P.P. Vol. XXIV)

The dichotomy between manifest and latent social ideologies is highlighted by this manipulation: the manifest, to educate the people, was seemingly being carried out even to the extent that both girls and boys could take two 'Class' subjects; the latent one, of socio-sexual subjection was effected through the restrictions in the curriculum.

Yet another prop for the ideology of the inevitability of differential ability being inherited within a social class framework was that of the 'Faculties'<sup>24</sup> which psychologists were propounding. This held that ....

"The mind's various forms of activities can be separately treated and trained." 25

The theory was based on two assumptions: that the faculties existed and that they could be trained. In the case of the 'intellectual' faculties (imagination, judgement, reasoning, perception, memory) they were not seen as pertaining to needlework. As it was then taught, this may well have been the case. But the blame for this could be laid at the door of the teaching profession rather than the nature of the subject itself. Perhaps though, the real problem was the system of financing which inevitably circumscribed the subject with considerable constraints.<sup>26</sup>

Potentially, needlecraft in its broad perspective has the capability to fulfil all these 'faculties' and more. The crucial processes which would in fact have utilised them, cutting out and constructing garments, were carried out by teachers as part of

their preparation in the early days, even though this was not intended.<sup>27</sup> The practice may have been due not only to the fear of making mistakes but also to reflection of teachers' expectation as to their pupils' abilities. It seems fair to assume that the working classes would not be credited with the ability to comprehend the more complex processes. This would accord with the ideology of social differentiation and occupation. Had later educational theories prevailed then, it would have been seen that this was but a question of the self-fulfilling prophecy and that the intellectual abilities were largely restrained by the low ceiling put on available knowledge. Even today (1976) owing to various pressures of time and fear of costly mistakes, as well as the teacher's professional reputation, garments are not infrequently completed or the more difficult processes worked by older pupils. This is also a means of cutting costs when older pupils do not bring work.<sup>28</sup>

A move to separate garment making and household sewing was made in the nineteen-forties.<sup>29</sup> Dresscraft was seen as creative in contrast to the more restrictive mending and patching. However, this appears to have gained little support initially, probably for reasons of the extra cost involved and the new directions in which the subject might move. Fear of the unknown seems to have hampered developments in the needlework field.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the second assumption underlying the 'Faculty' theory, that of a subject as a training ground for the mind, needlework was deemed to be a non-starter. Since it apparently 'failed' to utilise the faculties already referred to, it was also

valueless as a training mechanism for other subjects. Current experience would indicate the falseness of this claim. The ability of students from the broad range of the domestic subjects to adapt to and organise their academic studies has been considerably remarked upon; it is however outside the scope of this study to examine this more closely.<sup>31</sup>

Whilst at the time the 'Faculty' theory pertained mainly to elementary education it nevertheless led to a lack of pupils wishing to develop needlework at secondary level. Another cause of this reticence however may have been due to its being 'badly taught' in the early years.<sup>32</sup> Teachers had of necessity to take the subject in their training, regardless of ability or desire, resulting in many reluctant recruits.

### Secondary Schools

#### i) Early days

One of the major aspects relating to the domestic subjects and girls' secondary education is that of the private schools' role. It has been said that many headmistresses, among them Miss Beale and Miss Buss, were strongly opposed to them. There is however evidence to the contrary in at least a number of cases.<sup>33</sup>

Private schools were hampered by bulging timetables and the cost of providing for the subject.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, Headmistresses such as the Misses Beale and Buss made considerable efforts to ensure



good conditions for the teaching of practical subjects, often against considerable odds.<sup>35</sup> Both Miss Buss and the London Collegiate were quite generous in their time allowance for needlework out of a genuine concern for its value. Indeed, the London Collegiate even went so far as to institute examinations in the subject thereby raising its status and giving it emphasis. Yet these schools are traditionally noted for their academic bias.

Sheffield Central Higher Board School was also very generous in its time allocation to the domestic subjects. This appears to have been at the expense of Mathematics and Science however.<sup>36</sup> A truer evaluation of the time factor may be appreciated when a comparison is made with the grant refusal rate which was somewhat higher in Sheffield than in many other areas.<sup>37</sup>

#### ii) The middle decades - 20th Century

In the ideological euphoria which followed the second world war that of egalitarianism was perhaps the most influential in educational circles. This was reflected in the nineteen forty-four Education Act in which the concept of Comprehensive education was foreshadowed. Like other practical subjects needlework was to benefit from the expanding educational budget and society's guilt complex which was exacerbated by the findings about inequality of opportunity.<sup>38</sup> Yet once again the ability of a dominant group to adapt its ideology to suit its own ends is revealed. Support for Comprehensive education was forthcoming, not out of a genuine concern

for the betterment of educational provisions for all but out of a realisation that a Grammar school place being available was often determined by one's geographical location. That this was so is amply illustrated by the type of internal organisation so often employed: the Comprehensive schools all too often were merely larger replicas of the Grammar schools with the domestic subjects preserved for the attention of the less-able. The 'lower orders', believing that the middle classes were working for their benefit, legitimised their actions. The realities of the situation only became clarified when it was too late to redirect events.<sup>39</sup> Thus the middle classes' ability to perpetuate their ideology was again manifested.

In conjunction with the ideology of equality of opportunity the concept of C.S.E. was born. Since among other things, life-chances<sup>40</sup> determined and were determined by 'academic success' the demand for paper qualifications escalated, fanned by the rewards examination work brought to teachers. The Certificate of Secondary Education was envisaged as a means of affording a much wider range of pupils some means of advertising their success. The domestic subjects were among the earliest to take advantage of this new examination which offered teachers a very considerable voice in the design and management of schemes.

Unfortunately C.S.E. needlework has become more socially divisive than ever the General Certificate in Education or its forebears (e.g. School Certificate) was. The curriculum of the

## Needlework



Apart from garment construction (on the decline owing to cost and social conditions) modern Needlework includes traditional embroidery. Many of the stitches used derive from 'Plain Sewing' stitches such as Herringbone, Feather and Blanket stitch. It is linked to studies in design and texture .



Modern needlework also incorporates 'Creative Embroidery'. In this, the texture and design of the materials used is of greater importance than the traditional concept of 'perfection' in craft skills. The stitches are often merely functional and are supplanted by adhesive in some instances (photographs by courtesy of Hope Valley College, Derbyshire)

C.S.E. is much broader than that of the G.C.E.<sup>41</sup> C.S.E. involves creative embroidery, dress, a 'Project' and some theory. Whenever there is an opportunity to invoke superiority it appears to be grasped, however unintentionally. Those pupils who are able to benefit from parental wealth or attention do so - the classic areas which have been shown to give advantage in academic achievement. More affluent pupils enhance their work by means of better materials, photographs, visits in connection with their projects etc. Similarly, parents who can afford to devote time to helping their offspring, making up garments, taking them on educational visits, enhance their children's chances. Thus the poor pupil is doubly disadvantaged in the C.S.E.<sup>42</sup>

Measures to counteract some of these problems might be the introduction of a cost-ceiling and the means to ensure that all work was carried out on the school premises, or at least under the direction of the teacher. But this would be to destroy other educational objectives such as co-operation between home and school. Likewise, inherent timetabling difficulties would make it impossible to cater for the varying rates of pupil performance.

With the general development of the curriculum one of the most recent moves has been the incorporation of needlework into the art sector. Whilst this obviously has some advantages in terms of synthesising and expanding knowledge, it also has the disadvantage of discouraging many pupils who have the interest and manipulative

ability to do dressmaking and allowed skills but who have neither the ability or desire to do art. In terms of societal and personal investment this is perhaps an unfortunate move if, as appears to be happening, it becomes mutually exclusive. The move is being accelerated by the creation of 'Design Centres' which are discussed elsewhere.<sup>43</sup>

### Conclusion

The educational value of Needlework, especially dresscraft, has yet to be fully appreciated. Early attitudes have largely prevailed towards the subject. This may have stemmed from the use of untrained personnel in the early days (e.g. the Vicar's wife) or the compulsory nature of the subject which may have bred resentment.

As a subject it has been a 'carrier' of social ideologies par excellence. This is understandable when one appreciates the social distance between teacher and pupil and the circumstances surrounding their interactions. The association of needlework with poverty and low academic ability has led to its low esteem. Teachers' attitudes would have been transmitted to their pupils, albeit unintentionally, for attitudes are caught not taught; they are learned through interaction with significant others in particular, and the teacher would most probably fall into this category.

The craft image still largely obtains, not the 'artistic' or 'creative'. The equation with low-ability is perhaps its greatest drawback and until pupils of all ability levels are allowed to indulge in this occupation so will the potential of the subject

be depressed. Support from official bodies indicates the degree to which social ideologies pervade the subject; its gender-based association has long been a drawback. Although there are moves to change this other problems of continuity have to be overcome if any advantage is to be gained from enabling boys to learn the art.

There is a need to change the image of the subject.<sup>44</sup> This could be achieved perhaps if teachers were prepared to adopt some of the trade practices which facilitate speedy completion of articles, even though this may offend the individual teacher's notion of 'craft standards'. As a subject there is a need to be aware of current social values which alter with the changing social context: 'standards' are relative. Failure to adapt to and appreciate these factors will surely spell the death of needlework, in which case all that the subject has to offer will be lost, not merely 'old skills' still cherished by many teachers but few pupils.

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18. *supra.* Ch. II p.35 *ff*
19. Mrs. Pillow's Report claims that 'All the garments ... are as a rule required to be cut out by the girls (1896). H. Sillitoe however records that the cutting out was regarded as the 'preparation work of the teachers'.

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40. Max Weber is the source of this term. In his essay 'Class,  
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typical chances for a supply of goods, external to living conditions  
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that this concept includes ".....everything from the chance to  
stay alive during the first year after birth to the chance to  
view fine arts.....to remain healthy .....(and) to complete  
an intermediary or higher education grade".

41. C.S.E. is available in three 'Modes' : Mode I is externally set and assessed; Mode II is a compromise between external and internal setting and assessment; Mode III is designed, conducted and assessed by the schools themselves. Modes I & III are the most popular, especially the latter in the Domestic Subjects (A.T.D.S. Report 1969 p.41)
  
42. Some Moderators of C.S.E. were very aware of this problem. The writer has personal knowledge of action taken to mitigate the effects of social class in a C.S.E. examination to the extent of it being said that the school must not enter pupils for this examination unless a ceiling was put on the total price of materials used. This was because of the high standard in one school within an area raising the average mark.
  
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The Demonstration

yesterday



and today



Part IIChapter IVPedagogy and Knowledge in the Domestic Subjects

"Knowledge is power"

Francis Bacon

"Knowledge is change"

Alvin Toffler

Introduction

In the light of available evidence it is suggested that the pedagogy contained within the domestic subjects has reflected social ideologies, rather than educational beliefs. The pedagogical relationship, it could be argued, has remained essentially an authoritarian one with little deference to changes in learning theory. In a subject not dominated by external examinations to the degree that 'traditional' academic subjects have been, it might be surmised that (pedagogical) freedom would emancipate the subject in an era of rapid curriculum development. That its boundaries have expanded in an era of almost frenetic educational change is not to be disputed<sup>1</sup>; but this, it is argued, has only increased its eclectic propensities. The nature of the pedagogical relationship in terms of teaching methods and teacher-pupil relationships have remained stubbornly Victorianised.<sup>2</sup>

The curriculum is socially and historically located and culturally determined: it does not develop in a vacuum. It proceeds on the basis of beliefs " ... about how people learn, what human beings should be like, what society is."<sup>3</sup> Consequently educational

ideologies, stemming from social ideologies, are reflected in the school curriculum. In this chapter the question of ideological effects will be considered in relation to the total curriculum (i.e. all that goes on in the school)<sup>4</sup> but particular stress will be laid upon what might be described as the 'traditional' definition of curriculum, namely, the transmission of knowledge in the formal situation. There is no doubt that the 'hidden' curriculum (i.e. the social organisation, patterns of behaviour, teacher-pupil relationships, extra-curricular activities, dress etc.) also reflect reigning ideologies. The two are closely interrelated but not necessarily even indicative of each other as will be shown.

Similarly verbal and non-verbal culture as defined by Leach<sup>5</sup> will be shown to be extremely influential in broad curriculum terms. Indeed, the latter may explain why the question of formal and 'informal' teaching methods is in fact subordinate to the teacher's power and quite often negates the influence of the curriculum structure per se. A teacher's charisma is perhaps the most crucial factor in the pedagogical relationship<sup>6</sup>: it is an 'intrinsic' link.<sup>7</sup>

### The Formal Curriculum

The formal curriculum (however organised) is concerned with the transmission of knowledge. It centres upon the dominant culture of society. To say however that it "... represents a social consensus"<sup>8</sup> is to ignore the means by which this apparent consensus

is obtained. The power of schools to promote or reject works (e.g. in art) and the power of patronage<sup>9</sup> have been instrumental in the formation of this consensus. Similarly, the access to channels of communication is an important element.

From this, the inevitable division between 'High' and 'Folk' culture (written and oral respectively)<sup>10</sup> can be explained through the availability or otherwise, of communication means : 'High' culture is likely to enjoy a wider and faster transmission than 'Folk' culture and therefore is favourably advantaged. Thus what becomes accepted as 'culture' and deemed worthy to be passed on to succeeding generations may once again be said to be the prerogative of a dominant group or groups and not based on a consensus. Consensus in relation to the curriculum is likewise more apparent than real, although in the last decade there have been considerable moves to bring about change.

The formal curriculum has been governed by ideologies regarding :-

- i) The kind of person it is desired to produce.
- ii) Knowledge deemed to be worthy of 'passing on'.

Historically 'states of knowledge' have constituted the focal point of curriculum design and construction : more recently stress has been laid on 'ways of knowing'. This change stems from the recognition that rapid social and technological change renders states of knowledge obsolete often before they have even been arrived at.<sup>11</sup> Over the centuries types of curricula have evolved each based on ideologies then prevalent.

'Classical' and 'Romantic' curricula

It is possible to identify 'ideal' types of curricula stemming from 'Classic' and 'Romantic' ideologies. When these are juxtaposed with Skilbeck's definition of the dichotomy posited by these two curriculum models the influence of social ideologies can be appreciated.

Forms and dichotomies of the 'Classical' & 'Romantic' curricula

<u>Forms of curriculum</u>		<u>Dichotomies of curriculum</u>	
<u>Classical</u>	<u>Romantic</u>	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Romantic</u>
subject-centred	child-centred	standards	expression
skills	creativity	structure	style
instruction	experience	unity	diversity
information	discovery	excellence	excellencies
obedience	awareness	rationality	experiences
conformity	originality	culture	subculture
discipline	freedom		

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What perhaps these models do highlight is the ideology of individualism: each was envisaged as being the means of creating 'individuals'. The changes of ideology giving rise to these two models indicates that ideologies are responses to cultural, social and psychological strains<sup>13</sup> and that they are relative to the social conditions and the nature of social relationships prevailing at a given time.<sup>14</sup> The era of the 'Romantic' curriculum (post second-world war) witnessed many societal changes not least in the sphere of social

relationships and stemming from war-time experiences.

Although the two types of curriculum are frequently contrasted and polarized<sup>15</sup> - itself indicative of the conflict between an existing and assertive ideology, it could be said that there is a sense of hierarchy between them: the 'Classical' is seen as being embraced as a prerequisite of the 'Romantic'. Certainly they were never intended to be mutually exclusive.<sup>16</sup>

The concepts of 'Classicism' and 'Romanticism' are implicitly contained within Bernstein's analysis of 'curriculum codes'. In these he sees the nature of the pedagogical relationship changing with the structure of the curriculum, whether there is a 'tight' or 'relaxed' classification and framing of the curriculum. The Classical curriculum falls within the tight formula, the Romantic in the (more) relaxed. Prevailing social ideologies will determine which type of curriculum will be dominant in a given era although a mixture of the two is more likely to exist in reality.

Thus ideologies govern both the curriculum content and the methods of implementation. The latter will include curriculum design (i.e. whether a 'Collection' or 'Integrated' code<sup>17</sup>) and teaching methods. Each will be strongly influenced by the type of community envisaged<sup>18</sup> and the nature of social relationships in particular. Much will also depend on whether this refers to the current society or an anticipated one. The difference lies in whether the society is an hierarchical one, where relationships are based on a social order and in which the



individual is seen as serving society, a 'Contract' community in which the individual is envisaged as having freedom but within the constraints of a social order, or alternatively, as a 'Communitas' where the problem of social order is not weighed against the individual's freedom.<sup>19</sup>

### Classification

The traditional curriculum structure was of the 'Collection' code where subjects constituted a collection of segregated areas of knowledge. The 'Classical' curriculum was structured on this basis and the pedagogical relationship was an authoritarian one in which the teacher had immense power over the pupil for he was regarded as the fountain of knowledge. This concept arose from ruling ideologies of the day. When compulsory education for the masses was instituted (1870) home and work were becoming increasingly separated and the life-routine compartmentalised. Work roles were clearly defined as was the social order, relatively speaking.<sup>20</sup> As a microcosm of society the education system reflected this.

Even though the sources of knowledge are now much wider this organisation remains to a very considerable extent. Knowledge is classified on the basis of past knowledge: the boundaries between subjects was strongly 'insulated'<sup>21</sup> and the interconnectedness of knowledge, especially that of 'everyday knowledge' was frequently denied or ignored.

With changing social values and hence relationships, the nature of 'permissible knowledge' has also changed. Methods of teaching increasingly allow both for intuitive thinking and everyday knowledge

to be incorporated in the learning process. The teacher's approach is likely to be less formal where an 'integrated' curriculum is operational and the power relationship more equalised.<sup>22</sup>

The value of Bernstein's notion of curriculum analysis in terms of 'Classification' and 'Framing' is nowhere more apposite than in the Domestic Subjects, particularly for the light it throws on interpersonal relationships in terms of degrees of power. There seems to be a considerable difference between the domestic subjects and others.

It is frequently maintained that the nature of the domestic subject determines the behaviour patterns of those who take it up as an occupation. Indeed, it is often argued that only a certain type of personality enters the profession. This would be a recipe for robotism. It is considered here that the intrinsic nature of the subject is in fact denied and that other factors, such as the classification and framing of the school curriculum and social and psychological factors, extrinsic to the actual subject matter, are more relevantly to blame.

The Domestic Subjects (Home Economics) is one of the most strongly classified subjects in the curriculum. This has largely been the result of socio-economic factors. The early training of the domestic subjects teachers in separate institutions from the normal teacher training colleges, and the housing of the subject in special centres tended to make it a 'subject apart' in more than a literal sense. Self reliance was a necessity.<sup>23</sup> With the incorporation of the teacher training element into normal colleges this should have declined. At first, the 'normalisation' process

was a case of monotechnic institutions operating a three year course. Of itself this afforded a degree of superiority in comparison with the two year training of other teachers.<sup>24</sup> The subsequent integration of domestic subjects with other courses (as at Totley) was an attempt to avoid the consequences of their individualism. Ostensibly, this should have led to a less tight classification. In the event however, the continued separateness of Home Economics courses, as well as the physical isolation, both in schools and Colleges, tends to make for a 'total institution' ethos.<sup>25</sup> Tight time-table schedules in schools and Colleges allow less time for intercourse with other staff. By the same token, fewer extraneous duties fall upon them<sup>26</sup>: this has the effect of making them 'a race apart', although the scene is now changing.<sup>27</sup>

Domestic subjects are also more 'insulated'<sup>28</sup> than other subjects: teachers may not substitute for the Home Economist in at least the practical aspect, due partly to the problem of insurance. In addition however, it would appear that the fierce protectionism is an aid to their self-identity. By stressing that their knowledge is not merely 'everyday' knowledge, domestic subjects teachers are perhaps attempting to protect themselves from the effects of being in a non-degree subject.<sup>29</sup>

With changing social values and relationships the nature of permissible knowledge has also changed. Boundaries are much more permeable. Methods of teaching increasingly allow for both everyday knowledge and intuitive thinking to be incorporated in the learning process.

In conclusion, it may be argued that the strong classification may be the death knell of the subject if it persists. If pupils cannot afford the means of participation<sup>30</sup> and alternatives are not forthcoming, then the subject in its present form may die. Some Headteachers and L.E.As have urged this on the grounds though of its irrelevance to modern living.<sup>31</sup> Some schools however are seeking redirection<sup>32</sup>: pioneering is going on with incorporating it into either Sociology schemes or Humanities programmes.<sup>33</sup> What is significant is the fact that the synthesis has not been the other way round.<sup>34</sup>

### Framing

The strength of framing in the domestic subjects has led to much of its troubles today. Within the concept there are three elements: selection, organisation and pacing.<sup>35</sup>

#### i) Selection

The selection of knowledge items in the domestic subjects has been socially and economically determined rather than educationally. These factors have been discussed elsewhere<sup>36</sup> but it suffices to say that selection is a crucial factor in retaining pupils' interest. So also is pacing of that knowledge. If the material merely repeats what a pupil already knows and perhaps does frequently at home, then the interest is likely to evaporate rapidly. It appears that no allowance is made for the varying level of pre-knowledge in a class: the 'class lesson' is still the normal mode of communication. This has been the practice from the early days.

In the past, the selection of material was governed by the requirements of potential employers. Today it is determined in large measure by the demands of parents.<sup>37</sup> These may be affected by individual beliefs, tastes and habits and consequently totally anti-educational. Selection may also be affected to a considerable extent by physical restrictions and financial exigencies, imposed directly or indirectly by L.E.As.<sup>38</sup> Political factors also enter into such decisions, especially at the local level. For example, only specific sources may be used for the purchase of materials in some cases when in reality it would be far cheaper to have freedom of choice, such as bulk purchasing or through local mills. Experimental work is necessarily curtailed if available resources are restricted to the more expensive sources as is frequently the case in such instances. In addition, the limited stock carried by some of the designated shops may also inhibit the range of work undertaken, particularly in the case of garments.

From research findings<sup>39</sup> it seems that a major factor in the selection of knowledge items in the teacher's own former education. Pruning of the body of knowledge to the level of relevance appropriate to the current needs of society appears to be undertaken reluctantly and minimally. The authority of the chief H.M.I. for Home Economics has not it seems been very effective: the idea of 'six basic recipes' has met with little success.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, it would seem that the selection of knowledge items is historically influenced and socially and economically determined. True educational considerations are all too frequently forced into the background.

ii) Organisation

Organisation of knowledge can be on an 'integrated' or 'collective' basis as with the curriculum in general. To date, the tendency has been, in the domestic subjects, to organise it on a 'collective' basis. This has produced problems of interrelating across knowledge-areas, as in the case of nutrition and food. It is said that nutrition is the why and food the how of good health.<sup>41</sup> On a 'collective' basis however, it may take many years before the two elements are synthesised.<sup>42</sup> Certainly the Bird's Eye Food survey (1963) would support this finding: after more than seventy years of education in food values those interviewed had only a 'low level' of understanding about nutrition.<sup>43</sup> Some ten years later many more interviewees were at least aware of vitamins. However, this could be due to other forms of education such as advertisements. Even then, only fifty per cent of those interviewed mentioned proteins whilst twenty-five mentioned iron or calcium.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that many of those interviewed had a 'reasonably good' diet<sup>45</sup> may be due to other sources of information, such as women's magazines and 'Health' journals, which publish articles relating to modern illnesses (e.g. coronaries). Similarly, the wide choice of foods available in British shops may be a contributory factor. This is particularly noticeable when comparisons are made between the E.E.C. countries and the national idiosyncrasies of physical structure are noted.<sup>46</sup> Such a view however must be tempered by the current problem of obesity.

It was the advent of R.O.S.L.A. (1973) that brought at least some attempt at a reassessment of knowledge items - but then only for the final year group. Some L.E.As. were a source of authority in this respect: they provided special units (e.g. Lancashire) on the advice of their Advisers. These units offered a variety of internal designs to headteachers. Basically the aim was to provide a large open-plan type of accommodation which would facilitate an integrated approach to the entire curriculum for that year group at least. But, as ever, power itself lay with the Headteachers: many saw these units as a much needed source of extra teaching space - on the old classroom basis. Consequently many of these units were enclosed and furnished in the traditional style, often to the extent of rows of desks. This effectively annihilated any new teaching-learning situation.

Historically, the study areas of the domestic subjects have been discrete, except where they were combined as the 'Domestic Subjects' (1909)<sup>47</sup>. Power to effect this has rested with the individual teacher usually. The source of their power can be seen as having been located in the training establishments which may be regarded as the source of authority for the teacher since she so often has been conditioned by it into certain practices and beliefs. This, together with the reversion to methods etc. which she herself was taught by tend to perpetuate the organisation of knowledge within the 'traditional' patterns. Change may however be enforced by the necessary reorganisation contingent upon the construction of new degree courses. This will depend though on

whether the point of departure is the concept of inviolate knowledge items or whether the end product (i.e. the type of person to be produced) is the primary concern. In the light of available evidence, it seems that the former will prevail.<sup>48</sup> It is suggested that this will consequently produce an inbuilt conservatism yet again.

From all the evidence offered, it seems that, with rare exceptions, the reorganisation of knowledge is unlikely to occur: teachers, although expressing concern about the 'overcrowded third year'<sup>49</sup>, do not appear to consider any alternatives. College tutors likewise seem concerned to provide courses which will enable teachers to teach the crowded third year. Thus the problem is circulatory: in attempting to break the cycle the question of pacing might well hold the answer.

### iii) Pacing

Pacing is of major concern to the domestic subjects for it governs the image and consequently the status of the subject. Pacing is a matter of the release-rate of knowledge.

Originally, the pacing of knowledge was influenced by the physical conditions. Large classes and little equipment or money meant that knowledge was dispensed only slowly. Groups of pupils took turns at doing component parts of recipes.<sup>50</sup> Alternatively, the demonstration was given one week while groups of girls performed the practical part in the ensuing weeks - often resulting in a three week delay between the two. Sillitoe's comment about the lengthy



adherence to this practice (i.e. the 'demonstration' being apart from the practical) is still very pertinent today, for it is still widely in vogue, a week's interval being commonplace.<sup>51</sup>

Thus it can be appreciated that the pacing was largely governed by the methodology employed: this in turn was determined by economic factors. In the final analysis of course, this is a matter of social evaluation of the subject in terms of its 'worth' and perceived educational value. It may be argued that it was the affection of the teachers for the 'demonstration' which has hindered progress in the subject. It appears to have inhibited the development of other modes of communication.

The concept of class teaching is its anchor. It is this practice which prevents any allowance for variations in previous knowledge within a class group. It is quite often the case that pupils from the working classes have considerable previous knowledge (e.g. of cake making or child care) as the result of enforced experience. Similarly, the subsequent pacing of the knowledge may be unsuitable for those pupils who have facilities for interim practice.

The pacing of knowledge is thus seen to be governed by the obsession with the uniform approach. This was established in the early days of needlework teaching when the 'class method' was introduced.<sup>52</sup> Then it was the result of social values and economic pressures and may be viewed as inevitable in the circumstances. In any case, the 'previous knowledge' was hardly a matter for concern since the potential knowledge was considerably less than today and the acquisition of it unlikely, given the existing social conditions.<sup>53</sup>

Pacing of knowledge was also governed by edicts from the Department of Education and Science. The notion that the knowledge should accord with the 'Standard' requirements ensured this. This appears to have been at variance with other subjects in the nineteenth century when promotion of pupils was determined on the basis of ability. Added to this, the practice of filling up places in the cookery classes regardless of ability levels was a hampering influence,<sup>54</sup> despite the help given by Organisers (adjuncts to the Inspectorate). Today there is a noted antipathy on the part of teachers of the domestic subjects towards mixed ability classes. This is because they see the problem of pacing as being heightened in a practical subject.<sup>55</sup> Should the method of teaching be changed though, it is suggested that the problem would disappear of itself. It is perhaps a matter of conviction with regard to educational values. Certainly on the class basis, a group of pupils can only go as fast as the slowest member of the group, unless it is accepted that some will be stranded in the sea of knowledge. Thus a change to the group method would, it is maintained, ease the problem of pacing.

If the idea that pacing was a central feature of knowledge disposition, the antagonism towards one-year sixth form courses would be resolved.<sup>56</sup> The opportunities afforded by such courses to pupils who might otherwise never experience the domestic subjects could then be exploited. It might also encourage 'brighter' pupils to enter the field.

At the College level, pacing is also open to criticism.<sup>57</sup> Although some Colleges make very adequate arrangements for students of varying ability levels,<sup>58</sup> nevertheless some students feel insufficiently 'stretched' by their courses.<sup>59</sup> This suggests that the pacing is insufficiently rigorous.<sup>60</sup>

Curriculum structure and pedagogical relationships have frequently been influenced by psychological theory: theories regarding the learning process, motivation etc. But psychological theories, it may be argued, embody and reflect social ideologies.<sup>61</sup> They not infrequently lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome. Sociological factors influencing learning ability were not appreciated when the phenomenon of psychology hit the educational world.

#### Psychometry in the curriculum

The psychology industry invaded the educational scene in the nineteen twenties, coming in the main from America. As the result of Burt's<sup>62</sup> and others work the theory of intelligence inheritability was established and became highly effective. It was maintained that an individual's potential could be estimated on the basis of inherited capacity which was measurable at about eleven years old. Therefore, according to potential, a 'suitable' education should be provided. Thus an effective ceiling was put on a child's learning: for many this was a very low ceiling. But it suited the social hierarchy to be 'supported' in this way. The effect of teacher-power in the ability stakes was only very slowly recognised, as was the influence of the home.<sup>63</sup>

The rash of test material was evidence of a major industry.<sup>64</sup> It excluded other possible contributory factors by offering 'scientific' evidence. Inevitably, as psychometry became devalued, social explanations replaced it. An offshoot of this was Bernstein's work<sup>65</sup> which, while it related to language initially, became transferred (perhaps conveniently for teachers) to the general ability scene. The intention was to explain the derivation of academic inequality in terms of social-class background. Unfortunately it came to be regarded as inevitable. Thus what may well have been intended to stimulate positive discrimination in reality led to an acceptance of the concept of social-class differential ability. Thus was the myth perpetuated. The manipulation of findings to support ideologies of stratification was again effective.

Under this concept of inbuilt academic potential (or deficiency) achievement rests on the mastery of specific knowledge, mapped out in 'chunks' to be taught by the 'expert' and unquestioningly digested by the compulsorily coordinated learner. In this situation the teacher had the right to define what constituted 'worthwhile knowledge'<sup>66</sup> which itself was determined largely by social ideologies. What psychometry did was to support convergent thinkers.

With the questioning and erosion of assumptions (the nature v nurture controversy) the fixedness of the I.Q. became challenged: the mind became envisaged as active rather than static.<sup>67</sup> The phenomenological paradigm was invoked.

### Phenomenology in the curriculum

Changed concepts regarding the mental capacities of pupils influenced curriculum patterns and pedagogical relationships. Integrated curricula (in various guises) became more widely used particularly at the lower age levels. Respect for the child's subjective knowledge enhanced the 'linking' mechanism of the learning process. Hitherto this had been rejected, an effective stop-mechanism for many pupils.<sup>68</sup> Curricula became constructed on a 'project' base, self-learning programmes etc.

This curriculum paradigm has been slow to permeate the secondary level because they are still affected considerably by the problem of professional identity, governed as it is by the examination system. But the phenomenological ideology is now making an impact. This is testified to by the controversy surrounding the curriculum content and the concept of a 'core' curriculum.<sup>69</sup>

Bernstein highlights the contrasts between the psychometric and phenomenological paradigms in his analysis of 'Classification and Framing' in the curriculum, although he does not refer specifically to these models. He notes the changing nature of the power relationship between teacher and pupil according to whether the curriculum is structured on a 'Collection' or an 'Integrated' basis.<sup>70</sup>

In the realm of the domestic subjects phenomenology appears to have made little impact.

### Pedagogy in the Domestic Subjects

The domestic subjects suffer from the effects of psychometry. As a subject it tends to receive those pupils rated as academically deficient. However, it must be asked as to whether the effects have not been emphasised unnecessarily. A collection type code tends to operate and little or no account is taken of pupils' subjective knowledge. The 'class' teaching method which the collection type code favours does not easily accommodate individualised learning programmes which are indicated if different pre-knowledge is allowed for. Although individual differences in learning rates have been long recognised in educational circles it seems that the domestic subjects are not moving towards such acknowledgement in either sphere.<sup>71</sup>

### Needlework

In the days of 'Art' needlework, individual teaching was the norm.<sup>72</sup> However, 'Class' teaching was brought to Britain in 1873 from Darmstadt by Mrs. Aycogh Floyer.<sup>73</sup> The need for a more 'scientific' method of teaching was required in the large classes of elementary schools when Plain Sewing was introduced. This accorded with the age, which recognised the 'scientific mind' and sought precision and rationality in all processes.

The pedagogical relationship was an authoritarian one and the methodology was suitably supportive : processes were taught by the 'Drills'<sup>74</sup> which were of the '... utmost importance'.<sup>75</sup> These Drills were the outcome of education being regarded as a 'science'.<sup>76</sup> The idea underlying this concept was that many children together could be made to "... act with the precision of an individual".<sup>77</sup>

It was said that the drills " ... help to interest and attract", but it seems probable, in the light of prevailing social ideologies, that they aimed to cultivate " ... prompt attention and obedience".<sup>78</sup> It was probably very true that the exercises also could be said to develop habits of observation and imitation<sup>79</sup> - not least through fear of the consequences if they were unsuccessful. This, together with the idea that the drills built skill and knowledge 'line upon line and little by little'<sup>80</sup> must have been a major factor in the rejection of Needlework by many as a "mindless and petty occupation".

This collective teaching method was retained even when the sewing machine was developed sufficiently to take over some of the more arduous, uninteresting processes and pupils were allowed to carry out more of the planning and cutting out operations. It was only when the concept of individual differences, and consequently the notion of different rates of progress developed, that the 'framing' of the subject was relaxed somewhat. However, class teaching, with everyone doing the same pattern and process simultaneously can still be found quite frequently.<sup>81</sup> This suggests that the subject is still regarded by some teachers as a linear one with chunks of knowledge to be learned in sequence. But some teachers have relaxed their framing and practiced the integrated approach, allowing the pupil to develop at her own pace and virtually in whatever direction she chooses. This is facilitated by detailed record keeping of individuals' progress which enables the teacher to ensure that each pupil does cover all the basic processes etc. during the overall

course. The pupil is thus motivated because she is able to follow fashions, a feature which has become increasingly important in an era of 'self-development' and rapid change.

'Classification' of the subject has also altered to a degree, although this is internal adaptation rather than in relation to other subjects. From 'Plain Sewing', dressmaking/dresscraft developed and it was urged that needlework, as household sewing, repairing etc. should be included with Housecraft instead of with dress per se.<sup>82</sup> Gradually, as education expanded, subject boundaries became more elastic and personal empires were built, so needlework as 'Dress and Embroidery' moved erratically towards the Art sphere. It became associated with 'design' on the grounds that this was an integral part of the subject.<sup>83</sup> To a degree this may be so, but 'creativity' has many faces: by stressing the creative aspect as design so strongly, many pupils who are capable and enjoy the constructional aspect of creativity are being imperceptibly excluded from the subject. Thus there is a clash of ideologies - that of individualism versus utilitarianism.

'Creative Embroidery' is the modern counterpart of 'Art Needlework'. Here, the pedagogical relationship is once more on a one-to-one basis which ostensibly allows a much more relaxed framing than the class method. Yet from personal testimonies, it would seem that the personality factor is still superordinate: indeed, the authoritarian teacher can still be most effective if not more so, in this intimate relationship. The dyadic situation is much more tense and 'intimidation' highly possible. This would however seem



to differ situationally in that the teacher actually trained in the modern method is likely to have been reared within a more relaxed framework and to have imbibed educational theories within a complex rather than a mono-subject situation.

### Cookery, Housecraft, Laundrywork

Classification in these areas has remained strong. Although teachers were urged to relate food values to food processing (i.e. cooking) at the turn of the century<sup>84</sup> the two were not related for many decades.<sup>85</sup> Even today, despite over thirty years of vitamin knowledge and the impact of beneficial war-time diet practices<sup>86</sup> these areas are frequently not even related yet alone integrated.

Within the current interest (1976) in 'Health' education, the perpetuation of the collection type code within the subject is still observable. 'Health' is being retained as a separate entity<sup>87</sup> from food preparation and processing.

Housecraft and Laundrywork (now as 'Fibres and Fabrics') have retained their separate classification with archaic knowledge being frequently incorporated. These crafts are still taught as separate skills often with painfully itemised programmes which appear totally irrelevant to modern living.<sup>88</sup> The classification within the domestic subjects, although less tight in some institutions, retains a remarkably 'collection' type code curriculum.

An attempt at an integrated approach arose with the concept of the 'Flat' in the Domestic studies area. Programmes, in Colleges, simulating a group living situation do likewise. But they miss the

reality of family situations, offering a false experience, when the ability to synthesise competences in the context of Bloom's knowledge hierarchy is the real requirement. Where experiences involve the normal family upsets of timing and choice, as for example where children are brought in on a week/fortnight project basis,<sup>89</sup> then the integration of knowledge is emphasised and made more realistic. The sterility of many learning situations points to the still tight classification and framing within the subject.

It is the latter which is particularly in evidence still. Teachers seem to be exceptionally convinced that the selection, organisation and pacing of knowledge must follow a virtually preordained schedule:<sup>90</sup> the 'overcrowded third year' is seemingly never questioned as to possible rescheduling. Rarely is knowledge paced to the different needs of pupils - their different learning rates and pre-knowledge. There appears to be considerable antipathy to the use of modern media to overcome these problems:<sup>91</sup> the use of tapes, slides etc. for processes in cookery for example are extremely rare.<sup>92</sup> This is indicative of the degree to which the pedagogical relationship is still viewed as that of teacher and taught rather than the teacher as one resource among others.

Perhaps the most glaring example of the continuation of the traditional pedagogical relationship is that of 'the demonstration'. Here the teacher not only imparts substantive matter according to her knowledge level, but also methodology. It still appears to be thought that each college has its own beliefs as to 'what

is right'. Strict adherence to the teacher's recipe and method is demanded, even though this conflicts with the pupils' everyday knowledge on some occasions.<sup>93</sup> Thus the teacher fails to communicate through an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the pupil's 'commonsense' knowledge and thereby shuts the learning process down. There is some evidence to show that quite a few pupils rated high on intelligence reject the domestic subjects on these grounds alone. Pedantic teaching produces convergent thinking only. This also accounts for the frequent altercations between teacher and learner to the effect that 'my mum doesn't do it like that'. Within a relaxed frame work this can be coped with constructively and the two realities be enabled to meet: in a tight one this is impossible.

The popularity of the class method and the 'demonstration' stem from the days of vast classes and too little equipment.<sup>94</sup> The perpetuation of it however can only be its utilisation of 'knowledge as power'. Where the teacher has an apparent monopoly of knowledge, as with most subjects, the power to disseminate it affords an identity-protection mechanism. The teacher of domestic subjects is more vulnerable in this respect because their knowledge does not appear to be exclusive. Yet in reality it is. In fact the effect of incorrect knowledge or methodology is far more costly at both personal and societal levels.<sup>95</sup> Assumptions made about 'everyday knowledge' are often wild miscalculations, as for example the mythology of maternalism.<sup>96</sup> Ideologies concerning women, their psychology, biology and interests are the root cause and creators of these problems.<sup>97</sup>

Devolving from this is the whole question of what knowledge is of importance to succeeding generations and the gender factions within that. Since the identity of a subject can be said to be reflected in its examinations this element is examined in the next chapter.

ReferencesChapter IV

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13. Apter, D. (1964) Ideology and Discontent p.64 Glencoe
14. Flamenatz, J. (1970) Ideology p.60 (1971 edn) Collier Macmillan
15. Bennett, N. op.cit.

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18. Easthope, G. (1975) Community, Hierarchy and Open Education ch.1. R.& K.P.
19. *ibid.*
20. Change is slow: Randall Collins (1971) A Conflict Theory of Sexual Stratification, in Family, Marriage and the Struggle of the Sexes. Shows that 'Victorianism' could in fact be traced back to the sixteenth century to the breakdown of power-based home groups.
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22. *ibid.*
23. Several teachers who experienced their training in the early decades of the twentieth century have stated this.
24. This advantage was lost when all teacher education courses became three years.
25. Goffman, E. (1961) Asylums. Introduction p.16 & 22. Penguin
26. Appendix A3 (i) Of the extra duties however, the greatest demand was for catering in relation to school functions. (v. A.T.D.S. Report 1869 p.89)
27. Many Home Economics teachers now undertake 'playground' and dinner duties as well as having registration classes. They are also appointed as House or Year Tutors.
28. Bernstein, B. *loc. cit.*
29. The conditions are currently in a state of transition with the B.Ed. degree now available.

30. v. A.T.D.S. Report on the 'Costing of Home Economics and Needlework Lessons, (1974) esp. item 1.3.
31. In the late nineteen-sixties the Lancashire Education Authority seriously considered this move. (Also: Foster-White, Housecraft, vol. 38 no.8 p.293 Aug. 1965.
32. One Headmaster known personally to the writer has himself assumed the role of Head of Home Economics until he can appoint a teacher " ... who does not see the subject as only cookery".
33. Derbyshire L.E.A.
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35. Bernstein, B. op. cit. p.50
36. Passim this study, especially Chs. I. II. III & IV
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45. loc. cit.
46. Pyke, M. (1968) Food and Society ch. iv. Murray
47. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.234
48. B.Ed. Course Construction Committee took the former view.

49. At the Buxton Conference (June 1974) this point was specifically made rather than larger issues discussed. It would seem that there is much material which is regarded by teachers as necessarily falling into the third year by virtue of the build-up in years 1 & 2 but which left a large cognitive and motor skill gap before 'O' level courses began in the fourth year.
50. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.59. Classes of 200+ are referred to in P.P. 1886, General Education, vol 34, para 310 (Sheffield University) by Miss F.L. Calder.
51. *ibid.* p.38
52. *supra.* ch. III p.116
53. *supra.* ch. II. p: 35 ff
54. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.81
55. Many teachers have commented on this point to the writer. Although many Home Economics and other 'practical' subjects are taught in mixed ability groups, this is the result of the Headteacher's philosophy (or lip-service) to prevailing social and educational concepts. It does not ensure the acceptance of the principle by the practitioners, although it may ensure their compliance. The corollary to this is that the less committed the teacher to the principle of mixed ability teaching the less effective is the outcome likely to be.
56. There are many teachers who regard the 'crash-course' of one-year in the sixth form as detrimental to the understanding of the subject. Whilst this may be true to a degree, it is possible that, given the same circumstances (i.e. no other or only one other subject) it is possible (and known) that other subjects could likewise be studied. The sanctity of time is an illusion - it fails to account for some of the crucial variables contingent upon the learning process, namely, former knowledge and motivation.
57. Harvey, J. (1971) The Teaching of Home Economics in Great Britain. p.35
58. e.g. Totley-Thornbridge separates those with 'A' level Home Economics from those without for the first year.
59. Harvey, J. loc. cit.
60. For example, in Middle School courses the range of previous knowledge is likely to be even more varied than in a Mains course. Therefore, to take two hours to wash two garments ('practical' experience) was in the students' view unrealistic for those who were experienced mothers and well aware of the normal pressures in the home.



61. e.g. the theory of inherited intelligence suited the hierarchical structure of society and reflected the prevailing ideology of natural superiority.
62. Cyril Burt, Eynsenck, etc.
63. Douglas, J.W.B. (1964) Home, School and Family. Panther 1967
64. infra. ch.V.
65. Bernstein, B. (1971) Class, Codes and Control vol.1. pp. 170 ff. R. & K.P.
66. Open University The Social Organisation of Teaching and Learning. pp. 34-38
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73. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. pp. 49-50
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80. loc. cit.

81. Observed in schools
82. Bray, Mrs. C. (1940) Principal of the Katinka School of Dress Design introduced this concept. She examined at Training Colleges and conducted many courses for teachers (source: private papers).
83. loc. cit.
84. Pillow, Mrs. Report 1896 pp. 157-158
85. It seems that there is considerable difficulty in establishing new teaching methods in this field (Appendix I3(i) (Miss Finch).
86. Frequent references concerning the attributes of the dietary constraints through rationing during world war two are being made in 1977 (ref. S.T.N. Longmate 1975).
87. e.g. new B.Ed. courses
88. e.g. starching pillowslips; washing lace with a marble in a glass jar for three hours (student).
89. as at Bath College
90. Opinions expressed at the Buxton Conference on 'The Future of Home Economics', June 1974.
91. (i) Teachers devising the curriculum for the N.W.C.D.P. believed that their colleagues would not use the overhead projector; therefore they did not incorporate them into the teaching programme.
- (ii) Hutchinson, V. op. cit. p.14. item 6.1.2. aii
92. ibid. p.19 item 11.5
93. Barnes, D. op. cit. ch.3
94. Classes of 70 - 200 are recorded for demonstration lessons (Special Report on the teaching of cookery 1886) and that, for example, seventeen girls spent an afternoon cutting up 4 oranges and even then they did not see the end product since it took two days to complete the process. (Special Report on the Teaching of Cookery, 1907, p.7)
95. Whitfield, R. op. cit. p.233
96. Oakley, A. (1976) Housewife. ch.8 Penguin
97. infra. ch.IX

Chapter VExaminations

"External examinations came into existence in the nineteenth century to counter privilege, patronage and placemongering; they remain a safeguard against these things".

J.M.B./G.C.E.  
The Work of the J.M.B. 1969 p.22

Introduction

Examinations in our society have long been highly valued both by the population at large who stood to benefit and the teaching profession who have used it for promotional purposes and also as a means of containing pupils in a learning situation<sup>1</sup> when they might have other ends in view. Society, it could be argued, has used the examination system to allocate people to various occupational strata.<sup>2</sup> In Home Economics the picture has an added dimension: in themselves the examinations are socially divisive, notably at the level of public examinations.

Initially, the G.C.E., as had done the former School Certificate examinations, ostensibly separated the academically able pupils from the less academic ones in the broad analysis. The C.S.E., rather than closing the concept of failure, heightened it by streaming even further those who could cope and those who were 'unexaminable'. Since there is a correlation between social class and academic success, the conclusions are inescapable. What the explosion in C.S.E.<sup>3</sup> examinations did, was to reflect the societal demand for observable paper qualifications which would differentiate workers in an increasingly differentiated work situation. In this respect, it may be argued that it was functional

for society. It also helped to salve consciences in an era in which the ideology of egalitarianism was pseudo-dominant. However, in reality it can be seen as yet another example of piecemeal social engineering by means of which the dominant group was able to sustain its ideology and supremacy. Total commitment to 'equality' would have required measure to be taken in the whole social field, not just that of education.

#### The Function of Examinations

The history of examinations in Britain serves to illustrate the discrepancy which so often arises between intended and actual outcomes of any measure. Although when the School Certificate examination was launched (1918) it was intended that examinations should follow, not determine the curriculum, the Spens Committee (1938) found that the reverse had occurred, and that ...

"despite all safeguards, the School Certificate now dominates the work of the schools, controlling both the framework and the content of the curriculum."<sup>4</sup>

Some twenty years late (1960) the Beloe Committee reported that

"... the examination dictated the curriculum and cannot do otherwise."<sup>5</sup>

This is certainly debatable in the light of other countries' examinations, such as the German 'Arbitur'.<sup>6</sup> Even as recently as 1971 the balance

of power was noted in the School Council's deliberations, where it was clothed in the alternative guise that the curriculum was the "product" of the examination syllabus.<sup>7</sup>

It is said that the function of examinations in general is to provide a " ... rank order of attainment of a sample of pupils" and to hopefully provide some predictive value as to future performance.<sup>8</sup> This definition of the purpose of examinations differs somewhat from Cowen's, who appears to take an 'ideal' view of the purpose of examinations. He argues that initially it was the 'efficiency of the school that was being tested' (nineteenth century); later it was 'the effects of different styles of education' (1950s) and the method of teaching, when new methodologies were being tried out later.<sup>9</sup> Each of these might be feasible if the variable of 'the teacher' could be made constant. In the final analysis however, the one factor which appears to be of paramount importance is the personality factor of the teacher - an indefinable quality which determines the learning climate.<sup>10</sup>

Thus it may be asked what the latent function of examinations was. It could be argued that, since knowledge is a 'property' which eventually affords access to life-chances, examinations were a mechanism of the acquisitive society whereby goods and services were distributed, the rewards of society were attained. Social power, prestige and political power were ' ... the time honoured paraphernalia' available to those whose knowledge 'proved' them to be worthy.<sup>11</sup>

Although discrepancies in examination marking were noted as early as 1888 by Edgworth and by Starch in 1913, their estimated value was inflated by middle-class aspirers who were anxious to attain such rewards. Despite some fairly damning evidence by Hartog and Rhodes in 1935<sup>12</sup> which showed examiners to vary their markings on a remark basis after an interval of twelve to nineteen months, the proliferation of examinations is a feature of the 1950-1970 era, as the double-entry policy of many schools in relation to G.C.E. and C.S.E. shows. Indeed, examinations are one of the country's "growth industries".<sup>13</sup> An increasing amount of public money was being spent on education. Alternatively it may be seen as the result of an expanding middle-class seeking the measures of success traditionally associated with these classes. Examinations have however, frequently become ends in themselves with little, if any, evaluation of their purpose and effect, especially the latter. It may be that the system of rewards in education tended to persuade teachers that the entering of pupils for public examinations enhanced their promotion potential - as indeed it did, especially if one could claim a high success rate.<sup>14</sup> The economics of the 'double entry' are only now being acknowledged in the light of the necessary economies which are facing education.<sup>15</sup>

Other attributes of examinations are said to be that they enable pupils to assess their own " ... progress, strengths and weaknesses",<sup>16</sup> and that they supply information which teachers may use " ... to identify the needs of pupils for individual guidance and promotion".<sup>17</sup> These

are perhaps ideals which are rarely adhered to, or even held. Most internal examinations constitute a ritual which lead to the further hurdles of external examinations.

The end for which most examinations are used may be seen not so much as an assessment of the course being followed, as Wiseman and Pidgeon suggest,<sup>18</sup> but rather, a means of assessing the pupils' ability to absorb and "reproduce verbal or numerical formulae"<sup>19</sup> as supplied by the teacher. This process enhances the teacher's self-concept of a "successful" teacher. To assess the success of a course itself, the objectives would necessarily have to be pre-stated, and a means of evaluating all the intended outcomes, both social and cognitive would have to be found.

Current educational thinking suggests that examinations are but one mode of evaluation<sup>20</sup> and that there is a need for both ongoing as well as summative evaluation, the latter being mainly provided by examinations. It may be however, that the tautologous argument regarding the purpose and effect of examinations is an arid one, since the perceived purpose is often merely the outcome of the effect. Thus examinations, seen to achieve entry to the citadels of learning, may acquire this effect as their perceived function, although not necessarily overtly. Teachers may well see their objective as getting pupils over the examination hurdles despite the claim by Universities that 'A' levels are not a measuring stick<sup>21</sup>. In the field of the domestic subjects however, this hardly applies, since there has been little provision for the subject at the higher levels of education.

Whatever examinations set out to assess, cognitive, affective or motor skills, they must be clearly designed to measure the intended aspects. Therefore it seems essential that the objectives of the course be defined so that evaluation procedures do in fact measure the degree of achievement in relation to those objectives. Yet in the past, it would seem that the reverse has occurred, particularly in the field of the domestic subjects. Here it appears that Examination Boards and bodies have frequently defined the objectives through the nature of the questions set.<sup>22</sup> This point has been echoed only recently when it was stated that syllabuses are "very badly written .. (and that) you often have to go on the questions to a certain extent as a guide to what to teach."<sup>23</sup> This seemingly reflects the somewhat static nature of the purpose and the effect of examinations in the domestic subjects.

### Historical perspectives

Originally, the purpose of domestic subject examinations was to provide suitably qualified instructresses whom the training schools could send out to staff the growing number of cookery schools in the eighteenth-eighties (1880s) which proliferated as the result of the middle-class's demands.<sup>24</sup> These examinations, in the form of 'Diplomas', established the concept of social differentiation. The 'High' and 'Household' Diplomas were far more sought after than the 'Artisan' Diploma,<sup>25</sup> although it is claimed that at Berridge House the latter Diploma was stressed.<sup>26</sup> Success in the examinations virtually guaranteed a post at a higher salary than ordinary teachers could expect.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, this might have been one of the attractions of the training for the well-to-do young ladies who attended such courses.<sup>28</sup>



Another function of the Diploma system was to equip women for their future roles (e.g. superintendants of Institutions; or as managers of large households; for work overseas).<sup>29</sup> More recently, the purpose of examinations outside the state school system (i.e. at the tertiary level) may be seen basically as providing a self-fulfilling cycle - to provide teachers of the subject so that new teachers may be trained. Whilst this may at first sight appear to be a tautologous situation, an examination of the content of College courses and the rationale for this content would suggest this to be the case.

An overall effect of both these eras is a rather notable 'in-breeding' within the subject. Whilst it is argued by some that this is beneficial in that it creates a 'unity of methods, perspectives and practices',<sup>30</sup> it may also lead to ossification. This pattern is however slowly breaking as the generation of lecturers from the monotechnic colleges passes out of the system.

This problem may well have arisen as the result of the system of internally conducted college examinations. It was not until 1915 that the Department of Education was able to arrange a systematic and regular scheme of inspection by expert Inspectors for both Training Schools and the Elementary schools of the state system.<sup>31</sup> This was an important step forward and must have raised the status of the domestic subjects and the teachers thereof, whose 'quality' had been questionable owing to the briefness of their training and the frequency of examinations which put an intolerable strain on the cookery schools' resources.<sup>32</sup> Matters had been worsened when 'Housewifery' and 'Laundrywork' were added to the range of subjects taught.

The Cookery Training schools were eventually put on the same level as other teacher training establishments in respect of Final examinations (externally assessed)(1918).<sup>33</sup> This enabled them to associate with the Universities and Degrees which now incorporated the domestic subjects were established.<sup>34</sup>

#### Domestic Subjects and the Universities

It has been posited that the lack of University influence has benefitted the domestic subjects. It was suggested that examinations are not dominated by the demands of University entrance and that the curriculum therefore is free to develop according to the needs of the subject.<sup>35</sup> Yet it is the lack of university influence which has perhaps been a major factor in the persistently low status and weak image of the domestic subjects. For some years it was possible, (as stated above) to take a degree in the domestic subjects by means of a joint course. Universities such as Sheffield and Bristol cooperated with Training Colleges and students spent the majority of their time at the University, doing the 'practical' part at the Training College.<sup>36</sup> For instance, it was possible to take a B.Sc. at London University in 'Household and Social Science' and then a teaching qualification in the fourth year. At Sheffield it was possible to take a Diploma in Domestic Science (1911) in cooperation with the Sheffield College of Domestic Science.<sup>37</sup> It seems that the Sheffield Diploma lasted only a short while, for although the College of Domestic Science remained until 1927, when owing to the dangers of unemployment being greater among teachers of domestic subjects than ordinary teachers<sup>38</sup> it was closed. The Sheffield University Diploma had been withdrawn in 1917 on the grounds that there were insufficient

students.<sup>39</sup> It was wartime however and anyone interested in cooking would be likely to have been recruited, judging by the numbers of domestic subject teachers who went from the schools.<sup>40</sup> More recently, Bristol, which first introduced a degree in the Domestic Sciences in 1926, withdrew it in 1971 on the grounds that the needs of the students could be more satisfactorily met through the College of Education B.Ed.

At the present time there is only one University offering a first degree in 'Home Economics' (Surrey) although it is possible to take a B.Sc. in Household Science, Nutrition etc. as 'Household and Social Science' at Queen's College, London University.<sup>41</sup> This was established in 1928 and the Surrey course in 1970. It is now possible to take a higher degree by research at Surrey and London, but to date they have all been in the realm of food sciences, apart from one (K.Johnson) at Manchester.<sup>42</sup> This was concerned with satisfaction and dissatisfaction of Home Economics teachers.

The fact that all the degrees (except Surrey, which appears to subscribe to the actual concept of Home Economics) are science biased, is perhaps one of the reasons why so few decide to enter for them. It could be argued that, by the very nature of the subject, a degree incorporating a major element of social rather than pure science would have a far greater social impact than does the present degree. It is indeed ironic that it should be Queen Elizabeth's College which identifies as a 'major weakness' the lack of a Home Economics degree with a strong social science basis, for they themselves appear to demand a very strong 'pure' science bias in the courses they validate.<sup>43</sup>

The pressure to always include Home Economics within a Science faculty could be a serious handicap to the status of the subject<sup>44</sup> although not perhaps to those seeking to promote it.<sup>45</sup> Since component parts of Home Economics have now become established as University subjects in their own right (e.g. Sociology, Social Psychology) it would seem to be an appropriate time to reconsider the emphasis sought. At least it might be a propitious moment to consider alternative structures for in an area of such vast importance and diversity a mono-structure inevitably cannot provide for the scope of the discipline. Indeed, it could be argued that the two approaches are essentially rooted in opposition since the scientific one rests on the basis of 'rationality' and the social science one on 'reality'. Yet apart from the specialised study of the few, the social aspect dominates and often negates the scientific, for the individual will only accommodate the scientific into his social reality in the vast majority of cases.<sup>46</sup>

### School Examinations

The first type of school examination in the field of domestic subjects was that demanded by the 'payment-by-results' system. Needlework was a compulsory subject for the purpose of earning the basic grant.<sup>47</sup> The demand for success in Needlework led to the adoption of 'class teaching' since it was the 'most productive' method. Examinations were conducted by Government Inspectors, some of whom had no knowledge whatsoever of the subject.<sup>48</sup> This was perhaps not so surprising since the earlier Inspectors were men. Thus there was an unprecedented opportunity to submit work which had either been done

by outsiders (e.g. the Vicar's wife) or which had been worked in the main by the teacher (e.g. cutting out, hemming etc.). Even the practice of submitting the same garment for several years was not unknown since garments were 'sent in'.<sup>49</sup> Some H.M.Is. however, such as Mathew Arnold took a keen interest in the subject and appreciated its value. Indeed, some of them even went to the extent of learning the processes (e.g. buttonholing).<sup>50</sup>

Examination demands led to 'mass production' methods of teaching, based on methodical, mechanical procedures, even in examinations.<sup>51</sup> As a 'Special Subject', Needlework examinations consisted of set exercises which had to be completed within a given time, each pupil being allotted one of the exercises from the list given. The examinations even included those for 'Babies three to five'. They were expected to do 'Needle Drill' and 'Position Drill' which were respectively for threading a needle and holding the work in the correct position. They then had to complete tacking and running stitches to a count of six.<sup>52</sup> Examinations for other Grades consisted of sets of exercises which the Inspector would give out according to the Standard.<sup>53</sup> The method of organising the examination was to divide the class into groups, each group to consist of a number of pupils equal to the number of exercises for that Standard: thus Standard four with four exercises would be divided into groups of four. Each member of the group would then be given a different exercise.

Inspectors were instructed that "... too fine needlework should be avoided" but were then advised that Infants and Standard I should achieve about six to ten hemming stitches to the inch, Standard II eight

to eighteen and Standards III to VII should manage twelve to twenty-four<sup>54</sup> stitches. This was of course before it had been shown that such manipulative control was not really feasible until a child was about eight years old. There was also a timely warning that the "pernicious" habit of counting threads should be discouraged<sup>55</sup> and that pupils should attain precision simply by learning to coordinate hand and eye. In the Annual Report of 1891, the Directress of Needlework stated emphatically that the one "... great change" which she would like to see was the suspension of the practice whereby minute stitches were produced on samplers. Instead, she wished to see the "... more useful ... and prosaic work ..." of cutting out and making up of garments.<sup>56</sup> From this it can be seen that the function of examinations was purely vocational, ensuring that the future 'slopworkers' were adequately trained.<sup>57</sup>

### Secondary School Examinations

With the introduction of Secondary State education in 1902, examination fever flared. In the field of the domestic subjects, examinations again reflected the prevailing social order. For instance, in the Joint Matriculation Board's Senior School Certificate (1913) the Domestic Science was separate from Cookery, Laundrywork etc.<sup>58</sup> It was concerned entirely with Science. This meant that girls, like boys, could learn science. However, the ideology of feminine domesticity was firmly maintained : they were kept in their traditional orbit by the term 'domestic'. Their course content<sup>59</sup>, and the examination paper also, manifest the gap between the ideology at the level of intention and implementation.<sup>60</sup>

The 'Housecraft' examination was a separate entity and commanded its own timetable for examination purposes.<sup>61</sup> From this can be deduced the very considerable demands made upon the candidates. Areas of study included English, Composition, History, Geography, Arithmetic, French/German, Elementary General Science, Cookery, Housewifery, Laundry, Needlework, Drawing and Elementary Biology. Such a range of subjects within the concept of Housecraft is perhaps somewhat surprising. It was of course an examination to show the individual's capability to manage a large household.<sup>62</sup> It was thus firmly rooted in the middle class ideology of social differentiation. Nevertheless, as a subject it contained a broader range of subject matter than many pupils experience today.

As the result of specialisation, many subjects (e.g. History, Geography, Science) were hived off into separate examinations and the term 'Housecraft' became associated with Cookery and Household management only, with greater emphasis on the former.<sup>63</sup> With the fusion of Domestic Science and Housecraft, the academic potential for girls was lessened. This was even more so when Science was gradually excluded, or at best minimised.<sup>64</sup> This trend can be seen in the J.M.B. examinations when that of 1913 is compared with the 1931 paper.<sup>65</sup> In the former, Domestic Science was indeed science: the application to the home could have been entirely incidental. By 1931 though, the examinations show the science element to be embraced within the Household and personal Hygiene framework.<sup>66</sup>

Thus it may be argued that girls' education in general and the domestic subjects in particular<sup>67</sup> had taken a backward step which was eventually to lead to the social divisions, despite good intentions. The invisible element was in all probability the ideology of feminine domesticity which intensified during the inter-war period when women were not required in the productive market.<sup>68</sup>

In 1951 'Elementary Science' made a reappearance in conjunction with Housecraft.<sup>69</sup> This may have stemmed from concern over the lack of scientific knowledge and skills highlighted by experiences of the second world war (1939-1945). The 1958 syllabus shows a return to the original concept of the 1913 syllabus when the Housecraft examination was looking towards a breadth of knowledge in various fields. The main difference however is in the depth required. Owing to the knowledge boom of the post-war era, alternative syllabi had been introduced (1951). These in fact could, and did, put considerable pressure on teachers in the way of ensuring adequate provisions to cover the possible choice of questions candidates might select. The 1958 papers indicate the directions in which Home Economics was moving, not least the stress on the scientific aspect in the new, separate papers.<sup>70</sup> In addition, current social problems were coming into prominence in the sections on Town Planning, Housing, Social History, Sociological Studies etc. At first these appeared in the Housecraft papers (1958), then in the Needlework and Dressmaking papers (1962). At the same time (1962) Applied Physics and Applied Chemistry were important inclusions at 'A' level (in the Needlework and Dressmaking papers).<sup>71</sup>



The education explosion of the 1960s paralleled a growing social awareness. This was reflected in the changing syllabi of some Examination Boards such as the J.M.B. which introduced examinations incorporating studies on the "Home, the Family and Society". The change may also have been instigated by the increase in man-produced foodstuffs (e.g. convenience foods) and garments as well as technological developments which required a change in the content of examinations and syllabi - although teachers complain that these are not well reflected in the examinations.<sup>72</sup>

#### Examination analysis

In 1951 the School Certificate was replaced by the G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level examinations. Entrants to both have increased steadily. The success-failure rates however would imply either that the examination is more demanding than many anticipate or that pupils are being entered regardless of their ability.<sup>73</sup> Alternatively, there may be some reflection of the imbalance in the expertise of the teaching profession where young teachers, with inadequate experience are having to teach examination material in which they themselves are insufficiently grounded. The point was succinctly expressed by Margaret Middlemas when she stated ...

" ... (it is) incongruous that girls, almost straight from school would soon be standing up to teach others how to run their homes, manage families and share the life of the community." 74

Current criticism of external examinations in Home Economics (and its counterparts)<sup>75</sup> is perhaps justified when the lack of modern study areas is noted (e.g. convenience foods).<sup>76</sup> Syllabi appear to be some twenty years out of date and also to be somewhat class biased as can be seen by the reference to Deep Freezers. Those whose everyday reality includes such major household items will be at a considerable advantage in the examination for they will be working from actual experience while others will at best be operating only on 'teacher's knowledge'.<sup>77</sup>

If therefore the theoretical content of examinations has changed somewhat, the 'practical' content still appears to be weighted with the dead hand of a bygone era. It is argued that the teacher of Home Economics was hampered by the " ... less enlightened G.C.E. syllabuses"<sup>78</sup> during the first ten years of its existence. Certainly some of the tests left much to be desired since they were " ... badly worded and outside the pupils' everyday realities."<sup>79</sup>

What the practical examinations did was to create " ... a mad rush" and " ... unnecessary slaving" to produce a series of unrelated dishes to fit into some test which had been given " ... a string of jargon" in an attempt to make it relate to an everyday situation.<sup>80</sup> The examinations were frequently loaded so that the pupil was unable to prove her capabilities, as for example in the case of examination centres. Here the situation was frequently totally unknown to the candidate who could well find herself faced with equipment (e.g. a stove) with which she was quite unfamiliar. More than one candidate was faced with an electric stove when she had only ever experienced gas. In addition to this, the pupils had to rely on an adequate

supply of ingredients being available at the centre. It could entail a complete change of plan if the supply was inadequate or insufficient to cater for all the examinees, whose needs were not known prior to the actual examination.<sup>81</sup>

Then there was the problem of the examiner's own bias. The plea for them to be unbiassed, particularly with regard to method<sup>82</sup> was not misplaced in the light of the well known Domestic College's maxim the "If you don't make cakes our way it can't be right".<sup>83</sup> Complaints about examiners being out of touch with the realities of the pupils was echoed again in 1967 when it was suggested that "not too high a class" of work should be demanded, but rather, nutritionally sound components.<sup>84</sup> Certainly there would seem to be an incredible lack of communication between examiners, Examination Boards and the teachers if the questions asked at an examination conference (May 1967) are any indication. Teachers requested guidance from the examiners as to the balance of marks between the 'practical' and the theoretical sections of the G.C.E. 'A' level.<sup>85</sup>

On such a major issue it seems inconceivable that the basic allocation of marks should be in doubt. But the fact that there is a wide variation between the Boards does reinforce the need for clarification.<sup>86</sup> There would also appear to be a need to consider the openness of the lines of communication, especially where new teachers are concerned: the Examination Boards themselves feel there are adequate means of liaison with the teachers,<sup>87</sup> but this is from their superordinate position.

C.S.E.

The ideology of egalitarianism spread to the field of examinations in the 1960s. It was considered that all pupils should have a 'Leaver's Certificate'. To this end the Certificate of Secondary Education was established and the first Board, the South East Regional Examinations Board, came into existence in 1963.

The C.S.E. is a more visibly teacher controlled examination than the G.C.E.<sup>88</sup> especially Mode III where teachers submit their own syllabuses for approval to the Board. This examination has witnessed an "unprecedented increase" in the range of courses, particularly in the field of integrated and experimental courses.<sup>89</sup> Yet in the field of domestic subjects it seems that few teachers had the courage of their convictions to implement the "drastic changes" they deemed necessary, despite their opposition to the lines on which the practical examinations were apparently to be directed.<sup>90</sup>

Conservatism holds fast however, and even in 1969 complaints were being made about the content of practical examinations which demanded the making of lingerie, children's wear and the use of long seams in an age when man-made fibres, mass production methods and fashions require a different approach in a vastly changed marked situation.<sup>91</sup>

Ostensibly the C.S.E. was to enable a wider range of pupils to achieve qualifications than the former G.C.E. This would suggest an easier type of examination. However, certainly in the field of the domestic subjects and Needlework in particular, the breadth of knowledge required and the manual skills demanded were as great if not greater than that of the G.C.E.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the creative aspect was considerably above the G.C.E. The effects of the examination will

be considered later,<sup>93</sup> but it can be said at this point that there were certainly some unintended consequences resulting from the C.S.E. which were particularly noticeable in the realm of the domestic subjects.

After the initial examinations under the 'payment-by-results' system when the purpose of the examinations was clearly vocational from the pupils' viewpoint and utilitarian from the teachers', the manifest function of examinations in the domestic subjects may be seen as being on two levels. Primarily they were to afford a means of achieving success by those pupils who had not done so well in other curriculum areas.<sup>94</sup> But the latent function may have been to offer a palliative to the 'less able' in an era when success was increasingly visible through paper qualifications. Thus the latent function could be regarded as social integration. If this was not the case, then it could be argued that rather different examinations might have been constructed.

Currently, some would say that the purpose of examinations is to enable pupils to demonstrate their acquired knowledge and expertise to date<sup>95</sup> rather than providing a means of establishing their powers of intuitive thinking. This being so, even the new practical 'A' level papers<sup>96</sup> would seemingly be open to considerable criticism, for the practice of giving a specific question to each candidate (with the same one in the first half)<sup>97</sup> would seem to put severe limitations on the candidates' ability to show their potential. This is especially true if rather esoteric tests are devised: for example, lacto-vegetarian dishes may well be restricted in particular by seasonal, economic or distribution factors.

In the light of available evidence it would seem that concern over the purpose of examinations in the domestic subjects is justified, not least at the level of the Teacher's Certificate examination where the non-reality of the college world can have profound effects later on in the schools.

#### Effect of Examinations in the Domestic Subjects

Public examinations in the domestic subjects have recently commanded considerable criticism to the effect that they fail to reflect the current breadth of the subject.<sup>98</sup> It was stated that some of the G.C.E. syllabi were " ... old-fashioned and overconcerned with the art of cookery" and that there was an "urgent" need for research into the "purpose and effect of examinations".<sup>99</sup> This was despite recent changes in G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level syllabi.<sup>100</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse in detail the range of examinations in the various aspects of the domestic subjects: what will be attempted is an appraisal of the sociological elements involved in the 'purpose and effects' of examinations in this field.

It will be argued that, apart from the usual perceived functions of examinations, those in the domestic subjects domain have often been intended to offer an opportunity to those not academically gifted in order that they might attain a measure of success not otherwise possible. Thus the manifest function of examinations (in the area of the domestic subjects) was social integration. It will however be shown that they have in reality been dysfunctional in that

they have been socially divisive - at the public level at least. Thus they have reflected both the positive and negative aspects of the capitalist 'self-achievement' ideology: by defining success for the few, failure has been defined for the many.

Examinations tend to require personnel who can teach others to pass the examination in turn - thus creating a cyclical demand for the subject. The content of College courses is therefore likely to remain somewhat static since, as has been stated, it is necessary to produce practitioners who are capable of teaching to 'A' level standards. Horizons are thus limited and there is little awareness of the possibility of change - or it is denied. Indeed, College examinations and courses may still reflect the somewhat 'cosy ideology' of the early twentieth century.<sup>101</sup> Domestic Science Colleges were mono-technic institutions par excellence: their ethos was likely to be 'condescending and churchlike'.<sup>102</sup> There is still a tendency for some Home Economics Departments to infuse a 'sixth form ethos'<sup>103</sup> and an autocratic regime.<sup>104</sup> It may be said that the examinations of such institutions reflect these attitudes, most especially perhaps in the marking. It is possible for hard earned marks to be lost just because the presentation is not perfect - there is a crease in the cloth or a crumb on the table.<sup>105</sup> What such 'standards' do is to encourage a fastidiousness with mechanical detail most probably at the expense of larger issues. It must be said however that when students eventually reach the coal-face of reality, the classroom, some have stated that

they prefer these standards to the lower ones observed in situ.<sup>106</sup>

However, this would need to be considered alongside a number of other variables such as personality factors and teaching security before any conclusions could be safely drawn.

What may be asserted is that such attention to detail most probably discourages creativity, and also fosters a rejection of the subject, especially among more intelligent girls. Certainly a number of students deliberately suppress their desire for a creative approach owing to the acknowledged power of tutors in the examination stakes.<sup>107</sup> Likewise, school pupils may drop it before 'O' level because of the conformity demanded.<sup>108</sup>

Thus it may be said that the effect of examinations in the domestic studies domain has to date been somewhat detrimental to the image of the subject, for it is made to appear restrictive, uninspiring and undemanding. That such an image is at variance with the potential of the subject is made apparent when some of the work currently being undertaken is analysed. Unfortunately it is a fact that, through the medium of examinations, the standing of a subject vis-a-vis others is reflected.<sup>109</sup> Any subject is measured in examinational terms by the potential worth it has for either gaining access to Higher Education or for its market value in the immediate situation. Apart from the early days when employment was available in domestic service, the two qualities were not contained within the domestic subjects: it not being accepted as a University entry qualification on the whole<sup>110</sup> and only affording low-status jobs - not least that of housewife and mother.<sup>111</sup>



One major concern in relation to examinations is that University entrance is not the sole criteria of their content. An Examination Board has to pay its way; therefore any changes in syllabi have to be considered in this light.<sup>112</sup> It may well be however, that if new content was included, along lines suggested elsewhere,<sup>113</sup> the exceptionally high operational examination costs in Home Economics would be reduced.

The fact that no College of Education lists Home Economics as an essential entry requirement<sup>114</sup> does not of course enhance its image. This however shows the dilemma the subject is faced with : to demand it would probably exclude many potentially good teachers who were simply unable to take 'A' level Home Economics because the school did not offer it - it being too expensive a subject to operate for the few pupils who required it perhaps, yet by not demanding it makes it appear to be an easy subject to pick up. However, this is no more true of Home Economics than it is of other subjects which students take up for the first time at College or University (e.g. Sociology). Times are changing though, and after considerable campaigning on the part of teachers and other concerned bodies, 'A' level Home Economics is slowly gaining recognition as an entry qualification, for instance at London University.<sup>115</sup> The crux of the matter may rest in the manner of presentation. Unless and until 'A' level work in particular and Home Economics examinations in

general, are presented in an academic context and manner so will it appear to be non-academic,<sup>116</sup> and will therefore be rejected by the academically able pupils.

### 'A' level Home Economics and the Universities

It is generally argued that the academic content of 'A' level Home Economics syllabuses is inadequate for University entrance purposes.<sup>117</sup> What may be asked is whether it is any less indicative of future potential than other subjects. Or is the real problem that more subtle social pressures are at work?

One of the major attributes of 'A' levels has been their supposed predictive value. Certainly the Council for Secondary Schools Examinations felt that ...

" ... the real purpose of an external examination was to enable pupils to establish their possession of such competence in selected fields of study as would justify them in pursuing those studies further at University or in a course of professional training .. .. the examination should be forward looking ..." 118

Yet the accuracy of the prognosis based on 'A' level performance is very much open to doubt and selection for University a 'very chancy business' because despite the "most efficient methods ... (and the) ... best techniques" there is only a "very imperfect" prognosis of success.<sup>119</sup>

What 'A' level results fail to account for is the pupils' personality traits, such as perseverance. These attributes may be more accurately predictive of the pupils' potential. If this is so, then the Home Economics student may have far greater potential than many others since success in their field demands the skills of clear thought, forward planning, application and the ability to see a task through to its completion.<sup>120</sup>

If the image of Home Economics in the past has been that of a non academic subject this has perhaps been due to two major factors: first, the heavy weighting of the marks on the practical side,<sup>121</sup> and second, because of social perspectives which relate it to non-work, a point which will be dealt with later.<sup>122</sup>

Research into the question of 'A' level acceptability for the purpose of University entrance was very revealing, not least with regard to attitudes. It would seem that some Examination Boards have little knowledge (or interest?) as to the relative standing of their examinations vis-a-vis the Universities' entrance demands.<sup>123</sup> It seems that they tend to consult the Universities only when the matter becomes " ... urgent" in an individual case.<sup>124</sup> Yet one or two Examination Boards appear to be attempting to change their 'A' level Home Economics syllabi in order to make them more 'academically respectable', despite the claim that University entrance is only one aspect when seeking to make changes.<sup>125</sup> There is conflicting evidence on this point : while it is stated that University entrance parity is not a specific aim, Examiners maintain that ' ... revision is

taking place with this in mind'<sup>126</sup> Perhaps this offers some evidence of the interplay of power and authority for while the examiners are exercising authority - seeking to persuade the Universities to accept the subject on a par with others - the University Boards in reality have the power to determine their entrance qualifications, not least by the restrictions imposed regarding subject combination.<sup>127</sup>

Until Universities can be persuaded as to the academic content of Home Economics 'A' level courses Headteachers are unlikely to 'allow' pupils to take it when 'more useful' subjects (in their estimation) can be studied : subjects which will avail the pupil of access to further education if required. Until such time, the domestic subjects are likely to remain the cinderella of the curriculum.

#### Examination Costs in Home Economics

Apart from the social aspects concerning the effects of examinations so far discussed, there is an even greater division created as the result of the cost of the domestic subjects, particularly at the public examination level.

With any non-practical examination (and even with practical ones such as Science) the cost of examination materials to the pupil is negligible or non-existent. 'Practical' subjects however, such as Needlework, Food etc. can be prohibitively expensive and consequently a "serious deterrent" for pupils.<sup>128</sup> It is quite often for instance, expected that pupils should construct garments - either in part or whole - which are quite unsuitable for them and of no future use,<sup>129</sup> (e.g. the child's dress in the J.M.B. examination 1962).

At 'A' level, the examination may cost "several pounds", while the mock examination may cost as much if not more, since the costs are not defrayed officially.<sup>130</sup> In this case, the costs have to be met either by the pupil herself or in conjunction with the Home Economics Department. The pressure to produce items (especially in 'Food' sections) which are "visually impressive" is felt by many students<sup>131</sup> although in certain cases an Examination Board does stress the need for rationality in respect of cost. As a result of the high cost, the subject is effectively limited to fairly well-to-do pupils at the higher levels.<sup>132</sup> Where the Home Economics Department does help a pupil, the contribution has to come out of the Capitation allowance.<sup>133</sup> This can affect other areas of the department's work quite seriously (e.g. the early years) so that the teacher has to weigh the problem up in terms of one against several.

The class differences are also manifested in the quality of materials used both in dress and food and can have a very marked effect. Even in the C.S.E. the effects of expense are very noticeable. The ability to afford visits in conjunction with the 'Special Study' (Topic) can have a decisive influence on the end-product.

On another level, there is the problem of neighbourhood schools. Within a Board's area there may be the case where one school, by virtue of its situation, has a middle-class population whereas others may not. Standard between the schools may thus be distorted in that the overall standards of the area are raised. Fortunately Moderators have the power to correct such imbalances - if they are aware of them.<sup>134</sup> A cost-ceiling however might reasonably offset the effects of undue prosperity in such circumstances.

### Conclusions

Examinations are a mode of evaluation - an essential element in curriculum structure. As an instrument of measurement they should in fact measure the objectives of the course in terms of attainment levels. Thus the need for clearly defined objectives. Yet many of the stated objectives are impossible to assess within the ordinary framework of examinations, since many of them fall into the 'Affective' domain. Even at the practical level it seems that they fail to allow a pupil the scope to show her ability range.<sup>135</sup> The current enthusiasm for multiple choice answers will also only measure cognitive aspects, while the problem of constructing an 'answer bank' seem virtually insurmountable in the light of constantly changing knowledge.<sup>136</sup>

There are however alternative means of assessment, such as personalised records, essay type questions, project work etc. All these could be used to build up a broad 'profile' of the pupil. On-going assessment can be used either alone or in conjunction with summative forms of assessment. This would be no more time-consuming than the setting and marking of examinations which in themselves take up much valuable teaching time it is suggested.

Through the use of a variety of evaluation procedures it would be possible to 'measure' behaviours in the affective domain as well as in the cognitive. The use of these other measures would also eliminate the growing problem of cost, especially at the level of public examinations, a factor which has been of paramount importance in creating the social divisions noted within the subject.

A final reflection, giving food for thought, is the comment by teachers to the effect that the C.S.E. examinations " ... involved the girls and made them think".<sup>137</sup> Given a cost-ceiling in the light of previous criticisms noted, this may indicate the direction in which assessment may go, although there is a problem of 'Regionalism'<sup>138</sup> and teacher involvement.<sup>139</sup>

In order to verify some of the criticisms highlighted herein an analysis of a recent G.C.E. examination paper is made.<sup>140</sup>

ReferencesChapter V

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33. Sillitoe, H. *op. cit.* p.58
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48. e.g. Mr. Sneyd-Kinnersly v. H. Sillitoe *op. cit.* p.49
49. Appendix B1 Circular 28.2 (5.4). (1889)
50. Sillitoe, H. loc. cit.
51. *supra.* ch. IV. p.116
52. Appendix B2 Drills
53. Appendix B3 Schedule IIIB
54. Schedule III (1892) note 5 v. Appendix B4
55. *ibid.* note 6
56. Appendix B5 (Educational Blue Book for 1891)
57. The term 'slopworkers' denoted those who did plain sewing as in shirtmaking. These workers were even lower than dressmakers/seamstresses etc. (v. D. Crowe 1971, The Victorian Woman p.85 Allen and Unwin).

58. Appendix B6 (1913 papers)
59. Appendix B7 (1913 syllabus)
60. Appendix B8 (1913 question papers)
61. Appendix B9 (1913 examination T.T.)
62. Appendix B10 (Housecraft Course Content)
63. Indeed, it could be said that 'Domestic Subjects' became synonymous with 'Cookery'.
64. 'Science' was replaced by 'Subjects' in 1909
65. cf. Appendices B10 & B12
66. Appendix B11 (1931 papers)
67. Sillitoe, H. op. cit. p.182
68. Kenny, M. (1977) I'll take you home again Kathleen.  
S.T. 16.1.1977
69. Appendix B12 (1951 papers)
70. Appendix B13 (1958) (i) Paper I Housecraft (Social)  
(ii) Paper II Housecraft (Applied Physics)  
(iii) Paper III Housecraft (Miscellaneous)
71. Appendix B14 (i) Needlework & Dressmaking 'A' level 1962 Paper I  
(ii) Needlework & Dressmaking 'A' level 1962 Paper II
72. Appendix B15 'A' level Applied Physics 1975 (London)
73. B16 'O' and 'A' level entries/passes
74. Middlemas, M. (1966) Housecraft Vol.39 no.3 p.82
75. Appendix B17 (Alternative names)
76. Examination papers allow little opportunity for using modern equipment: even in 1975 'convenience foods' were only of the cake-mixture type.
77. v. Barnes, D. (1976) From Communication to Curriculum  
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85. Conference Report *ibid.* p.155
86. Appendix B18 Allocation of marks
87. Although there are 85.1% teachers on J.M.B. preparatory sub-committees panels, one of their members referred to the 'continued domination' of the Universities in a talk to students: Totley-Thornbridge, June 1975. v. R. Whitfield. *op. cit.* p.248
88. Teachers seem little aware of their potential to influence G.C.E. syllabi (a form of mode 2, as in C.S.E.) but at the school level, the attendance at C.S.E. Panel meetings increases the consciousness of its pressure.
89. North West Regional Examination Board. 9th Annual Report. 1972/3 p.5 although only 3% = Mode III : see previous chapter.
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91. " 'A' level Needlework Conference" Housecraft. Vol.42 no.4 p.132
92. Based on the writer's experience of teaching both types of syllabi.
93. *infra.* p.148 et seq.
94. While it was rare to find explicit reference to this (Newsom ch.10) the inferences were all too clear to parents, pupils and teachers.
95. A.T.D.S. Report 1969
96. v. Appendix B15 ('A' level papers. London 1975)
97. *ibid.* Test 3. Only 3 tests given : in the first part of each question, candidates were required to make and compare a sponge-cake mixture made by the 'traditional' method with one made by the all-in-one method.

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100. A.T.D.S. Report 1969 p.43
101. Peters, R.S. (1968) Theory and Practice of Teacher Training. Tr. in Ed. no.7 p.8 H.M.S.O.
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105. Incidents related after final Teacher's Certificate practical examinations 1974
106. Statements made by a respondent in an in-depth interview.
107. In a group discussion it was voluntarily stated that over 50% had been prepared to withdraw during the second year of training (13.11.1975). Since similar reactions have occurred in the two subsequent years, it would seem to be a normal reaction as students become conscious of the power of the institution.
108. Several instances known personally to the writer.
109. Appendix A4 (Miss Ibottson's letter p.2)
110. e.g. University of Kent ... 'does not recognise the subject at all (in any of its guises) ...' (letter 7.6.1975) and Reading University stated that ... 'we take no cognisance of Home Economics ... at 'A' level.' (letter 24.9.1976).
111. Oakley, A. (1974) Housewife. passim. Penguin
112. Appendix A2 p.2
113. infra. ch. VII
114. Harvey, J. op. cit. p.25

115. Appendix A6
116. Appendix A1 p.3
117. v. (i) H.Ecs. vol. 16 no.6 p.9  
(ii) Hsc. vol. 43 no.1 p.21
118. Jeffery, G.B. (ed) (1958) External Examinations in Secondary Schools p.27 Harrap
119. Oliver, R.A.S. (1960) The Effectiveness of G.C.E. 'A' level as a criterion for University selection. J.M.B.
120. Respectful admiration by other students for the H.Ecs. students on the B.Ed. course (1976/7) with regard to their organisational ability and application has been very noticeable. This is the first year when the various groups of students have really come into contact with each other and acquired knowledge of, rather than merely knowledge about.
121. (i) Hsc. vol. 40 no.1 'A' level Conference Report. May 1967  
(ii) This view dates (perhaps) from 1909 when the B.O.E. stated that "... marks should be divided between theory and practice in such a way that the maximum number of marks accorded to theory does not exceed one-fourth of the maximum number accorded to the whole examination. (my emphasis)
122. infra. ch. IX
123. Appendix A.2 p.2
124. ibid.
125. ibid.
126. Hsc. vol.43 no.1 p.21
127. (i) Whitfield, R.S. (1975) Disciplines of the Curriculum, p.248 McGraw Hill  
(ii) Reid, S. (1975) Remove Control of Entry From Universities T.H.E.S. 5.12.1975
128. A.T.D.S. Report (1974) The Costing of Home Economics and Needlework Lessons, p.2 items 1 & 5
129. ibid. p.7 items 4 & 7
130. ibid. p.2 items 1 & 5

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132. A.T.D.S. Report 1974                      passim, but especially 4.1 p.6
133. A.T.D.S. Report 1974                      Cost of Examinations
134. v. ref. 42 ch.III
135. Harvey, J. (1971)                          op. cit. p.17
136. Problems were encountered in a research programme at Sheffield City Polytechnic when a multiple choice answer schedule was being constructed.
137. A Level Conference : Report 1967. Hsc. Vol.40 no.5 p.155
138. J.M.B. Op. 29 pp20-22
139. MacIntosh, H.G. (ed) (1974)              Techniques and Problems of Assessment  
p.161 Arnold
140. Appendix B19.

Part IIIChapter VIThe Core Curriculum

The wider the range of activities, the less specialised they are, the more appropriate it is to speak of education.

J. Gribble. 1969

Introduction to Philosophy  
of Education. p.23

Introduction

As a subject, Home Economics (Domestic Subjects) may be said to be at the crossroads: decisions as to future developments have to be taken. There appear to be three choices before it; to become the 'core' of the curriculum, to become more specialised, or to die. Each of the first two alternatives involves a change of identity and image. The ensuing chapters will examine the factors affecting each of the alternatives and their possible outcomes in the light of current social and educational thinking and the economic status of women. It will be suggested that only a complete reappraisal of both content and method is required if the stated objectives of the subject are to be achieved and the concept of progress in the subject to be anything more than mere rhetoric offered as palliatives to teachers and public to the effect that change is taking place.

Each society is concerned with the problem of identifying basic knowledge requirements for its future citizens. The rationale for selection is complex and subject to many vested interests. In a highly



industrialised society, where the knowledge level has escalated to mountainous proportions, the problem is one of selecting out rather than selecting in. Previously the concept of linear subject development has demanded sequential knowledge. Now there is insufficient time available to incorporate this approach in its entirety within the statutory school period. Therefore, either subjects as such must be deleted on utilitarian grounds, or new 'comprehensive' approaches need developing. Much depends on one's perspectives on learning. It was in the face of such monumental problems that the concept of a 'core' curriculum was born.

It was envisaged that there must be a core of knowledge which would be common to all needs and that a period of two or three years would constitute the basis, from which specialisms could subsequently be developed. Thus all that is said below must be seen as relating only to a period of at most three years and that the base age line is considered to be eleven. From this it will be seen that in some instances the 'core' would begin in the 'Middle' school and even comprise two years work there if the transfer age was thirteen.

The most significant problem underlying the concept of the 'core' curriculum is that of its cultural basis. The controversy epitomises the dichotomy in the concept of 'worthwhile knowledge'.

### Worthwhile knowledge

If the curriculum is mainly concerned with the transmission of knowledge, the question arises as to what that knowledge should be: what is worthwhile transmitting. The dilemma surrounding the value of knowledge theoretically replaces that of 'whose knowledge' of bygone eras. But as with the latter, it is essentially a question of ideology which, when stripped of rhetoric and pretensions, is still essentially a matter of social differences.

It is manifested in the struggle between the 'traditional' curriculum and the current concept of the 'core curriculum' and its cultural basis. Strictly speaking, it may be said that a 'core' has always existed in the guise of literacy and numeracy with a 'superior' core of the classics for the higher education. Many philosophers and educationists have grappled with the concept of 'worthwhile knowledge', notably Hirst,<sup>1</sup> Peters,<sup>2</sup> Phenix,<sup>3</sup> and Bantock.<sup>4</sup> To date there has been a tripartite curriculum hierarchy, each the outcome of ideologies, supported or initiated by developments in the psychological field. (Binet, Spearman etc.) At the one extreme the traditional, classical curriculum of the Grammar school; at the other, the watered down version, for the Secondary Modern school. Sandwiched between was the 'vocational' curriculum of the Technical colleges where the 'practical' subjects were offered. Such a curriculum structure is still in evidence although the vocational and the diluted Grammar school curriculum have been synthesised. This affords a good example of the deflecting of an assertive ideology by the adaptation of a ruling one.

The question of what constitutes 'worthwhile knowledge', although often discussed at high levels of abstraction, would seem arid when placed within the definition of 'education'. Essentially this comprises ability to cope with the basics of living consonant with the prevailing social context, plus the additional facets of enquiry and adaptability in order to embrace changing situations.<sup>5</sup> That the curriculum offers evidence of much esoteric knowledge at the expense of the basic necessities is the essence of the current debate surrounding the 'core' curriculum and its cultural basis.<sup>6</sup>

It is envisaged that the curriculum will constitute a common education which will emphasise the values, sentiments, skills and knowledge which will provide the society with stability and vitality.<sup>7</sup> Special education may follow where it is required for the benefit of society. This definition however is capable of a myriad of interpretations and is a recipe for either a reactionary or a progressive curriculum; it therefore does not really advance the discussion.

Any definition of what constitutes 'worthwhileness' is a value judgement. The important point is that to date, the power of definition lay with a dominant group namely the upper/middle classes, which was able to impose its value system, to the exclusion of others. This was achieved largely through the medium of the Universities. Hence the lowly position of the domestic subjects.

Lawton argues the need for a reappraisal by all teachers of their subjects in the curriculum, and to question the validity of subjects in general.<sup>8</sup> The criteria he defines for the selection of knowledge

from the culture encapsulate the notions of stability, justice, cooperation and relevance.<sup>9</sup> Yet the first two could again be very subjective and viewed from a 'class' base. The latter two initiate new concepts although the question he himself applies to others is apposite, relevant to what, or perhaps to whom? The question of 'worthwhileness' is, like reality, contingent upon the individual experiencing it. That it will change with social contexts and individuals is obvious. Basically it may be said to hinge upon what gives 'pleasure' (satisfaction).<sup>10</sup> But this is of itself debatable in that satisfaction often only lies within experience and does not involve an extension of it.

Bantock's 'inherent worth' of literature and Peter's of theoretical pursuits are concerned with the pleasure derived from these activities - the consequences for the individual either as a means to an end or as an end in itself. Thus 'worthwhileness' is not quantifiable. The degree to which pleasure is derived, to the individual alone or to a wider society is perhaps the hallmark of traditional culture. The danger lies in the imposition of one man's pleasure on another regardless of its outcome: equally however, the danger of denying access to another's pleasure is societally suicidal.

Much of what has constituted traditional culture has been a matter of access to media channels. It could be argued that Mozart and Shakespeare are part of that culture because they had privileged access to the channels of communication. The advent of instant communication on a grand scale, television, radio, mass marketing methods for records, helped to make available the 'folk'

culture which then accordingly escalated. Use of pressures to shape 'culture' cannot of course be underestimated however in modern society, so that the current situation may equally be a distorted reality. The role of the curriculum in determining what shall be regarded as 'worthwhile' is surely a question of opening up as many channels of experience as possible. 'Pop' music may have increased enormously in popularity, but equally there have never been so many young 'traditional' musicians, to judge by the number of school orchestras.

The domination of one ideology over another is a matter of degree of expense to society in terms of stability: what is required is a synthesis of ideologies based, not on class perspectives, but on a societal, and indeed world, basis.

#### Definition of 'core'

'Common' and 'core' are not synonymous terms except for administrative purposes. 'Common' refers to the basis of the knowledge while 'core' refers to the structure. Thus it is feasible to have a 'core curriculum' based on a 'high' culture, which many would maintain was the case in the early curricula, or on a 'common' ('popular') culture. Either 'core' could form the basis of a 'common' curriculum which is simply a curriculum experienced by all pupils regardless of ability.

Thus the question of what should constitute the 'core' is really the argument regarding 'worthwhileness'.<sup>11</sup> It is this which gives rise to academic factional warfare. Here, 'core' will be assumed to mean 'essential experiences deemed relevant to the needs of society and (of) the individual'.<sup>12</sup> It is not tied to academic knowledge per se since for some pupils (and therefore for society at large) other experiences may be more apposite for certain pupils.<sup>13</sup> The concept outlined is that of Taba's,<sup>14</sup> and is seen as one with '... ambitious aims' which hopefully will " ... develop integration, to serve the needs of students and to promote active learning and significant relationships between life and learning". (my underlining)

#### Content of the 'Core Curriculum'

Hirst, Peters,<sup>15</sup> Niblett<sup>16</sup> and others have each specified their content for a curriculum. Hirst defined seven 'forms of knowledge'; mathematics, physical sciences; human sciences, history; religion; literature and the fine arts; philosophy and moral knowledge. But, as Barrow points out,<sup>17</sup> his claim to them as forms of knowledge is not established: they are little more than distinct subjects or subject areas, as are many others. The claim to develop rationality, the ability to be able to discern 'logically distinct types of propositions' infers a level of abstractive ability far beyond the reach of the majority of pupils.

Pupils certainly need to develop a 'rational mind' in terms of being able to make rational decisions in everyday life. But 'rationality', like 'reality' is in the mind of the beholder:<sup>18</sup> it is rooted in their own socialisation and personal culture.<sup>19</sup> Thus an attitude of willingness to consider the range of variables (as far as they are known or are searched for) is perhaps the level of 'knowledge' to be aimed for. Deriving from this is the notion that attitudes are more important than acquired academic knowledge which of itself changes rapidly in current society. The inherent danger of Hirst's and Peters' and Dearden's 'knowledge' categories is the old one of compartmentalisation of knowledge (as in Bernstein's 'Collection' code curriculum) which has proved so ineffective for a majority of children.<sup>20</sup>

To be useful to an individual, knowledge has to be meaningful. Therefore the personalisation of knowledge would seem to be essential. As Bruner<sup>21</sup> indicates, this means " ... making the familiar an instance of a more general case and thereby produces an awareness of it."<sup>22</sup> In effect this entails getting to the child's feeling, fantasies and values.<sup>23</sup> Thus the core curriculum should be concerned with the means of developing these aspects of the individual: an awareness of himself as an individual and as a member of a community (of a range of communities) and an appreciation of perspectives other than his own.

It is frequently suggested that the aim of education is to make good members of society.<sup>24</sup> If this is to be more than pious rhetoric those subjects most closely related to the understanding of society should be included in a core curriculum. The need for relevance and reality has frequently been stated or implied in official Reports.<sup>25</sup> Thus the substantive material needs to be closely related to everyday life. The need for a curriculum based on a new common culture which is 'educationally desirable rather than socially respectable' has been expressed by Lawton.<sup>26</sup> Yet having outlined curriculum problems to be solved (e.g. demands of new/expanded subjects, pastoral care programmes etc.) he promptly lists subjects : (Mathematics, Physical and Biological Sciences, Humanities and Social Studies, Expressive Arts, Moral Education etc.)

Thus one might venture to suggest that he is merely positing a new perspective with regard to approach and classification of material. His conceptual construction is more in sympathy with the Junior school methodology which sees the learner as central to the teaching-learning process, where the classification and framing are much more relaxed in the so called 'modern methods' approach.

Such a curriculum could still be largely based on a 'high' culture concept thereby affording little improvement on the former, 'Classical' curriculum. Currently the call is for a 'common' culture which is rooted in the experience of the majority. Each however is problematic.



The two cultures

C.P. Snow first gave voice to the notion of two cultures as existing in our society.<sup>27</sup> It has given rise to much discussion in the name of curriculum relevance in the world of education. However, it is suggested that this is an irrelevance in terms of the school curriculum. What should be of concern is the 'educational' concept. Since it appears that a curriculum based on the 'high' culture has failed the larger part of the population it seems reasonable to consider an alternative basis. But this also has its dangers. A 'common culture' base, as advocated by Lawton,<sup>28</sup> Midwinter<sup>29</sup> and others may lead to a trivialisation of knowledge. An even greater danger though lies in the fact that the moment an activity becomes associated with a particular class it leads to a lack of sympathy and understanding of other perspectives.<sup>30</sup> This is the problem raised by curricula such as that envisaged by Midwinter when it is rooted in localised subcultures.<sup>31</sup>

The two cultures, if they do really exist, are not mutually exclusive in the hands of a good teacher. The real concern should be the availability of a 'liberal' education. Although the substantive matter here would still be affected by individuals' realities a liberal education would be concerned with the enlarging of personal perspectives, and an avoidance of trivialisation and superficiality. This is not merely a curriculum concern for the elite; all members of society should have the opportunity to experience such an education. Thus the two cultures may be seen as parts of a whole.

Central to this problem is that of the curriculum content, and whether one subject or a group of subjects will provide the most effective structure and results. Conflict about the quality obtained through a single or group study rests on the question of depth versus breadth. Yet both are needed: the point is that for the majority of pupils, ossification sets in before either are reached. The discreetness of subject areas as traditionally organised often fails to embrace pupils own understanding of the world. Specialisation can stretch the mind but equally it can hypnotise it to a narrow perspective: this is equally unacceptable, as is a superficial study of a broad range of subjects.

Current thinkers in the field of curriculum posit a number of major criteria :

1. Concentration should be on pupils' existing knowledge, not their areas of ignorance - as points of departure.
2. It would cater for the whole population, not merely an elite.
3. It would include and/or lead to different kinds of knowledge, not merely academic knowledge.
4. It would be relevant to :-
  - (a) their experience, needs and interests - not least in that every pupil is self interested through trying to establish his/her identity.
  - (b) contemporary issues. 32
5. It would be realistic - rooted in actual experience.
6. It would lead to the personalisation of knowledge<sup>33</sup> through the development of feelings for and about others as well as self.

A curriculum based on these criteria would effectively link Ormell's<sup>34</sup> three 'worlds', the natural, the human and the technological.

It accords with the characteristics of 'core' curriculum which are:-

1. Greater integration of learning (i.e. cutting across subject boundaries).
2. It relates life problems to students'/pupils' interests.<sup>35</sup>

Criticisms levelled at curricula based on these criteria really amount to criticisms of the teachers and/or designers. If such a curriculum "fails to offer significant and systematic knowledge"<sup>36</sup> then it is a case of more organisation and structuring being involved than was perhaps expected.<sup>37</sup> If "much material and many outlines lack intellectual challenge and perspective"<sup>38</sup> then this is perhaps incompetence on the part of the practitioners, or lack of due time being allocated to the increased nature of the preparation required for this type of programme.

Wheeler's concept of a 'core' curriculum contains the notion of a unified curriculum with one field acting as the unifying centre.<sup>39</sup> One is back then to the argument as to which subject. Whilst any subject could theoretically act as the point of departure<sup>40</sup> it would seem that a broad initial-base is required in order to capture the interest of a wide range of pupils.

The danger of putting most recognised subjects at the centre point is that they may only present a myopic version of the world and thereby lead to interpretations only from that perspective (e.g. science, religion etc.) A 'composite' subject (e.g. Geography, Social Science) would offer greater breadth of vision and multiple points of departure. But a multi-composite subject would produce a kaleidoscopic range of leads. To meet the range of criteria already outlined however, the

subject must necessarily be rooted in the reality of the pupils. Such a subject is Home Economics/Domestic Subjects.

It is significant that even 'modern' curriculum theorists dismiss the domestic subjects as a low category area of study. Stenhouse groups it with other 'practical' subjects (art, music, physical education and handwork) as " ... lacking the philosophical unity of the sciences and humanities", although he does admit that they are 'essential elements' in the general education of everyone.<sup>41</sup> He claims that " ... the common element ... is the practice of skills or techniques, the critical refinement of hand and ear".<sup>42</sup> Such a statement indicates 'knowledge about' not 'knowledge of'<sup>43</sup> the substantive matter (admittedly only at its best). It is indicative of the practice whereby sweeping assumptions are made on the basis of the visible or audible areas only in those subjects.

The ascription of 'practical' to Art and Music reflects a superficial appreciation of those subjects. Stenhouse's subsequent claim that the " ... the self expression through these subjects above all other subjects ... frees oneself from the dependence on the teacher",<sup>44</sup> totally ignores the years of training involved at the behest of a teacher and the power of specific 'schools'. He also maintains that the freedom of the self derives from the fact that the subjects involve a blending of the cultural tradition with a mastery of skill which is essentially individual. Just so; does this then suggest that the double step requires less ability than the former one? By his own definition, a subject not requiring the blending skill requires more

dependence on teachers. This would indicate that the 'practical' subjects (though I would demur from classifying all in the one group) are of a higher level, as Bloom's Taxonomy<sup>45</sup> would indicate. Stenhouse's contention that "... one starts from the skills and performances of the individual ... and not from the culture tradition which surrounds them"<sup>46</sup> is as applicable to the learning of reading as it is to music. The complex process is enshrined in the cultural context.

The danger lies in the categorisation of subjects. Even Barrow with his very realistic analysis of a 'core' curriculum refers to 'cookery' not Home Economics or Domestic Subjects.<sup>47</sup> A more realistic grouping of subjects would perhaps see the domestic subjects and Art incorporated in Humanities or Social Science.<sup>48</sup> The problem again lies in that of the subject's identity and communication of that identity to others. Essentially this is a matter of language and communication.

### Links of Language

It is suggested here that much of the debate over knowledge areas, curriculum structure and language codes<sup>49</sup> is educationally largely irrelevant. The real problem lies in communication. Language, both verbal and written, is a sign which stimulates conceptual formation. The straightjacket of single disciplines and their fossilised formulations which act as language shorthand, are used to convey their subject concepts. This tends to isolate them from communication with other knowledge areas.

In the teaching-learning situation the clash of realities meet at the level of language. If the teacher is unable to meet the pupil's language initially then communication is lost. The effective teacher achieves a successful meeting and then leads pupils to see the relevance of the discrete subject language. From this, the pupil can reach towards the conceptual formations of the teacher: without it, he retains his own concepts, rejecting those of the teacher.<sup>50</sup>

The denial by many teachers that their own language is a barrier<sup>51</sup> is akin to the concert pianist playing a major concerto and then demanding the same from the pupil.<sup>52</sup> The professional is unable often to analyse the sequence at the comprehensible level of the learner.<sup>53</sup> Language should, of necessity, be inclusive, not exclusive; the solution lies with the teacher not the pupil. The demystification of knowledge through the medium of language would stimulate children's interests. Consequently the potential cognitive level would be raised since the learner's reflexivity would allow him to create knowledge.<sup>54</sup>

It could indeed be argued that the 'soft' curriculum, structured on Bernstein's 'Integrated code', with its frequently associated self-learning format (though this is not necessarily so) is likely to facilitate the meeting of the languages more easily than the 'hard' ('Collective code') curriculum.<sup>55</sup>

Given that the acclaimed attributes of both the transferability of knowledge and the intelligence factor as an absolute have each been effectively contested over the past few decades, it would seem that a subject which can offer a wide spectrum of knowledge and skills

and which is both relevant to pupils as well as being rooted in their actual experience, thereby offering an empirical approach, as well as being capable of arousing the qualities of empathy and sympathy for other human beings at an individual, societal and world levels should have a very valid claim to the central point of the curriculum. Home Economics is such a subject.

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Chapter VIIThe Claim for Home Economics

"One wide topic, which is of such practical and social importance in our civilization that it begs our attention for inclusion in a core curriculum, is the home ... an applied and practical field of enquiry involving both the sexes,..(it) can only be studied from a wide spectrum of disciplinary viewpoints ..."

R.C. Whitfield  
Disciplines of the Curriculum  
p.233

Introduction

It has been correctly said that "Among the more significant developments in the last twenty years ... (has been) the extension of the base of the old Home Economics course ..."<sup>1</sup> Homemaking courses, home and family life, personal relations, child care, budgeting, social science and applied science all came to be linked together and the interrelationship emphasised in new courses. More recently nutrition (as such) and Counselling have been incorporated as well as Health Studies. The study of 'Furnishing and Fabrics', 'Dress and Design' and Creative Embroidery have updated and redirected studies of some traditional areas.

The scope of scientific and social science knowledge has exploded in the second half of this century. This has added breadth and depth to areas already contained within the field of Home Economics and has embraced new realms of study such as child psychology, community and legal studies. Admittedly this is only to be found at the frontiers of the teaching within this subject, for old habits die hard.<sup>2</sup> But it is the synergistic quality of the subject which justifies its claim to centrality. Over and above all other

considerations, the interactive nature of common and uncommon sense reality<sup>3</sup> would be realised.

### The 'Relevance' of Home Economics

The major support for the centrality value of Home Economics lies in the fact that teaching needs to begin from the pupils' common-sense reality and work outwards to the '... uncommon-sense reality of academic subjects or disciplines'.<sup>4</sup> Given the recognition that human relationships is the link-mechanism which runs through all the aspects contained within Home Economics then the expansion into more traditional subject areas (e.g. History, Geography, Science, English etc.) would be seen as relevant. Differentiating subjects in the past has been the major fault of the schools it is argued.<sup>5</sup> This however is to ignore the perceived pressures of prevailing social ideologies regarding 'success' and the means of obtaining it. Integration of the curriculum through the medium of a human relationship theme would allow consideration of future problems connected with the social order (in its broad context) both at the micro and macro levels, with the advantage that the projection would be stemming from familiar grounds. No other subject offers this attribute which, as Lawton suggests, is a major requirement of a curriculum.<sup>6</sup> It offers a source of cohesion and coherence for the total curriculum. This is an essential feature if the current crisis in education is to be overcome.<sup>7</sup> It would also make more individuals 'effective thinkers' in that societal and international problems would be meaningful to them and invoke their thought processes to both immediate and future

problems. 'Effective thinking' has hitherto been associated with abstract thinking in the main.<sup>8</sup> The connotation therefore is doubtful when applied to everyday life. 'Concerned thought' might be more relevant.

The other major value which is the prerogative of Home Economics is the link between home and school. Apart from the obvious one of parental involvement in terms of material provisions and consumption of items made in ongoing programmes, the link envisaged here as being of prime importance is that of realities. The pupil can see the subject operating all around him: thus his school and non-school realities could become meaningfully integrated.

#### Perspectives on Curricular Foundations

Earlier writers on the curriculum, Schwab,<sup>9</sup> Hirst,<sup>10</sup> Phenix<sup>11</sup> and Peters<sup>12</sup> had attempted to define the content of the curriculum in terms of either 'types of thinking', 'disciplines', 'realms of meaning' or 'forms of knowledge'. These were, in their way, the outcome of ideologies regarding the nature of education itself. At the abstract level they offer interesting guidelines but at the practical level they tend to be little more than an argument supporting the status quo. When it comes to the 'nitty-gritty' of classroom reality, with the exception of Phenix, they appear to be reduced to the old academic-subject format.



One of the major problems of the traditional curriculum has been the alienation of the majority of pupils.<sup>13</sup> Therefore if Hirst's rather 'pure' 'forms of knowledge' (which Barrow refutes)<sup>14</sup> were to be applied in the early years of the Secondary school, this would be the likely outcome yet again. Applied knowledge however, stemming from the pupils' reality would avoid the alienation syndrome. It would, it is argued, constitute the foundation for the future, more abstract knowledge. Thus an inversion of the traditional sequence might be the answer, for as Barrow reasons, 'informed opinion' (which Hirst seeks) cannot be given by anyone unless they have studied the subject matter.<sup>15</sup> Now if it is at this early stage that pupils are alienated, then it is at this point that change is required. To be meaningful, these forms of knowledge must be relevant. Therefore if a pupil cannot perceive any relevance he will opt out of the learning process. Made relevant however, by means of being rooted in his own reality, the necessary stimulus to later, higher levels of study will be established. The vast majority of pupils have no need of the higher levels of knowledge, but they are disastrously disadvantaged without the practical level. Therefore, provided that the channels to the 'higher' realms of knowledge are genuinely available, the greater emphasis on the applied level would seem to be societally advantageous. Relevance leads to response, response to development. From this point it will be a matter of which direction to follow. The social context and ideologies will determine this.

It would seem that the broad field of Home Economics with its central chain of human relationships could provide the relevance and realism required to constitute the base for the practical-to-theoretical process. It is a subject concerned with the most fundamental problems of man at all levels. It can operate from the ego-centred to the socio-centredness which Piaget defined as 'natural' to man.<sup>16</sup> It would also lead to the 'world view' which is missing in most subjects,<sup>17</sup> for problems of food, shelter and human rights are international. Yet the subject starts from the perspective of self-awareness, an essential prerequisite to awareness of others' needs and problems. This would, if it is maintained, lead to the development of Phenix's 'complete person'.

According to Phenix, this 'complete person' can be developed through a curriculum which contains his six 'realms of meaning'; Symbolics; Empirics; Aesthetics; Synoetics; Synoptics; Ethics and Morality. Given the concept of Bruner's 'spiral curriculum',<sup>18</sup> it would appear that the subject of Home Economics, with its potential myriad of developmental points, would constitute a relevant and realistic framework.

With all the curriculum designs outlined above, the question of style ('framing') has not been considered: yet it is this factor which largely determines the degree of knowledge - integration. Knowledge which is required to shape action, needs to be reflexive: this is in contrast to the bodies of arcane knowledge which were

held to be valuable in themselves - often because of their scarcity value alone. Thus Barnes' 'Interpretation'<sup>19</sup> model of learning and its concomitant teaching model would seem to be the most appropriate, for it allows both teacher and learner to bring a wide range of knowledge to bear on the learning process thereby multiplying the possible links. Ablewhite<sup>20</sup> has clearly shown how pupils make links quite differently to those the teacher makes: this has been the weakness of the traditional curriculum: teacher and pupil realities have not met in the cognitive world. It is evident that the early links are crucial: the all-embracing subject of Home Economics' could afford the strongest and surest ones.

#### Modern curricular strategies

Because of its comprehensive initial study areas, Home Economics paves the way for the twin demands of a good curriculum. These Lawton identifies as coverage and balance.<sup>21</sup> The problem lies in the components required to achieve this and the organisation utilised. For Lawton the compartmentalised approach still seems to hold sway with the exception of an acknowledgement of some more modern subject groupings (e.g. Expressive and Creative Arts).<sup>22</sup>

Barrow's<sup>23</sup> curriculum could be suitably covered through the medium of Home Economics. His 'new' curriculum centres on two types of knowledge,<sup>24</sup> the 'scientific' and the 'religious' - whether empirically provable or not. This would develop, he maintains, two interpretive attitudes, the religious (i.e. non-scientific) and the

scientific. In addition, several 'awarenesses' would be aroused (e.g. moral, aesthetic, scientific etc.) A crucial omission however seems to be that of social awareness. This it is argued, would be axiomatic if his other suggestions are to be taken seriously. Home Economics, given its new orientation, would correct this.

According to Barrow the curriculum should contain five types of 'pursuit' which are, he maintains, valuable to the individual and the community.<sup>25</sup> To this end he specifies study areas which are stage, not age constructs: health and moral training, numeracy, literacy as stage one; the natural sciences, mathematics, religion, fine arts, history and literature as stage two; vocational and social studies as stage three with the addition of such options as cookery, sociology, latin etc.

While there is a greater degree of coherence in his proposals than in many other proposed curricula, the link being a perspective on man in some of the areas, there is not a through-link. His concern is with 'pleasure' in the sense that the activities should be beneficial to the individual and society. The inherent danger in such an analysis is that of value judgements. His measure is the avoidance of pain. Yet the giver and receiver of pain may have different realities as to what that actually constitutes.<sup>26</sup> It is also a somewhat static curriculum in that deviance, which Durkheim contends is essential to the health of society,<sup>27</sup> is not apparently embraced. Deviance, in the sense of deviation from the accepted behaviours, beliefs etc. of society results from, and gives rise

to, changes in society. This is essential in order to ensure the future of a society within constantly changing contexts. Thus dynamism and deviancy are twin forces in an effective society and this needs to be reflected in the curriculum.

There are then serious faults even in what at first sight appears to be a much more relevant and realistic curriculum. Home Economics could preempt these faults. A study of human relationships necessarily involves a study of deviancy through problems such as broken homes, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence at both the micro and the macro levels. A unified approach through Home Economics would overcome the problem of compartmentalisation which still lead Barrow to disassociate health from food.

By examining some specific areas mentioned by Barrow and others it will be shown how modern Home Economics (in its new guise) can both unify and expand the curriculum. Whitfield's demand for the inclusion of Home Economics in the core curriculum<sup>28</sup> is extremely valuable and perhaps a lone voice. Even so it is envisaged as a focus. Therefore it fails to incorporate the real potential breadth and depth of the subject and its real claim to constitute the 'core' of the curriculum.

### Food

Food and drink are essential to man's survival: true, but the difference between mere survival and good health lies in the knowledge of food in all its aspects, production, natural and technological,

marketing, processing, preparation and presentation, cultural and religious factors and their effects on nutritional levels. Then there are the personal, biological processes and age-group problems; special and cultivated diets (i.e. medical and promoted diets such as 'slimming' diets). Leading from this are problems of personal and public health, pollution etc.

Taking an historical and comparative approach would incorporate formerly defined areas of History and Geography. In-depth studies of these subjects would develop in the later years in terms of the conditions they imposed on man's behaviour. The comparative approach would develop not only an awareness of cultural differences and similarities but also an empathy with members of other societies. A study of customs beliefs and practices of various cultures could lead to the experimentation with 'national' dishes. Poverty and affluence at individual and international levels would, it is hoped, help to develop a greater understanding of the causes and effects, both natural and man-made.

Stemming from this would be studies of Ormell's three world perspectives.<sup>29</sup> The application of physics, chemistry and biology: those who developed a particular interest could then move into the 'pure' form of these subjects in the post core-curriculum stages.<sup>30</sup>

Although moving from the applied to the pure is the reverse of the traditionally accepted academic flow it might well be the means of preventing alienation from those subjects on the part of so

many pupils. The 'pure' forms are required by a relatively few persons in the final analysis. The argument often put forward, that the 'pure' form has of necessity to be started early in order to develop the future specialist is at least questionable. It fails to take account of motivation, which would accelerate a late starter, and also it fails to account for the fact that many pupils who might become specialists are precluded for reasons outlined above.

Study of malnutrition, poverty and human problems could be linked and modern ones such as obesity and the effects of diet on human development incorporated, at suitable levels. This would, hopefully induce favourable attitudes towards good personal nutrition together with an understanding of the multiple facets involved and sympathy with world events.

Mathematics would be utilised in a practical manner, weighing, ratios of foods in recipes etc. costing, measuring for packaging and transporting and distribution distances etc. Mathematical concepts such as those of 'space' could be incorporated in examples of pupils' assessment of container sizes (e.g. basins, pans) to take different mixtures or for storage purposes.<sup>31</sup>

Heat transferability might be far more meaningful to many pupils through experiments with meringue mixtures (e.g. in baked Alaska) than the usual rod expansion. A study of ovens in relation to food changes would produce many more learning outcomes than the traditional studies on heat.

Similarly, chemical actions and reactions on foods through various processes (e.g. cooking, canning, freezing) could lead to a much greater awareness of the causes of dietary deficiency as well as giving greater meaning to historical events such as battles or famous explorations through developments such as these. Visits to different types of food processing plants, instead of the sole farm visit which is common, would link industry,<sup>32</sup> reality and modernity together with technological studies. Personal and public health in relation to food would be much more meaningful; the study of viruses etc. would take it to a world-wide perspective.

#### Textiles : Furnishing and Fabrics

The initial link here might be through the study of the effects of a fire - examples arise frequently in the news of the disastrous fires now often stated to be started by the effect of heat on modern textiles. In this way more learning would be likely to result since safety in the home would inevitably arise in discussion.

Combinations of elements which are used in the construction of modern fabrics would provide the basis for an historical analysis of fibre development and yet lead to 'pure' chemistry studies. World resources and problems of supply and demand could lead to 'pure' economics, geography, geomorphology etc.



### Home and Family

Through a study of the pupils' own homes and lives it is possible to develop many 'awarenesses',<sup>33</sup> historical, geographical, scientific, social etc. It can however also form the basis for the development of 'pure' subjects. If, as Barrow maintains, the fundamental question of how man ought to live is central to History and an 'expansion of awareness and sympathy' is the central function of Literature, then the study of his own home life and relationships would afford a meaningful introduction. Allied to the study of other societies and the mode of living would add a dimension of consciousness not normally experienced by the majority. Later study of 'pure' subjects would then be underpinned by a sympathy not merely compulsion. For example, the reading of some of the classics in Literature, such as Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' or Mrs. Gaskell's 'Mary Barton' could be analysed in terms of the family relationships and behaviours, class distinctions and values, class diets and work/leisure : this might well arouse more passions and interest than is usually the case with all but the most ardently academic pupils.

### Health

As already stated, nutrition and the preparation and processing of food are very closely linked to health, both public and personal. Good health is central to the well-being of society at large as well as the individual for ill-health is very costly to society in terms of lost man-hours<sup>34</sup> in industry and remedial medicine.<sup>35</sup>

Through historical studies of living conditions and the structure/design of houses (e.g. no kitchens or bathrooms) sanitation and pollution would be linked to everyday realities.

Literacy, which many claim to be the central requirement of education, begins in the cradle. Research into academic achievement points to the importance of the pre-school years: the importance of 'play', of talk, the sustaining of small children's natural inquisitiveness. Thus a knowledge of how and why these aspects are of such prime importance is relevant - more so perhaps than the 'practical' knowledge of feeding and bathing the baby for these are often subject to fads and fashions of psychology, apart from the fact that necessary information is available and more meaningful at the requisite moments in time. The importance of curtailing housewifely activities when human relationship may be of greater consequences is more a matter of attitudes than of knowledge, a point which would be underpinning a course centred on human relationships. Literacy through discussion of family problems would achieve multiple learning outcomes.

Human biology stems from the study of the self, a study which can be related simultaneously with social, emotional and psychological development. This would establish a much more natural sequence (in the pupils' perspective at least) than is the case of 'traditional' biology where for example human reproduction is peripheral in the general study of plant and animal reproduction to such an extent that fourth year pupils in no way linked 'reproduction' with the process of human reproduction: the transfer of knowledge from 'Biology' to 'Mothercraft' was non-existent. Botany, Biochemistry Zoology could then be developed in their 'pure' forms later on.

Physics too would be much more meaningful if studied initially in relation to human energy : levers and pulleys, still studied in the abstract, would be more realistic if associated with the problems of backache, slipped discs etc. A study of the problems of handicapped persons would offer a source of applied physics in respect of gadgets in the home or ramps versus stairs in shops and public places. Then, physics, so often a 'cold' (and subsequently 'dead') subject for the majority of pupils would promote social awareness and an attitude of concern for others in an area of increasing gerontacy when these attributes will be required.

Chemistry, so often killed through incomprehensible language and out-of-reality experiments, could be meaningfully applied to food studies and lead perhaps to improved personal dietary habits.

Dress as communication would be extremely relevant to many pupils who experience conflict with 'authority' both at school and home as indeed the whole concept of self-presentation might be. Linked to the broader aspects of control through uniforms (civil and military) the moral implications for self-control etc. might be invoked without pupils feeling that they are being scapegoated. This is an essential aspect of attitude formation and change.

### Conclusion

In claiming that Home Economics is capable of fulfilling the demands of a 'core' curriculum it is not being suggested that the present format would be adequate : far from it. Reconstruction and redirection would be minimal requirements. However, the potential

substantive matter, focussed on the concept of human relationships, offers far more than any other single subject.

Support for the claim can be rooted in Piaget's developmental stages of the learning process. Given the criticisms of his subjects, what Piaget does highlight is the three stage learning process; the enactive, iconic and symbolic. Much of the present study areas of Home Economics actually do - and others certainly could - start with the enactive (action) phase. The iconic (visual) stage is frequently concurrent with the enactive thereby telescoping the learning process and could be said to be one of the reasons for the success of the domestic subjects with 'less able' pupils. If other subjects also provided a 'practical' initiation (e.g. much more conversation, discussions etc. in English) perhaps 'backwardness' would not be as common as it is.<sup>36</sup> The third stage, the symbolic, where language structures concepts derives from the second stage. It is said that few people, relatively speaking, ever reach this third stage: mental pictures are not translated into verbal structures. In the light of previous statements concerning blocks to language, notably the problem of teacher and pupil realities meeting,<sup>37</sup> it would seem reasonable to suggest that the problem lies with the teacher not the pupil. Home Economics, with a language which at least in the initial stages, encompasses that of the pupils' daily realities, offers a vehicle of communication more suitable than most.

Additional support for the centrality of Home Economics can be found in Ormell's contention that many of the age-old processes of learning have been 'short-circuited' by technological development,

such as television, tape-recorders etc., thereby rendering obsolete the support for the type of education which emphasises the memorisation of 'facts'<sup>38</sup> - themselves a debatable concept. Computer developments have brought complicated arithmetical (and other) processes within the orbit of the unskilled person<sup>39</sup> and current complaints from industry regarding the mathematical ability of pupils on entering the work situation may really be indicative of a backwardness on the part of industry rather than the pupils.<sup>40</sup>

The real problem would seem to be that of knowledge which is required for everyday living but which is not easily available: the uncommonsense knowledge required for commonsense purposes (e.g. nutrition, psychology in advertising etc.)

When considering the content of the curriculum and the role of subjects as they are traditionally known, it is as well to remember that some of the most exciting and relevant material has arisen in the 'spaces between' the disciplines.<sup>41</sup> The fact that the ability of this material to stand up to the 'knockabout conditions of daily use in the classroom'<sup>42</sup> is queried by Ormell could be that it lacks a unifying concept. That posited in this study, human relationships, would perhaps supply the focus required to avoid haphazard, meaningless development.

Room for the twilight subjects areas (in terms of traditional categories) can be found on the grounds that much of what previously passed for the 'hard' disciplines is now obsolete as the result of technological developments. To teach 'fossilised formulations'<sup>43</sup> of bygone eras at the expense of enquiring into the prevailing environment

is extremely dangerous. Societal ossification is likely to be the product of such practices. Thus the problem of 'worthwhileness' in relation to the curriculum must be seen in terms of the prevailing societal context : it is relative to the historical and social location. However, Barrow's concept of a 'pleasure' based curriculum is also debatable. Apart from the possible misconception as to the term by the teaching profession as well as the public, it may be argued that the depth of 'pleasure' is in question. The danger of trivialisation is paramount.<sup>44</sup> Given Barrow's principle that it is in opposition to 'pain', the whole concept is value-prone.<sup>45</sup> Taken at the deeper level of 'satisfaction', both personal and societal, many questions concerning the education of 'the masses' seem to fall into place. The semantic difference is that of value. In the latter there is the concept of 'reward' which suggests more than the temporal quality of 'pleasure'. In this way the problem that dogs the domestic subjects, that of the considerable amount of routinised activities, takes on a different perspective. They become means to ends not ends in themselves. At the same time the 'routine', which can be seen in terms of stepping stones, each stage of which gives gradations of satisfaction in terms of the whole, becomes not merely mindless activity but a contributory element.<sup>46</sup> When there is a 'consequence' resulting from an activity it cannot be mindless.<sup>47</sup> If therefore the concept of human relationships is kept in focus, mindless routine will be eliminated from much that is currently engaged in as 'Home Economics' and purposeful activities invoked.

It is said that the aim of a good curriculum is to

" ... find sequences which will generate a kind of confidence, an ongoing illumination, an appetite for education" 48

Among previous arguments against breadth in the curriculum has been that breadth encourages lack of depth, depth being the identifying attributes of a liberal education.<sup>49</sup> But a core curriculum must surely offer breadth if it is to appeal to the majority of pupils. Yet coherence is likewise a basic essential: coherence through the study of and concern for human relationships would seem feasible through the broadest subject in the curriculum, Home Economics (given that it would acquire a new name).

A core curriculum of this nature could also operate across institutions: problems currently being experienced curriculum-wise as the result of different transfer ages<sup>50</sup> (viz. whether Junior or Middle school systems operate and if the latter, what age ranges are concerned) would be diminished since, given cooperation between schools, there is no reason why one year of the 'core' in a three year programme should not function in the primary school.

ReferencesChapter VII

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35. Guardian 30.8.1974 'N.H.S. money wasted on obesity caese'.
36. This would appear to be in the order of 15%-20% to judge by the ratio of 'Remedial' classes in schools. The true concept of 'remedial' however would suggest a much higher proportion of pupils to be 'backward' in specific learning areas.
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38. Hirst, Peters et al have spent much time and space on the subject; yet many 'facts' are historically and socially located and may also be said to have been subject to interpretive 'realities'.
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Chapter VIIIObstacles to development I : identity, image and nomenclature

"Schools make better disciples than inquirers".

J. Dewey (1961)

Democracy and Education  
p.339

Introduction

Despite the potential of Home Economics it would seem that 'development' is more apparent than real. Progress is hindered by intrinsic factors as well as extrinsic ones. There are a number of obstacles to the development of the subject, among them problems of identity, image, nomenclature and attitudes both within and towards the subject.

The first three problems will be examined in this chapter. The ensuing chapter will analyse the role of the ideology of womanhood within the domestic subject for it is felt that this is perhaps the major problem in terms of attitudes engendered by and towards the subject.

Identity

A major problem the subject is currently experiencing is the realisation that its practitioners are uncertain as to its identity.<sup>1</sup> A subject's identity lies in its fundamental subject

matter: this gives rise to its image from which it subsequently derives its status. With most subjects the question of identity is non-problematic: it is clear-cut and historically determined (e.g. English). Where new subjects have arisen, as in the case of Environmental Studies, their identity has been fairly clearly established by the use of a new title. But in the case of the domestic subjects it would appear that an attempt is being made to establish a new image within the existing framework of name and subject matter. Other subjects have experienced similar problems it is suggested,<sup>2</sup> although they have not had to contend with the social attitudes as have the domestic subjects.

Home Economics is a subject with 'expanding boundaries'.<sup>3</sup> Many of its practitioners see this as being merely the acquisition of more material to teach. Thus the identity cannot have changed. As a subject though it is 'turbulent and confused' as to what that identity is.<sup>4</sup> It has been suggested that the 'central identity ... is organisation and management'.<sup>5</sup> Yet these are processes, not substantive areas: the knowledge has itself to be applied to a body of knowledge: they are means to ends, not ends to themselves. Therefore they cannot constitute the identity of the subject.

Home Economics as an area of study encapsulated society's concept of woman's role and status. Perhaps the confusion over identity arises from this very point, itself a matter of considerable debate. Once the identity is ascertained then a philosophy can be arrived at, although it would seem that a social philosophy must of necessity precede this. The founders of the subject had such

a philosophy - to help the poorer classes to improve their standard of living.<sup>6</sup> But this was only within the social context of the day and was perhaps counteracted by other social ideologies regarding social status.<sup>7</sup> Today, this perspective which suggests a degree of patronage, would be seen as value-loaded. It would therefore perhaps be better to envisage it as problems encountered within the family and societal context.

It is suggested here that the fundamental identity of the domestic subjects is human relationships. Such an identity would place the subject within the context of total society, not merely within the home. It also encapsulates the difference between 'home' and 'house'. This would in fact incorporate the essential element which home economists, when discussing the name of the subject have insisted, is crucial. It would also facilitate a world perspective and thereby broaden outlooks. With the identity of human relationships the linking of various strands (sometimes referred to as 'a ragbag')<sup>8</sup> normally contained within the subject would be natural: nutrition, health, food presentation etc. would be seen as necessarily taking into account others' beliefs, behaviour, cultural background and practices, as well as the processes by which these were arrived at, and if necessary by which they are changed. Thus factors which actually govern nutrition - taboos, social class etc. which have to date made a mockery of nutrition education, would be better understood and thereby enable more effective teaching to be undertaken.<sup>9</sup>

Given this identity, the complex nature of the domestic subjects could assume a place in the school curriculum which would appeal to both sexes, and as such, might eventually be taught by both. Should

this be achieved, it is argued that the social and sexual biases<sup>10</sup> which at present appear to afflict the subject would thereby be eliminated.

The complexity of the subject can be seen in the A.T.D.S. Report when areas of study rather than objectives were defined.<sup>11</sup> These it was said were a summation of areas covered and seem to bear little resemblance to the overall teaching pattern.<sup>12</sup> The apparent fragmented nature of the subject indicates the reason for the difficulties experienced in seeking an identity upon which all may agree.

The corpus of knowledge embraced within a subject is identified to others through the medium of its name. Of itself, this infers ownership of that particular body of knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Therefore the question of nomenclature has been of immense consequence for the domestic subjects.

### Nomenclature

One of the major problems constantly facing the domestic subjects is the social overtones appertaining to them. Since the name of any subject area denotes its identity and thereby its image, it would seem imperative to select an accurately symbolic title. The domestic subjects have been bedevilled by this issue for many years. Currently, the problem would appear to be that whilst attempting to change the subject matter, the encasing title is to be retained. Thus, while it is true that a mere change of nomenclature

will not effect a change of attitudes towards the subject, observers may equally not acknowledge the newer content unless a new, universal name is adopted.<sup>14</sup> Past changes of name have not succeeded in removing the stigma attached to the subject.

Originally the domestic subjects were entitled under their separate, descriptively accurate names; domestic economy, laundry work, housewifery etc. From thereon confusion appears to have reigned and is perhaps an indication of the lack of direction within the subject, or rather, its multi-directional nature. Whilst the term 'Domestic Subjects' replaced the former individualised titles in order to indicate the mixed nature of a new, combined approach<sup>15</sup> the title of 'Domestic Science' was substituted for 'Cookery' at a number of training schools.<sup>16</sup> In the case of the training institutions this appears to have been based on the philosophy that a good scientific understanding of food and processes was essential.<sup>17</sup> It also incorporated the Social Science element which was being recognised as a significant element in the application of domestic science.<sup>18</sup> In 1909 however, the word 'Subjects' replaced 'Science' in the official title of the A.T.D.S., the officially representative body.<sup>19</sup> Yet schools often used the term 'Science' to enhance the teaching of science.<sup>20</sup>

A variety of titles was, and still is, used by the various Examination Boards, and schools<sup>21</sup> although the A.T.D.S. reverted to 'Domestic Science' in 1962. This move, which 'surprised' members and 'astonished' non-members, despite a survey, was an attempt to

ensure a title that would be meaningful to everyone and which would present to the 'dimly comprehending outside world' that the practitioners of the subject 'at least had an idea of what they were doing'.<sup>22</sup>

The name was coined from an amalgam of the diffuse range of existing terminology: domestic Subjects; Domestic Science; Household Science; Homecraft; Home Science; Household Technology; Home Economics etc. But this was retrospective not developmental in outlook. It failed to encompass the social aspects and in effect it polarised the subject into two sections in terms of practitioners - those who liked the practical aspects only and those who could cope with the required science. Thus the social science element was virtually excluded. This not only inhibited many potentially interested persons but could be said to be a fundamental cause of the subject's lack of impact: the human element is surely the lynchpin in the communication process.

A very brief survey (at the Buxton Conference 1974) showed that many teachers see a change of name as undesirable, although they were seemingly unaware of the range of currently operative names. According to these teachers, the term 'domestic' or 'home' is inviolate,<sup>23</sup> a point echoed by tutors when considering future courses. Yet as Rudd and Wiseman point out, teachers of domestic subjects are " ... likely to enjoy the same status as teachers of Mathematics only when Domestic Science is seen to be clearly interpreted as human education".<sup>24</sup> \*

Since the name is a symbol, this concept would have to be reflected

\* my emphasis



in it if indeed there is to be any indication to outsiders as to the general emphasis within the subject.

In some countries (e.g. France, Sweden) the title of 'Family Sciences' or 'Family Studies' is used. These would seem to indicate the tenor of the courses and to exclude the concept of 'work' traditionally associated with domesticity. In France for example, Home Economics is seen as being " ... less concerned with the transmission of practical recipes than with training for the profession of homemaking ... the preparation of women to be mothers of families". In Canada it centres on " ... mastery of those attitudes that are the essence of abundant family living".<sup>25</sup> Both these visions would seem to embrace the concept of human relationships, despite the role orientation of the French statement. Whilst many would argue that such a perspective is contained within the British version, to others it appears at best a secondary concern, housewifery being the dominant one.

In conclusion then, it may be argued that a change of name is imperative if due recognition is to be achieved by the subject in this country. Perhaps the adherence to the former name(s) is indicative of the conservative nature of the profession and that significant persons who could be instrumental in the process are themselves opposed to change. Certainly there seems to be considerable support from students once they had examined the variables involved and had become super-conscious of societal attitudes.<sup>26</sup>

If the new identity of the domestic subjects was recognised by its own practitioners, links with other subjects would be readily forthcoming it is suggested. Indeed, it could easily claim to be central to the curriculum, constituting the 'core'. This is examined in the subsequent chapter.

The alternative to becoming the 'core', or at least a major contributory element to a core, is for the subject to become more specialist. In this instance, any one of its myriad of component parts could become specialist areas (e.g. Nutrition, Science, Social Sciences etc). Some institutions have sought this (e.g. Elizabeth Gaskell, Manchester). In terms of 'academic respectability' this is feasible and seem to be the attraction. Yet in terms of societal needs, the unique contribution of the subject is its synergistic quality. Those who seek specialisation to the degree suggested could be self-seeking rather than altruistic.<sup>27</sup> The kernel of the problem lies in the deep-seated dichotomy between 'pure' and 'applied' knowledge. Until this is overcome it appears to be an insoluble problem. It is also debatable whether schools would find sufficient work for such specialist teachers and since the profession is largely self-perpetuating this could be the vital factor.

The final alternative then is for the subject per se to die out. It is already being absorbed into other areas<sup>28</sup> in some instances. This suggests that others recognise the identity of the subject (i.e. human relationships) more effectively than do its own practitioners.

In that case, they are their own worst enemies. Awareness of the true nature and importance of the subject however could be harnessed to the concept of a 'core curriculum' in which the domestic subjects constitute the focus or even the core itself.

### Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing evidence it is abundantly clear that Home Economics needs a new image if it is to survive as a curriculum entity. This will only be achieved through a radical reassessment of its identity and a clear philosophy concerning its role in modern society.

One of the major stumbling blocks is the profession itself and the insistence on the very strong scientific bias.<sup>29</sup> But this is to deny the changed emphasis of the discipline<sup>30</sup> and the new knowledge which illuminates the past failure to change peoples' habits. Recognition that more changes would be wrought through an understanding of behavioural development which could then lead to the introduction of scientific analysis would in all probability enable the subject to be classified in the human sciences.

ReferencesChapter VIII

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Chapter IX

## Obstacles to Development II :

Ideology of Womanhood in the Domestic Subjects

"Women have only the neutered dignity men have allowed the women they have called 'good'. The indignity of femininity has been internalised for millenia."

S. Rowbotham 1973

'Women's Consciousness, Man's World'.

p.xi Pelican

Introduction

It has been suggested that the domestic subjects have fulfilled the role of a 'carrying group' for social ideologies which relate to women.<sup>1</sup> But contrary to the normal use of this term, that is, that a carrying group conveys an assertive ideology, the domestic subjects have carried retrospective ideologies. Yet it is as effective, if not more so, for the invisible nature of this role is its defence. Since it transmits archaic ideologies regarding women's sex, status and economic value though, it is likely to be rejected by forward thinking people, who envisage a more egalitarian role for women. Certainly research evidence supports the view that Home Economists, at least emerging from the school situation, are more conformist than other groups.<sup>2</sup> Unless and until the subject becomes congruent with current thinking it will be rejected by those who could be instrumental in developing the subject's true potential.<sup>3</sup> As it is, it appears to be a small, close circle on two levels, those who teach and intend to teach it and those who take it as a non-examination subject. Those who study branches of the domestic subjects in the

non-teaching world do not fall quite into the same category since they are not concerned with the specific home situation and the perpetuation of the feminine ideology. Yet even here, the tendency to conservatism appears to be stronger,<sup>4</sup> although this is an area for future study. The trend to reject Sociological Studies in new Home Economics degrees is evidence of this.<sup>5</sup> However, this is in direct opposition to moves in the schools.<sup>6</sup> Thus the very people who seek to promote the standing of the subject could be the cause of its downfall.

As a subject the traditional role of woman as wife and housekeeper, with the emphasis on the latter, is accepted unquestioningly. But as Mitchell states,<sup>7</sup> of all women students, Home Economists should at least be entitled to ask the rationale of this. They should, as future citizens, be aware that the ideals transmitted through the subject are based on historical socio-economic ideologies whose relevance in the modern world is queried. Many of the students are indeed conscious of a conflict between their subject and the 'real world,'<sup>8</sup> a factor intensified by the development of Comprehensive education. They are also aware however of the need to comply with the demands of the subject in order to acquire the desired qualification.<sup>9</sup> Although many of the more dissident students intend to 'change things' when they themselves reach teacher status, and may refuse to assume a veneer in order to pass,<sup>10</sup> the noted reversion syndrome suggests that this will not in fact occur.<sup>11</sup>

The Women's Liberation Movement and other writers have commented adversely on the role of 'housewife'<sup>12</sup> in relation to the suppression of women and that, although the technical and physical conditions of housewifery have altered substantially in the last half century, there is still a tendency for housework activity to proliferate.<sup>13</sup> Oakley posits that the length of education is the key factor in detachment from the housewife role.<sup>14</sup> Yet the length of compulsory education has been considerably extended.<sup>15</sup> The gap between education and homemaker role however has decreased as the age rate of marriage has declined and the rate of marriage has increased.<sup>16</sup> Into the bargain, it is not the quantity of education but the quality which is the crucial factor: increased length has for many simply meant an expansion of the existing type of education, frequently of the domestic subjects themselves. Since more working class than middle class housewives have a 'traditional orientation to housework'<sup>17</sup> and the tendency is for working class children to be in the lower ability streams which get more of the domestic subjects, then there exists a vicious circle, all of which can be seen as ensuring that the working classes do not 'rise above themselves'. Doors are closed as well as opened by the very quality of the education experienced.

This chapter examines some of the societal aspects which have created the image of womanhood which the domestic subjects in the world of education inherently supports.



### Legitimation

As a subject, Home Economics 'legitimises' the economic exploitation of women through the unquestioning acceptance of traditional women's idealised role of housewife. It reifies the cultural creation of the family, as do sociologists who support the functionalist perspective<sup>18</sup> of the family. The images portrayed of womanhood and family are those of peace and plenty<sup>19</sup> whereas in reality the family may be the site of violence, despair and abuse. The concept of the feminine role created a 'useful prop and a spurious modernity'<sup>20</sup> to the conservative perspective.

Homemaking and housework are habitually interpreted as synonymous in the domestic subjects thus contributing to the cosy image of home life<sup>21</sup> which the world of mass media, for its own dubious purposes, magnifies.<sup>22</sup> As Oakley argues, a falsity hinges on the dichotomy between 'family' and 'work'<sup>23</sup> and obscures the true conservative ideology underpinning the whole concept of the family in Britain. The sentimental cult of the 'feminine mystique'<sup>24</sup> in the psychological guise of 'needs' and 'natural fulfilment' is perhaps the cheapest way in which society can ensure the exclusion of women from the 'world of work' where they might constitute a formidable, competitive body against which many men might fail. Thus are they silenced.

When the opportunity to expand the subject arose with the raising of the school leaving age (1972) instead of opening up the subject and allowing a questioning approach, courses continued to

enhance the legendary 'beautiful, dutiful' wife-role. Courses in hair and beauty care promote meaningless, mindless, time-consuming occupations which in the final analysis merely support the capitalist system by increasing demand for cosmetics etc. which proliferate in this country to an extent far beyond other countries.<sup>25</sup>

In the superordinate role, the teacher has virtually limitless power to determine the perspective promoted within the pedagogical relationship, as Bernstein points out.<sup>26</sup> However, the subordinate has many sources of knowledge available - the mass media, peers and powers of observation, all of which create a reality based on 'commonsense knowledge', and against which the teacher's reality is measured. If the two clash, and in Home Economics this is particularly likely, then the reality which is the more 'credible' will be accepted. Therefore, the unquestioning acceptance of the 'feminine mystique' which forms the basis of the teacher's reality, is transmitted at the lowest level, the trivia of outward appearance.

The 'feminine mystique' was created for male convenience. It rested on two myths regarding women's place in society, namely the division of labour and that of motherhood.<sup>27</sup> The inculcation of 'housepride' is a useful tool of the capitalist system: the acquisition of property in terms of household goods as well as that of bricks and mortar, the emblem of the nuclear family, is fuelled by the indoctrination of 'perfection' in housewifery.<sup>28</sup> Coupled with the efforts of the mass media the assault upon the housewife is totally effective. The poverty of isolation<sup>29</sup> in

terms of human relationships resulting from this is mystified within the social ideology of 'individualism'. The Family, in the realm of the domestic subjects is seen as non-problematic and divinely ordained. Examination of the broken family is not normally part of the programme - with the exception of 'Welfare Studies' which is frequently treated in an historical context only. Many controversial areas are subject to the 'battery of neglect'<sup>30</sup> by the domestic subjects : problems such as group living outside the 'normal' family context, alcoholism in the family, scapegoating, and violence to the person.<sup>31</sup> The problem is likely to be exacerbated as courses are truncated in the name of breadth and administrative convenience.

Yet students, as teachers, will meet these families in the course of their career;<sup>32</sup> inability to appreciate the problems facing these families may lead either to total disregard of the classroom effects<sup>33</sup> or an incorrect analysis and mistaken remedial measures. Similarly, the false front posited within the domestic course, of an idyllic, cosy domesticity, may escalate marriage by those least prepared for it and who subsequently, traumatically discover that the home is virtually a prison which is officially protected from the scrutiny of the Law. The introduction of 'Child Care' courses are one source of such encouragement.<sup>34</sup>

Assertions that the subject is 'relevant' on the grounds of 'reality' are mistaken. The reality presented is a distorted one : thus the credibility of the domestic subject in the modern

context is dubious. It is based on a series of myths which are perpetuated through the medium of the subject. An analysis of the major myths will highlight the problem.

### The Division of Labour Myth

The division of labour gave rise to the concept of 'woman's work'. It can be said to have arisen from the separation of home and work, essentially an effect of industrialisation. Yet this is a class based (and biased) view, since of necessity, many working-class women have always worked.<sup>35</sup> Division of labour by sex however is clearly a male construct for it is not 'natural' but culturally determined. It is therefore based on a sexist ideology. Cultural variations will testify to this.<sup>36</sup>

Sexual differences both biological and supposed mental ones, have been promoted as the major justification for the 'inferiority' of women. However, these have been defined on the basis of male-perspective questions. Once women start asking the questions which men never ask, then a different picture emerges.<sup>37</sup> The ideological bias, unrecognised until the nineteen-seventies, facilitated the perpetuation of the sexist division of labour in society and created both inequitable and iniquitous situations. This ideology was supported by the apparent 'findings' of Freud: these suited the dominant groups' ideology in many fields.

It is suggested that the sexual repression of the industrialisation era was a feature of capitalism in that a dull, automatised workforce was required by the nature of the work, with reason and clarity

underpinning all managerial actions.<sup>38</sup> Spontaneity and instinct were non-conducive to such work and sexual behaviour was considered to fall into this latter category. Yet if man could not dominate his work situation, although domination was a societal male-related value, then it was highly likely that it would find expression in the family situation. This itself was legally protected by the ideology of privatisation, which decreed that freedom of action between husband and wife was sacrosanct, even to severe injury.

In this respect, it could be argued that by encouraging girls of the lower classes to become home oriented, the domestic subjects are currently enhancing early marriage thereby exacerbating a problem. Divorce figures indicate the vulnerability of early marriages.<sup>39</sup> Thus the domestic subjects are posing a paradox for themselves: early marriage is encouraging failure in the very area of life the subject seeks to support. Certainly it encourages a sexist ideology based on the 'ideal' family situation. Considering the diversity of conceptions regarding marriage, this bias is ill conceived.

Much of the presumed evidence of female inferiority is in fact the outcome of deliberate suppression of contrary evidence. Examination of specific life areas will reveal the extent of this practice.

### The Great Suppression

One of the most frequently promoted 'justifications' for the social inequality of women is that, even in their own traditional realm of womanhood, namely cooking, men take all the top jobs.<sup>40</sup> It is said that there are no women geniuses in the majority of fields - with the implication that they are incapable of being such. This last word of male defence has only recently been challenged to any meaningful degree: light has at last been thrown on the means used to suppress and silence women.<sup>41</sup>

The concept of geniuship is socially determined in that it is " ... subject to the same laws of cotton and molasses" in that it adjusts to supply and demand.<sup>42</sup> The apparent lack of it highlights the methodology employed in the suppression of women. A genius, like a deviant is only labelled as such when recognition is granted to that effect.<sup>43</sup> The potential for geniuship may exist within an individual and it may be exercised. But to gain recognition may largely depend on the modern form of patronage,<sup>44</sup> namely access to the channels of communication, such as the written word, exhibitions, television, radio etc. It is at this point that persistent discrimination against women has led to their effective suppression and silencing. What was perhaps most effective was the social ideology of femininity which held that to be a genius was " ... a useless and dangerous endowment".<sup>45</sup>

It was perhaps beliefs like this that led to the constant non-recognition of women. For example, what has been written about women, thereby publicising the image of 'woman', has been mainly by men who " ... almost totally ignore the existence of women".<sup>46</sup> Few works by women have survived. This may be due to the fact that no one deemed it worthwhile collecting them, but more probably because few women had the opportunity even to learn to read and write. The few isolated works which did survive were mainly by nuns - almost the only females who were taught to read and write. Even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women were frequently obliged to resort to the use of pseudonyms in order to get their work published.<sup>47</sup> What was published was invariably deemed to be indicative of woman's inferiority. The subject matter was often trivial. Yet what was ignored in this particular instance, was the fact that in order to get a book published, it was necessary to write the sort of material the publisher decided would succeed. Thus on the whole, the published material was only that which conformed to the male view of women or what women wanted: hence trivial matter for trivial persons. Thus the self-fulfilling prophecy was 'proved'. The irony of the situation was that many would-be authoresses were constrained to publish in order to make a living. This was a necessity frequently incurred by the debts of reckless husbands.<sup>48</sup>

In other fields such as Music and Medicine, where men have been said to be superior to women it can be shown that this is largely due to the machinations of men. In Medicine for example, the story of female suppression has only recently come to light.<sup>49</sup>

It shows the combined forces of the church, the law and the upper classes being brought to bear on the exclusion of women from the profession of healing.<sup>50</sup> As late as 1974 access to medical training was limited on numerical grounds by means of a quota system.<sup>51</sup> Even when qualified, in medicine a woman today has to be " ... so outstanding that she simply cannot be overlooked" in order to obtain a post of any standing.<sup>52</sup>

In music, often held to be a prima facie case of woman's failure to achieve greatness, there is evidence of a very anti-woman attitude which may well explain the apparent lack of eminent women conductors and composers.<sup>53</sup> Notably too, the effects of the patronage system in the field of music have been overlooked.<sup>54</sup> It is doubtful whether any patrons would have risked their own image or status by supporting a female.

The apparent absence of great women artists is likewise quite simply explained.<sup>55</sup> In order to become known, it is necessary for one's pictures to be 'hung' or catalogued either in a well known gallery or through the medium of a private exhibition. The support of a favourable critic's review is also extremely helpful. The fact that few, if any women achieved such eminence has been in large measure due to the deliberate neglect of critics and even to the attribution of their work to other artists.<sup>56</sup>



Apart from these examples of seemingly deliberate suppression through the ignoring of their existence, there is evidence of positive discrimination against women within organisational policies.<sup>57</sup> Other factors however would also seem to be involved when an attempt is made to account for so few women being at "the top".<sup>58</sup> Demographic and economic factors as well as social attitudes have played major roles in this. Women of potential ability are often inconveniently placed geographically when they wish to further their careers. This is due to the fact that they have, according to convention, followed their husbands work location. Similarly, the motivation has to be strong in some instances where the economics of employment are such that there is little financial reward in any. It could be that satisfaction in paid employment is not the sole criteria for women and that they achieve a personal harmony by combining satisfaction on a broader spectrum than men who achieve high office within a specific field.

Above all however, the time factor is perhaps the most important one in relation to 'success'. The time to be free of external influences is crucial to creativity:<sup>59</sup> women, especially within the framework of a family situation, are rarely able to achieve this state.

Thus the 'mental paucity' attributed to women is allied to their supposed physical debility thereby making them the secondary sex according to masculine definitions and perspectives.

From this has stemmed the notion of 'woman's work'. This comprises occupations requiring little mental ability or physical strength supposedly: teaching and nursing are examples of this extension.

### Woman's Work

The concept of woman's work has been justified on the grounds of biological differences, notably that of brain size initially.<sup>60</sup> Recent findings regarding the effects of poor nutrition on the size of brains<sup>61</sup> would suggest that the noted undernourishment of females during gestation and the early years could account for the apparent discrepancy. This is perhaps even more likely in view of the fact that after a certain size, brain weight is not related to ability, the important variable being that of brain complexity.

The assignation of sex to roles likewise produced some inconvenient discrepancies for the theory of male superiority in that tests designed to measure artistic or verbal ability reversed the commonly held views. For example, women were found to be more artistic and less talkative on a masculine-feminine measure.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, on sex related skills tests when matched with roles, it was found that the fine-muscle superiority of girls would have produced far more women doctors (but for the quota system).

Thus it would seem that men found it necessary to suppress such evidence on the purported grounds of 'weakness'. However, granted that there was a notable amount of weakness numerically in society this theory disregarded the physical and social factors involved. In the middle classes it was a cultivated weakness, in the working class it was socially induced as the result of the heavy

work the women undertook. The ideology of feminine domesticity meant that the ladies of the middle classes were regarded as their husband's adornment, the ability to have a non-working wife being a visible measure of his success. But this was also linked to the concept of man's immortality which required the assurance that a man had an heir of his own flesh and blood. This was achieved through monogamous marriage and the subsequent isolation of his wife in the home. A combination of social pressures as to the wifely role and time in which to fulfil it led middle class ladies to cultivate the feminine virtues - sometimes to extremes. Among these was that of 'having the vapours' and fainting. Such practices, together with her economic, psychological and emotional dependence on her husband (or father) made the middle-class woman appear weak - both mentally and physically.<sup>63</sup>

In contrast, her working-class counterpart was in reality weak from working "hours which no man worked"<sup>64</sup>; indeed, the work was so severe that the constitution received "... such a shock from which it never recovered".<sup>65</sup> The 'slavery' of the young dressmaker was equal to none.<sup>66</sup> It was matched only perhaps by the conditions of work in the mines. If these women survived to be mothers, it is likely that their health, which was "... already utterly destroyed"<sup>67</sup> by the conditions of work, would be unable to stand the rigours of pregnancy and childbirth. Thus it would seem that they were lacking in muscular strength, not least because they had been "... insufficiently fed and not properly clothed" from birth in comparison with males.<sup>68</sup>

Thus it can be seen that the picture of 'weak women' was perhaps justified : on the one hand there were the parasites of the middle classes, doomed to and governed by trivialities and the 'tyranny of bric-a-brac'.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand there were those weakened and exhausted by the conditions of their existence. But this was woman as produced by society and could be said to be man-made, although this is never the total picture. Nevertheless there is ample evidence offered by Engels as to the original superiority of women in the days before the concept of private property and the institution of monogamy.<sup>70</sup> Both the above aspects of 'womanhood' were encapsulated within the concept of 'home' and idealised as far as woman's role was concerned. Each was 'justified' by the religious beliefs of the day through the notion of immortality. The upper and middle classes saw themselves immortalised through their inheritable property, the concept of which was embraced within the Christian Ethic; the lower orders, especially the women would be 'immortalised' as the reward for the misery of their earthly existence.<sup>71</sup> Thus was the status quo justified and perpetuated. Certainly one may question the idea that the working classes would have wanted their children to inherit their lot. But this does illustrate the ability of the elite groups to perpetrate their ideologies upon society and at the same time to manipulate the working classes to legitimate them.

The concept of the dominant male was thus ubiquitous in Britain. It was the one which provided the ideological bedrock of the domestic subjects. It also provided the rationale for the juxtaposition of the

hard domestic "daily round and common task" and the leisure-time handicrafts. Each of these was socially definitive. Either way, as a subject it has been associated with unpaid and unvalued work. Consequently it attracts the anti-feminism from the male sector which only values work in hard-cash terms (or its substitutes) and from women who resent the subject for its degrading potential. Paradoxically, it frequently achieves support, but only because it in fact enhances male superiority.

This was in marked contrast to the historical evidence<sup>72</sup> and stemmed largely from the change from the family wage of the cottage industry to the labour-wage of the factory. Woman's work became equated with the home sphere gradually as work became role specific, with the man ostensibly becoming the breadwinner and woman the breeder and breadmaker. This social and economic expedient was essential if a fit work force was to be ensured. The notion of 'motherhood' was enhanced as a 'need' which all women were said to have.

As the result of the manipulation of idealised social concepts of femininity and maternity, the utilisation of two individuals' work for one wage was socially legitimised.<sup>73</sup> In the same way, men were manipulated by the ideologies of chivalry and responsibility as well as that of masculinity.

With the separation of paid work and home, women alone were assigned to the unnaturalness of isolation of housework. The invisible nature of their work made it appear to be much less demanding than it actually was. Likewise the breadth of knowledge currently required to be an effective housewife is not acknowledged. It is this invisibility which enables the perpetuation of prevailing ideologies regarding women's work and hence her economic value. The fact that the majority of women had to work of necessity was thereby ignored. Invisibility however was part of the ideological manipulation: the middle classes had servants relegated to the kitchens while the working classes' housework was either obscured by the fact that the men were away for long hours in comparison with the part-time work of the wives, or it was achieved through the segregated role patterns.

Such a mythological picture was within the middle classes' ability to perpetuate through the ideology of self-achievement. The fact that the ceiling on female achievement was very much lower than that of males was obscured in the educational provisions, notably the curriculum constrictions. It was by this means that the concept of female inferiority was sustained.<sup>74</sup>

### The Fallacy of Inferiority

Criticism of the domestic subject centres on the fact that concept of 'woman's work' is role-identifying and determining. This concept however is of fairly recent genesis. Prior to the onset of industrialisation women had been economically important and equal to

men. They had carried out functions in agriculture, business enterprises and industry. Men had likewise participated fully in family life.

The change from family to individual wages however had a marked effect. In the early part of the eighteenth century women were employed in work which was of a seasonal nature, hoeing, harvesting etc. Their work was therefore considered to be only 'supplementary' to either husband's or father's.<sup>75</sup> Yet it was commonly held that wives and children should earn their keep. This conflict regarding womens' work may be seen as the outcome of evaluational and existential factors. It was a function of the relationship between male and female in terms of human values. Women were demoted in social-evaluative terms in order to justify the employment of men in times of job-scarcity.<sup>76</sup> The notion of dispensibility stemmed from the fragmented nature of their seasonal employment on the farms. The social demotion of women's work on the grounds of biological differences was redefined and legitimised in terms of 'deserved' treatment. Thus it is with all suppressed groups. Thus the concept of 'women's work' is ideologically based and controlled from a male perspective. It is equated with simple, routine tasks not scarce knowledge. When however the actual skills are specialised outside the home (e.g. baking) they are considerably more highly regarded - the location factor is apparently a determining factor. The iniquity of definition is emphasised when a job-specification is changed. Perhaps 'house operative' would command greater respect than housewife since it does not embrace the idea of subservience.

The sexist ideology and the contingent one of woman's work is rooted in the function of reproduction, the facts of which are non-disputable. It is the extension of this 'inevitability' into the state of motherhood and the process of mothering, with its ineluctable consequences, that is disputable. It is not 'natural', rather it is socially induced : deviant practitioners have however remained largely inconspicuous, unless extremes have been reached.

### The Myth of Motherhood

The myth of motherhood rests on the concept of biological determinism which testifies to the 'naturalness' of motherhood.<sup>77</sup> Childbearing itself may be biologically determined to date, but childrearing is culturally defined.<sup>78</sup>

Support for the myth has been derived from sociological and psychological 'evidence'.<sup>79</sup> Apart from the 'need fulfilment' the 'bogey of mother deprivation'<sup>80</sup> was invoked in the 1950s which offered pseudo-scientific evidence of the necessity of the mother's presence during the early years of childhood.<sup>81</sup> The fact that this theory has been questioned<sup>82</sup> and modified<sup>83</sup>, if not actually withdrawn, testifies to the doubtful nature of the 'evidence'. It was indeed a social convenience at the time when female demands for equal opportunities were potentially, dangerously challenging. This suggests that ideologies are materialised within a sexual context when a perceived 'need' arises. Support in the field of education



was forthcoming from Committee : praise was lavished on the domestic subjects. These committees however were constituted almost totally of males, whose perspectives would in any case have been coloured by their own socialisation within these ideological contexts.

For example, the Newsom Report's enthusiasm for embroidery<sup>84</sup> indicated little awareness of the realities of working class life. The stress laid on the domestic subjects showed that the Committee members failed to appreciate that it was these pupils who usually had very considerable practice in the domestic arts, of necessity. As Hannah Gavron's study elicited, it is the middle classes who tend to lack such experience.<sup>85</sup>

In the light of available evidence, the image of the family and society as reflected in the domestic subjects is unrealistic. Above all, the false image of women in society is perhaps the most dangerous in an age of questioning, for it does not allow the examination of other practices, such as advertising to be adequately investigated. Ideology perpetuates a state of womanhood which masks the historical suppression of women and gives an ironic twist to the concept 'half our Future' as embraced within the title of the Newsom Report.<sup>86</sup>

Yet the domestic subjects could be instrumental in establishing the economic importance of woman's work, not simply by joining the baying for payment for household and mothering functions, but by establishing the concept that it is, in its own right, a major

contributory factor in the production process, not merely in the consumption one.<sup>87</sup> Implicit in the current teaching is the notion of the family as a consumer unit only and the woman's as being in the pre-market situation and therefore unproductive. Seen however as a circulatory process, the woman's role clearly becomes central in the productive process since she not only facilitates the actual work-force member in the daily course of events, ensuring his capacity to cope through adequate health etc., but she also produces the new members of the future work force. The practice of seeing the separation of paid employment and the home-based work as two separate entities has allowed the perpetuation of the myth of non-productivity of the woman's role. But the two processes are inextricably linked. Once again the ability to impose the male perspective has arisen because few women, if any, have written in this field.

As a subject, Home Economics would necessarily have to embrace studies relating to the work situation and thus move away from the cosy ideology of 'home' to the realistic world of home-and-work. Inevitably it would reflect the life-situations of the majority of the pupils at whom the subject is directed and would require adjustment on the part of the practitioners who tend to come only from the middle classes.<sup>88</sup>

### The Myth of Marriage

The estate of marriage is socially constructed. It affords a status in modern society which has been largely unattainable through other means. Yet evidence would suggest that the concept of 'union' is ambiguous if the value each partner extracts is considered. Bernard shows the effect of 'his' and 'her' marriage.<sup>89</sup> The inevitable conclusion is that the ideology of 'marital harmony' is somewhat out of tune with the facts.

Marriage itself confers societal approval of personal adequacy, heterosexual normality and personal maturity<sup>90</sup> despite the fact that these may not exist in any one individual who marries. Since this has been related to women in the main (male achievement could be assessed outside the marriage bond) it can be seen that in reality this status conferring is but a rite de passage to motherhood. All this was contained within the 'package' of femininity. The status passage is itself ritualised and publicised (engagement, wedding, honeymoon etc.) The shock follows.<sup>91</sup> It is this aspect which is not examined within the framework of the domestic subjects. Thus they may be accused of an unwarranted bias, if not a totally misleading one.

A more realistic analysis of marriage and motherhood with the notion that they may be problematic not perfect would introduce a measure of reality hitherto missing. It is this idealised concept, the effect of non-conscious ideology<sup>92</sup> which is open to question.

Conclusion

The domestic subjects rest upon an ideological framework in which inequality is to all intents and purposes 'justified' on a sexist basis. This is the main obstacle to its development. Unjustifiable suppression of female talent in the name of male dominance and superiority robs society of the potential of over half its population. The degree to which this can be tolerated in the future is questionable. Fallacious ideologies will inevitably lead to a questioning of the subject which acts as the transmission vehicle.

ReferencesChapter IX

1. *supra.* chapter I. p.8.
2. Table B X & BXI p.349-350 q. 7/8 (Research: Questionnaire B)
3. Berger, N. & Maizels, J. (1962) 'Woman, Fancy or Free': the authors claim that the domestic subjects would not be chosen if girls were not conditioned into their role expectation of marriage and motherhood. Those who are not quite so conditioned may indeed reject it. (L.B. Tanner (ed) Myths about women in Voices from Women's Liberation 1970. Signet).
4. In-depth interview: Polytechnic H.Ecs. students
5. It would appear that several B.Ed. submissions for Home Economics have either no or minimal components of sociological studies.
6. At 'A' level the sociological component is increasing, e.g. J.M.B. (1976) introduced a new examination on individuals' 'Rights'.
7. Mitchell, J. (1974) Woman's Estate. p.22 Penguin
8. Table C IV(a)(h) p.383
9. Table C IV(a)(i) p.383
10. Shipman, M. (1967) 'Theory and Practice in the Education of Teachers'. Ed.Res.vol.9. no.3 (June 1967) found that students conformed to College expectations but that on taking up the first teaching post they reverted to latent practices.
11. Table C V (q.4 p.392)
12. e.g. A Oakley; S. Rowbotham; J. Mitchell; L. Comer; N. Berger, J. Maizels etc.
13. Oakley, A. (1976) Housewife p.96 Pelican
14. *ibid.* p. 98
15. With the raising of the minimum school leaving age to 16 in 1972 the legal dates of the ending of minority status and possible marriage met and even overlapped in some cases owing to the idiosyncrasies of the system.
16. Social Trends 1975
17. Oakley, A. *op. cit.* p.98 (for a deeper explanation vide R. Hoggart The Uses of Literacy. ch. 3 & 4)

18. e.g. M. Farmer, R. Fletcher
19. Mitchell, J. op. cit. p.100
20. Rowbotham, S. (1973) Woman's Consciousness, Man's World  
p 3 Pelican
21. *ibid.* p.76
22. Millum, T. (1975) The Image of Women Chatto & Windus
23. Oakley, A. (1974) The Sociology of Housework p.25  
Martin Robertson
24. Friedan, B. (1971) The Feminine Mystique Gollanz
25. By comparison with other E.E.C. countries, cosmetics are exceptionally cheap and abundant in Britain.
26. Bernstein, B. (1971) On Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge, in M.D.F. Young (ed) Knowledge and Control. p.50 Collier Macmillan.
27. Oakley, A. (1974) The Leyton Obsessional Inventory; Psychological Medicine pp.48-64
28. 'Perfection' tends to be synonymous with 'ideal' and frequently is equated with 'modern' and 'new'.
29. Comer, L. (1974) Wedlocked Women. pp.89-90  
Feminist Books
30. *ibid.* p.208
31. It is perhaps significant that when a realistic family situation was posited to a R.O.S.L.A. class and comment invited upon a situation involving a child who, on returning from school and is requested to hang up his coat, replies 'get stuffed', it was eighty-five minutes before the teacher (the Deputy Head) could get a word in edgeways. (B. Jerman, 'Starting Young' Guardian. 31.8.1976).
32. Questionnaire D : of those respondents who amplified their responses with comments, many referred to this point.
33. e.g. truancy, maladjustment etc.

34. The writer established what is believed to have been the first course of this nature and after several years reluctantly came to this conclusion. There was of course no control group and therefore the observation was made in respect only of the careers of those pupils involved in the course.
35. Land, H. (1975) The Myth of the Male Breadwinner. New. Soc. 9.10.1975
36. Oakley, A. op. cit. p.160 ff.
37. Bernard, J. (1972) The Sex Game, Communication Between the Sexes. N.Yk. Atheneum
38. Johnson, R. (1976) Notes on the Schooling of the English Working Class 1780-1850 in R. Dale et al (eds) Schooling and Capitalism. no.4. R. & K.P.
39. Table 1.15. p.57 Social Trends 1975. The highest rate is for those under four years of marriage; this masks those which break up in their third and fourth years but which are not finalised until the fifth or sixth years.
40. In the B.B.C. programme 'You and Yours' (15.2.1976) Ms. Adele Verseman stated that only after many letters did she gain a position in the Savoy Hotel kitchen. During the course of the programme, the head cook stated that "Women are unable to cope with the heavy fish kettles" and the reason for not employing women was that cooking was "... a career because you have to know thousands of dishes."
41. Stott, M. The Silenced Sex. Guardian. 18.9.1974
42. Macauley, T.B. (1824) On the Athenian Orator : cited in the Newsom Report. p.6
43. Schur, E.M. (1971) Labelling Deviant Behaviour. Harper Row
44. Modern forms of patronage frequently appear to be more a matter of commercial viability than artistic ability.
45. This comment was contained in a letter from 'Adele and Theodore' cited in H.C. Barnard (1966) A History of Education from 1760.p.23. Univ. London.
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47. Mills, J.S. (1869) On the Subjection of Women. p.242. Everyman's Library 825 Dent.
48. This was not unknown in the middle classes where women often wrote novels, under pseudonyms, in order to cope with the problem in a 'respectable' manner. (eg Mrs E.S. Trollope).

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54. Bourdieu, P. (1966) Intellectual Field and Creative Project, in M.D.F. Young, op. cit. p.6
55. Zimmerman, L. Why are there no great woman artists? S.T. 13.10.1974
56. (i) Peter Ustinov stated that his mother's expertise was 'consistently ignored' by the critics of her time. Only when a posthumous exhibition was given (1973/4) was her talent (belatedly) acknowledged. (B.B.C. 'Celebration' 14.9.1974)
- (ii) Owen John, sister of Augustus John, was recognised by the British Arts Council as an artist who had produced " ... some of the finest work by any British artist of her time" only when a retrospective exhibition was given of her painting in New York 1960 (Zimmerman, op.cit.)
- (iii) The work of Mary Beale (1633-1699) suffered " ... almost total eclipse" as the result of her work being ignored by the catalogueurs and writers but also to the fact that her work was 'invariably' attributed to other (male) painters, notably Leler. (M.Stett, Guardian, 30.10.1975).
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- e.g. no women are on Government Boards of : Railways, Waterways, Coal, Steel, Airways, Sugar etc.

Consumer Gas Council	8	women	out of	24
Regional & Economic Planning	17	...	...	258
Area Electricity Board	5	...	...	99
Regional Water Authorities	9	...	...	221
Education:				
Arts Council	3	...	...	20
Design	3	...	...	28
Social Services				
Research Council	2	...	...	14



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