Marianna Papastephanou   *Editor*

Philosophical Perspectives on Compulsory Education

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Philosophical Perspectives on Compulsory Education

Marianna Papastephanou

Introduction

From antiquity to the present, schools of some form have, in one way or other, been involved in the material and symbolic reproduction of societies.[1] As David Reidy puts it, 'all or nearly all enduring liberal democracies have some form of compulsory education that directly or indirectly but almost always purposefully serves assimilationist ends' (Reidy 2001, p. 587). The diachronic resilience of schooling along with its synchronic omnipresence often makes schools appear as natural, self-evident and unavoidable. The naturalization of schooling is then extended to its modern specification as compulsory in a universalist fashion. Thus, schools appear not only naturally and self-evidently compulsory but also universally compulsory in multiple senses. Schooling has become compulsory in a numerical-universal sense (all children must attend school and all liberal states rely on compulsory schooling); in a temporal-universal sense (school attendance lasts for a fixed period of time for all children); in a comprehensive-universal sense (all children must acquire a common threshold of knowledge); and, more recently, in a synchronizing-universal sense (this occurs through supra-state synchronization of global educational time and globalized curricular isomorphism. Such synchronizing universalized practices establish, for instance, common tests for measuring achievement of all children and common standards for assessing school performance around the globe).

From Luther down to John Stuart Mill (Kleinig 1981) and John Dewey (Aviram 1986), compulsory education has been heralded either as an instrument of social

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[1] Schools for the children of the King and the aristocracy had been founded in Egypt as early as 2,500 BC. There is also evidence of the significance of schooling for the China of Confucius's times (circa fifth century BC). The first laws of compulsory education were set in the ancient Greek world by legislators such as Zaleucus (seventh century BC) (a law of compulsory education for all in the city Epizephyrioi Locroi is attributed to him) and Charondas (sixth century BC).

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coordination and individual well-being, or as a vehicle of democratization and progress, or as a means for protecting the rights of the young and of society, etc. In its function as a facilitator of social ends and mediator between the individual, the family, and the state, educational compulsority was channeled and materialized mainly through schooling. Schools have operated as politicized and, at times, even utopianized sites of educational experience, as society often projects its hopes for a better future and for its own transvaluation on a democratized, universal, and 'progressive' acculturation through schooling. Even when aspirations became gradually toned down to the effect that it is by now commonly held that schools are neither the exclusive loci of pedagogy nor the avant-garde of society; many theorists believe that 'compulsory attendance laws safeguard children's interests by ensuring an adequate level of education necessary for functioning in society and contributing to its economic stability' (Merry and Karsten 2010, p. 505).

But there have also been periods of challenge and denaturalization of compulsory education (e.g., radical criticisms of schooling in the 1960s and 1970s (Aviram 1986, p. 56)), producing a range of interesting and spirited debates not only on matters of educational legality but also on matters that boil down to broader philosophical questions about the self and the world. As John Kleinig described the tendency that derived from P. Goodman, I. Illich and J. Holt's writings, schooling was then seen as expressing and reproducing 'an oppressive and alienating culture'. To those thinkers, 'it was only because schooling' was 'identified with education in the public mind that its compulsory nature' escaped 'close scrutiny' (Kleinig 1981, p. 200). Surely, most theorists did not go as far as deschooling or other radical alternatives to the compulsory, liberal classroom. And some others saw such endeavors as 'largely emotional, often demagogical, and unsystematic' (Aviram 1986, p. 56). Still, many questioned the school system up to schools as such. They often did so from within the very paradigm of liberalism and its conception of freedom. For instance, as Peter Gardner put it back in 1984 in his discussion of John White's views, for many liberals the question was: 'under what circumstances are we justified in encroaching on children's freedom for the purpose of promoting learning?' (Gardner 1984, p. 182). Conversely, even in cases where the aims of education rather than compulsory education/curricula as such were at stake, questions about the philosophical paradigm, e.g., libertarianism or liberalism, within which schooling and its aims acquired their sense (White 1985), were suffusing debates in ways that set compulsority at stake or thematized and denaturalized it.

Many tensions arise when liberal school curricula are debated concerning the extent to which they infringe on liberty by recommending or determining a particular way of life (Gardner 1984; White 1985). And reservations have often been expressed about the exercise of paternalism (involved in compulsoriness) on grounds of its gender orientation and its connotations of male power (Williams 1990, p. 287). Tensions also mark the connection of the state's enabling role regarding liberty (Merry and Karsten 2010) with parental rights over their children's interests and the pluralism of educational choice. As things stand in liberal societies, Reidy remarks, compulsory education cannot avoid a confrontation with challenges that derive from reactions or responses to assimilationist social tendencies, and demands for more

pluralism in contemporary contexts. Thus, 'of the institutions constitutive of a just basic social structure, institutions of compulsory education more than any other must engage, manage, and mediate the tensions between citizens' public and nonpublic identities' (Reidy 2001, p. 587).

Hence, some of the questions that have been treated as intrinsically relevant to the whole issue of compulsory education are:

- Compulsion paternalism and utilitarianism in relation to education for all.
- Distinctions between compulsion and coercion.
- Distinctions between compulsory education and compulsory schooling.
- The content of schooling and compulsory curricula.
- Deschooling, homeschooling, and school choice.
- Conceptions of education as initiation.
- Conceptions of the school as *in loco parentis* institution.
- Ethical dilemmas concerning the justification of compulsion or of custodial views on education.
- Technologies of the self, governmentality, and schooling.
- Individual well-being, societal reproduction or transformation, and schooling.
- Philosophical anthropology (viz. issues of human nature), epistemology (views concerning knowledge acquisition, learning processes, and objectivity), political philosophy (e.g., issues of citizenship), and schooling.

Taking into account the lasting significance of older debates and the enrichment of them through theoretical material, argumentation over schooling, its character, and its scope can be recast in the light of recent philosophical educational debates. Amongst other things, such debates revolve around the following controversies: liberalism versus communitarianism; modernism versus postmodernism; education, autonomy, and the potential contradiction of attempting to secure autonomy through compulsory means. Other related controversies comprise the following focal points: faith schools, children's rights, and parental rights; formal–liberal conceptions of the good and their debatable free-standing character; biopower and biopolitics; and equity, eudaimonism and radical change versus performativity, standardization and marketization.

These debates can also enrich philosophical–educational discourses. Educational theorists may even have to rethink the coupling of autonomy with the promotion of compulsoriness—a coupling that has been treated as fundamental to liberal schooling (Schinkel 2010, p. 114). Failure adequately to mine such debates and couplings of priorities leads to a lack in philosophical–educational engagement with one of the most central pedagogical practices of the contemporary world, namely, the school. To remedy this lack, the book brings together work that addresses those connections through the highly original and innovative work of its contributors.

Philosophical Perspectives on Compulsory Education does not only seek to explore older debates in hindsight but also to connect the discussion of schooling with new theoretical developments and new emphases. The first part of the book operates primarily at the conceptual and justificatory level and invites a revisited notion of compulsoriness. The second part is more applied, and focuses on specific aspects of compulsory schooling and/or education.

Part One

As previously stated, much of what is at stake philosophically here boils down to how we interpret the self, humanity, and the world. Therefore, prior to delving into conceptual and theoretical quandaries regarding the compulsory character of education, some onto-anthropological approximations of what could count as education should be attempted. Volker Kraft (Chap. 2) investigates this onto-anthropological province by drawing on the idea of education as an operative mechanism and the distinction between what he terms 'pointing' and 'learning'. Kraft detects what he calls 'educational triangles' with which education must deal if it is justifiably expected to realize its potentials. In Kraft's approach, therefore, the notion of education must be rendered an onto-anthropological problem at a very profound and comprehensive level, before deciding on its status as compulsory or not.

Yet, much conceptual work is necessary if compulsory education is to be clearly distinguished from coercion and other objectionable instances of the connection between state-control, schooling, and uniformity. In this vein, if a clearer meaning of education as differentiated from schooling and the curriculum is to be asserted, further conceptual distinctions are in order. Robin Barrow (Chap. 3) takes up this conceptual challenge and offers a masterfully crafted analysis that untangles important theoretical knots presented by compulsory education. Briefly reconstructing the philosophical context of compulsory education from antiquity to the present, Barrow navigates through the straits of extreme individualization and the extreme universalization of schooling that should be resisted. He thus manages to put forward a conception of compulsory schooling for autonomy and civic responsibility that is original, thoughtful, and responsive to our conception of what should count as desirable education.

Like Barrow, Geoff Hinchliffe (Chap. 4) also emphasizes the importance of untangling philosophical and conceptual knots underlying the very justification of compulsory education, but he sets out from this to cover a different—yet, equally significant—theoretical ground. Hinchliffe formulates the outline of a theory of educational authority, based on liberty. He sets the stage for it: through original conceptual work on what the notion of 'republican liberty' means; and through argumentative work on the deeper implications of republican liberty for the justification of compulsory education. Against facile views, Hinchliffe provides an important insight about the political rather than exclusively educational discursive nature of educational authority. Seen through this prism, educational authority and by implication teacher authority appears inextricably linked with the public qualities and dimensions of both education and educators. The concomitant public intervention and role of education and the teacher, respectively are not just assumed but also expected to be properly thought out and performed.

Another facile view to combat is the one that assumes an unproblematic passage from theoretical conceptions of education-as-conversation to existing forms of schooling. Within the contemporary educational–theoretical context favoring democratic dialogue and communication, a central question about schooling should be:

is the theory of education-as-conversation reconcilable with the practice of compulsion? If yes, on what conditions? In an incisive essay, that unpacks various dimensions of compulsion, Kevin Williams (Chap. 5) takes up precisely this challenge that schooling confronts and specifies the conditions on which a positive response to the above question could be given. Despite its centrality, such a question has not yet been discussed; by shifting attention to it and formulating a proper response to it, Williams opens a valuable, new path in the relevant educational discourse.

Whilst the philosophy and theory of education have explored possibilities for a reconceptualization and reformulation of compulsory schooling, some of which have been indicated above, a more general tendency to see compulsory education as initiation and then to couple it with a privileged sense of commonality persists. Naoko Saito (Chap. 6) examines the repercussions of this for the relation of education to freedom and convincingly argues that a dichotomous treatment of these notions is undesirable. She engagingly draws from Standish, Emerson and Thoreau a conception of subjectivity, translation and the uncommon that can help us reconfigure the idea of compulsory education with an eye to human perfectibility and by employing the example of language education. Hers is an approach that offers compulsory education a new justificatory framework through preconditions such as receptivity of otherness and redemption of the uncommon within the common of the idea of compulsoriness.

The question of the preconditions for a justification of compulsory schooling is tackled from another angle in Anders Schinkel's contribution (Chap. 7). Here the emphasis is on the significance of context. Since the book has, so far, proceeded through conceptual and theoretical dilemmas, it is now crucial to turn to, and accommodate, some clearly-stated sensitivity to historical circumstance. Not that what preceded this chapter ignored the contextual; but, now the contextual becomes more thematized and spelled out as a theoretical precondition in its own right regarding the acceptability of the compulsory. Schinkel raises some apposite presuppositions of situatedness with regard to the issue of endorsing or rejecting compulsory schooling. He argues that a pragmatic outlook on the compulsory, wards off the risks of making sweeping or abstract generalizations and secures the appropriate connection (one that is, typically though regrettably, missing in most relevant discourse) between the specific aim of education and the type of education (compulsory or not) that effects it. His emphasis on the particular and situated concludes the more general, theoretical part of the book and eases the passage to the more practice- or case-oriented part.

Part Two

General theoretical issues surrounding compulsory education are often tested through more concrete aspects of schooling, some of which have a specific origin in, or particular bearing on, the current socio-political conditions of schooling.

A philosophical–educational intervention in the topic of compulsory education that aspires to be sensitive to context has to take into account how the latter presents theory with particular, distinct, and practical challenges. Historical, provocative contexts provide the socio-political conditions of schooling in ways that are often dominated by tendencies demarcating the very self-understanding of societies that seek education. David Blacker (Chap. 8) considers neoliberalism such a dominant tendency and articulates a spirited and fascinating critique of it. Concretizing the more general claim that philosophy unleashes the pure discontent with 'what is' for the sake of 'what should be,' Blacker utilizes his critical energies precisely for unmasking the double, Janus-faced historical operations of compulsory education. Hence, compulsory education is presented in its practical effects as both disabling and enabling, though the latter potential seems, in Blacker's view, to be currently at grave risk due to the sway of neoliberalism. Argumentation is finally explored as an antidote to the nihilism that the standard 'neoliberalized' conception of compulsory education promotes.

Aharon Aviram (Chap. 9) also focuses on the context of compulsory schooling, but his priority is the mapping of the historical course and the systemic sedimentation of the compulsory that singles out the main layers on which compulsory schooling has relied. Aviram discusses the 'modernism versus postmodernism' divide as a temporal framework that assists us in understanding and explaining current phenomena or educational dilemmas related to, or bearing upon, the compulsory. In ways that both converge with and depart from Blacker's critique of the neoliberal society (thus, covering a different but equally important ground), Aviram detects the societal and educational dysfunctions that have led compulsory schooling into disrepute or even into failure. By reference to major historical instances of educational redirection, Aviram offers his own account of reinventing compulsory education which is sensitive though critical to the context and the new givens of the postmodern era.

Specific educational dilemmas that seem, at first sight, not to be intrinsically related to compulsory education connect to it, nevertheless, at a deeper level. Such is, for instance, the dilemma associated with faith schools, as Kevin Williams (Chap. 10) so pertinently shows. *In loco parentis* conceptions of compulsory schooling should respond to issues of children's rights that crop up when the extent of harkening to children's own appraisal of a faith school must be decided. Williams sets some preconditions for staving off dangers associated with compulsoriness and faith schools—preconditions that, by being specifications of the broader conditions on which the theoretical acceptance of compulsoriness and education-as-conversation is effected (see Chap. 5), ease the passage from the theoretical to the practical.

Helen Lees (Chap. 11) explores dilemmas of children and parents' rights as posed by compulsory educational realities but from a perspective that has a comparative-educational touch while also considering alternative educational worlds. If compulsory education in its various state-controlled instantiations stands accused of violating human rights and even of normalizing physical violence, is branding it 'ridiculous' a quick solution to the whole problem? Lees seems to avoid a direct answer to this by resorting to a contextualized approach, one that may be seen as a more practice-oriented illustration of the theoretical point that Schinkel makes in

Chap. 7. Commenting on empirical observations related to the complex student and parental reception of compulsority, depending on the country, Lees's chapter covers the ground that concerns legal measures. It views the latter as a crucial factor in appraisals of compulsory education and of the approval or discontent that it causes among some of those affected by it, namely, students and parents whose rights are thus, put centre stage.

Another instance of conflict between parental (and student) choice and practices of compulsory education is homework and its effects on young students' handling of time. Compulsory education would be impotent if it were not based on specific, universalized, and standardized practices that materialize it as an actual and dominant reality. Chief among them is the practice of homework whose largely unquestioned character should not obscure the real problems that it causes when it comes to parental and student-lived time. In an era that emphasizes so much of the time that is invested on achievement and makes compulsory school (and its practices, e.g., homework) the corresponding vehicle to success, Andrew Davis (Chap. 12) raises the philosophical questions that drive criticisms of the above realities home. In his essay, which sheds valuable light on a specific and rather under-theorized aspect of compulsory educational practice, namely, the homework, empirical research investigating the expendability of some kinds of homework is scrutinized on grounds of Davis's important philosophical theory of educational values.

The subtext in all contributions is a vision of educational transformation in one way or other. All chapters (from the most theoretical to the most practice-related) promote a version of a recast or redirected compulsory schooling. Hence, it is important to complete this book with an exploration of the notion of educational transformation as such. Amrita Zahir (Chap. 13) undertakes this task and reconstructs the current and varying contexts within which several conceptions of educational transformation acquire their meaning or become the aspired objective of educational theory and practice. The richness of the idea of transformation and its significance for educational reforms may be unveiled, Zahir argues, by examining the relationship of the concept of transformation in general with that which exists at a given time and location. The tension between the ideal and the real, the standard and general in need of either preservation or modification or, perhaps, abandonment constitutes the province of utopian thought to which education always pays its credentials in a 'more or less' manner.

The volume ends with a Coda by Paul Gibbs who suggested the edition of this book to me in the first place. His sensibilities and enthusiasm about this project have been a constant encouragement for me and I thank him once again about his guidance and support.

I would like to conclude this introduction by reminding the reader an etymological point that tends to be forgotten now that the normalization and naturalization that the centuries of schooling and its globalization have imbued our everydayness. 'Schools' and 'schooling' come from 'scholē', the Greek word for 'leisure', for the kind of break with invested time (e.g., the time of work) that makes possible a thought free from the trials and obligations of daily life, from the pressures of neoliberal performativity and measurability, and from the urgency of decision-making. In forgetting this we also

tend to forget that a familiarity with schools from so early in our life and a performance of scholarly tasks or of our teaching in schools and departments (always at risk of routinization) glosses over the ramifications of the 'time for thought' (rather than merely of action) sense of schooling associated with the root word scholē. Schooling, then, entails a problematization of the apparently unproblematic, of whatever seems perfectly natural, and the preparation of thought for those pauses that raise questions about seemingly indubitable realities. Perhaps the pause for thought presupposed by a book that problematizes compulsory education may constitute a small rupture of the smooth flow of routinely performed schooling and scholarly practices. I hope that this book fulfills precisely this possibility.

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Part I
The General, Theoretical Challenges

Constants of Education

Volker Kraft

In recent years, we have been treated regularly to the so-called "Generation Barometer", a representative study carried out with the aim of showing up changes in the pedagogical climate in Germany. In spring 2009, the barometer pointed to "profound changes in the parent–child relationship", with children today receiving considerably more attention and encouragement than in the past, more respect as autonomous personalities, and greater freedom and latitude. Not only had the style of parenting changed, parental aims had seemingly changed as well. When parents of children under 16 were asked what their children should learn, the answer was self-worth and self-confidence first, followed by the elaboration of innate abilities, assertiveness and intellectual curiosity, the honest manifestation of feelings, courage, and strength of will. The converse of this pedagogical weather report has industriousness, social conformity, modesty, and religious orientation on the wane (cf. Forum Familie Stark Machen 2009). Everyday observation confirms this intuitively, what with the deep-seated determination that our children should have it better than we did making parenting an intergenerational compensation mechanism and me-first attitude generator.

Tempting as it is to dwell on the various findings of such studies and comment on them in terms of pedagogical invariables—that is not my real intent here, or only peripherally. My title suggests a different perspective. Inquiry into the "constants in education" implies taking education as a form and as an autonomous operative mechanism. With the popular media impressing upon us the unreasonable demands of our little "tyrants in tennis shoes" and singing the praises of old-fashioned discipline, my perspective may seem sober and unspectacular. However, cooling media fever is perhaps not the worst thing scholarly consideration can do.

The following deliberations are subdivided into two parts. First, using graphic representations, I shall try to illustrate how education works as a form and as an operative mechanism. In a second step, I shall elaborate on five preconditions for its success.

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Education as Form and Operative Mechanism

If I wanted to use a different heading for the following remarks, "the Bermuda Triangle of education" would not be bad. Like ships and planes between Bermuda, Florida and Puerto Rico, education seems to disappear mysteriously in the triangles I am about to discuss. My theoretical deliberations must try to bring it back.

The Evolutionary Triangle of Education

The first triangle gives us the big picture. In a quasi-Darwinian sense, education can be seen as a kind of evolutionary flexible response (cf. Treml 2004) interconnecting three great magnitudes: nature, human consciousness, and culture and society.
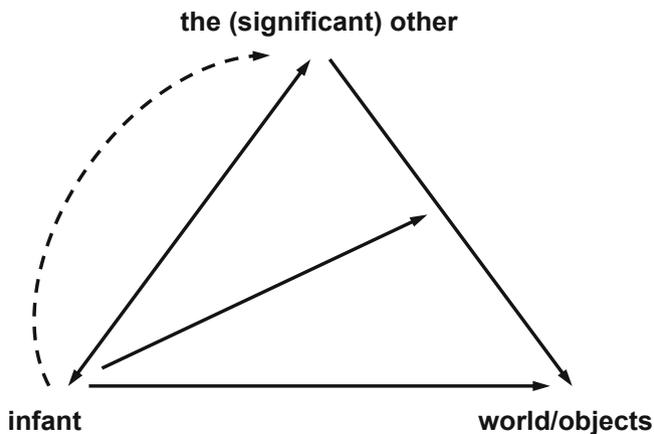
Education cannot be reduced to any one of these three magnitudes but binds them together in a triad. Only in this way can two problems be dealt with as the unity of their difference, namely the problem of origin, of reproduction, the birth problem, so to speak, and the problem of the past, of tradition and conservation, what might be called collective memory. Education thus stands for conservation and change, and variety and redundance. Its true function consists of providing both simultaneously: conservation *and* change.

Here we discover—a consoling thought—that education must always also misfire a bit, for it is in the nature of education to fall short of the hopes placed in it and disappoint expectations (cf. Winkler 2006, pp. 59 et seq.; see also Kraft 2009b). Whenever education is coupled exclusively with only one or even two of the three magnitudes, the result is malfunction or stagnation. This can be observed in closed educational systems stressing, say, individual consciousness and society. Development comes to a standstill and sooner or later, after profound upheavals, the triangle reconstitutes itself.

The Ontogenetic Triangle of Education

The second triangle proceeds from research by contemporary cultural-anthropology-minded developmental psychologists such as Michael Tomasello (2002, 2009). The perspective here is a different one, not phylogenesis, the development of the whole line of descent, but ontogenesis, the development of the individual.

Of special importance here is a phenomenon which is sometimes called the "nine-month revolution". A triangle of a very different kind is constituted between age 9 months and age 13–15 months. In this space of time, the mode of communication is transformed fundamentally—no longer dyadic, it assumes a triadic configuration. This so-called "joint attention" developmental complex usually transverses three stages: it begins with the child confirming attention ("We both look at the same thing"), proceeds to the child following attention ("I look at what you look at") and culminates in the child directing attention ("You look at what I look at"). This constitutes a referential triangle of child, adult, and object of attention. The third stage marks the onset of the deictic gestures with which small children point to an object or hold it up trying to direct the attention of adults to it. Three stick figure drawings illustrate what I mean (cf. Tomasello 2002, p. 81):
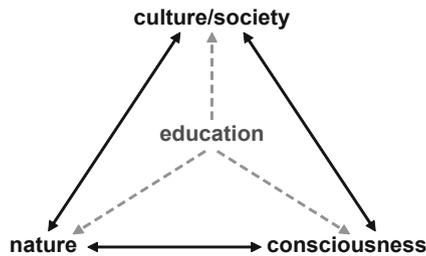
This developmental complex has to do with the fact that children, at this age, begin to conceive of themselves as intentionally active individuals and extrapolate from this basis to others, thus gaining additional insight into how these "others" tick. Since, as is generally accepted, even infants assume that "other persons are similar to me", every new insight into the child's own activity leads directly to a new understanding of the activity of others. Perception, and this is the decisive point, is directly connected with intentions, which is seen most clearly in pointing to something. Pointing to something combines self-referentiality and outside referentiality with object referentiality: someone shows somebody something. In other words, triangulation is the fundamental mechanism by which we explore the world from earliest childhood: we focus on a third thing from two different perspectives.

In his highly instructive book *Exploring the Origins of Thinking*, the English psychoanalyst and autism researcher Peter Hobson (2003), more so than Tomasello, devotes special attention to the inner processes necessary to this triangulation.

Hobson speaks of the irresistible pull of identification which draws the baby to adult consciousness and thence to various perspectives on objects in the world. Hence, adult attitudes, feelings, and emotions take on such immense, literally "fundamental" significance. This is also the locus of what distinguishes human behavior from the behavior of primates. For primates, the fellow primate is only a signpost stimulus, so to speak, on the path to the object, a way station, an interesting surface phenomenon. But there is no developmental dynamic involved, and primates can learn nothing about the relationship between consciousness and the outer world. Their inner world is closed off from their fellows, terra incognita (cf. Tomasello 2008). For this reason, one might add, primates have no teachers, no schools, and no parental wish that the young learn something in particular in a particular way.

The triangle that results from the "nine-month revolution", which I will call a developmental-psychological triangle, looks like this (cf. Hobson 2003, p. 249):
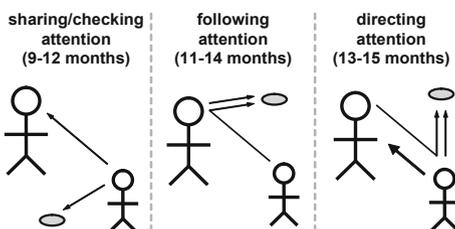
What do we see? In joint attention mode, the child is in direct contact with three aspects: the child is occupied with an object in the world and is in emotional touch with another, an individual who is likewise occupied with the object. This is exactly what the child observes, the occupation of the other with the same object (represented as the line bisecting the triangle). The two object relationships may differ. For example, the child may be suspicious of the object but observes that the other, perhaps the child's mother, is smiling in amusement. Through identification (the dotted line) with the inner world of the other and the realization that the other's attitude towards the object is a different one, the child is enabled to assume that attitude can revise and refashion his own relationship to the object.

The Didactic Triangle and the Form of Education

Why have we taken this detour into developmental psychology? The answer brings us to a third triangle. As I hope to show, individual development also gives us the blueprint for education. We only need to flip-flop two positions in order to transform the developmental-psychological triangle into a pedagogical, or didactic, triangle:

te   = teacher
p   = pupil
to   = topic
←——→   = interest
⇒   = action/instruction
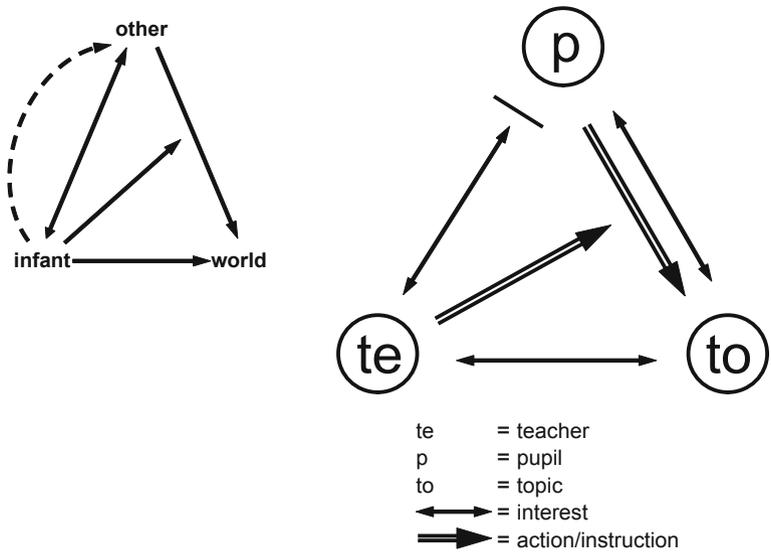
On the left, we have the developmental-psychological triangle and on the right, the didactic triangle (after Wolfgang Sünkel 1996, p. 64). The pupil (p) is interested, we hope, in an object/subject/topic (to) in which the teacher (te) is also interested (joined attention). Analogously to the child and the other, the teacher's observations and interventions, i.e., instruction, act on the pupil's active interest in the subject. By "transference" as articulated by showing and telling on the part of the teacher, the pupil's relationship to the subject changes to resemble that of the teacher.

In both triangles, a bisecting arrow points to the relationship between the infant/teacher and the interest of the other (pupil) in an object (subject). In the didactic triangle, however, this is a double line rendering the fact that a professional pedagogical operation is at work, whereas the single line in the developmental-psychological triangle indicates an intuitive process which becomes clearer and more methodical only in the course of further development. We also note in the didactic triangle that the line connecting teacher and pupil does not fully connect at the pupil end, showing that in institutional education, the pedagogical professional, unlike the family member, is not primarily interested in the pupil as a person but as a learner.

When we teach children, what we are doing is basically the same thing as what they do themselves at a crucial stage of their cognitive development. The pedagogical form is thus an elaboration of this early prelingual development experience, which is why the teaching situation is intuitively, unreflectedly familiar. In other words, being taught is not something we must learn later because it has the same form as the scheme by which we, with the help of others, initially embarked on understanding the world. Pedagogical activity is thus the continuation of this early intuitive deictic structure. Pointing and showing is inherent or implicit in all learning, and teachers manifest and utilize this formal component of the learning process to produce results.

Even as adults, when we learn new things as autodidacts, so to speak, we discover that showing and learning come together as when we were children. One is reminded of Heidegger: "Teaching is giving, presenting; but what is given or presented is not that which is to be learned but rather the directive to the pupil to take for himself what he already has. When the pupil simply takes what is given, he does not learn . . . True learning takes place only when the taking of what one already has is a *giving to oneself* and is experienced as such" (1975, p. 56). Our look at early development clearly shows, as Hegel put it (1986, p. 81), "children's innate striving for education", a *need*, then, inherent to us all, that underlies all education and is not to be frustrated lightly.

Education itself can be grasped as the unity of the difference between showing and learning: When we teach, something is shown; when we teach successfully, the learner is enabled to show what has been shown (cf. Prange 2005). The object shown is the knowledge of the world needed to conduct our lives independently and responsibly, including habits and skills, and knowledge and attitudes. Hence, showing takes several forms. It can be demonstrative, when the operation or working of something is shown, or representative, when models are used, or directive, when rules are presented, or reflexive, for example in discussions (cf. Prange and Strobel-Eisele 2006; Kraft 2009a, pp. 181 et seq.). However, showing and learning are very different operations which are not simply linearly connected. No direct path leads from good intentions to good results. Rather, the two processes, as in all communication, must be related and attuned to one another, synchronized, so as not to leave results to chance.

This is the task of articulation, which connects showing and learning in two important ways. On the one hand, the object to be shown must be broken down, dissected, and compartmentalized, which also produces a sequence of first this, then that, and finally the last thing. On the other hand, learning and showing must be brought close to one another, at least for a certain period. Perhaps I can put it like this: Pedagogical activity, like bridge-building, arches toward the learning consciousness, but the closing of the gap, the ultimate connection in consensual understanding, cannot be forced by the showing side. It must follow independently from the learning side. Learning, like loving, is fundamentally individual and cannot be delegated. Money cannot buy it. This is the crucial difference between pedagogy and technology and represents the inevitable structural insecurity in professions that seek to influence the behavior of others using communicative means (cf. Kraft 2009a, pp. 105 et seq.).

One crucial constant in education is thus found in the specific form underlying its operation, abstract but time-honored, which I offer here, the fourth and last triangle, as a kind of interim conclusion (cf. Prange 2005, p. 55). As we see, the form of education proceeds from the connection between child, teacher, and theme or topic:

topic
(causa finalis)

form
(causa formalis)

child   **eductor**
(causa materialis)   **(causa efficiens)**
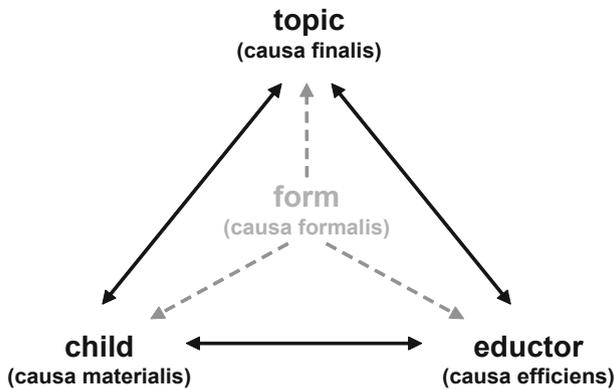
We cannot help but be alienated by the one or the other unattractive assumption in our triangle. The child, for example, appears as the medium of education (cf. Luhmann 1991) or, even less appealing, as the raw material with which education fulfills its functions. The teacher, on the other hand, is the prime mover, the bearer of knowledge and normative demands as well as the risk factor hovering over education. Where do the themes and topics come from, and who decides which are worthy and which are not? If we call to mind the influence on modern digital childhood of the new media, our triangle begins to lose shape. One might also ask how pedagogical activity differs from psychotherapeutic treatment. In psychotherapy, the triangle collapses in that the theme or topic under discussion wanders down to the position of the child or patient, psychological pathologies being problems that the mind has with itself. Thus, the fundamental form of psychotherapy is dyadic. However, these are deliberations that would take us beyond our bounds here.

As promised, I will now proceed in a second step to point out some of the most important preconditions of the operative mechanism of education.

Body, Emotion, Time, Space, and Socio-Structural Situation

There are five important preconditions, somewhat like concentric circles, for us to look at: body, emotion, time, space, and socio-structural situation.

The first precondition is almost self-evident and need only be mentioned: The pedagogical triangle normally assumes the presence of an intact body, with biology also coming into play as the maturity and physical and mental development needed for learning ability.

The second precondition is basically a continuation of the first, with pedagogical operations assuming the presence of an emotional foundation on which to build (cf. Klika and Schubert 2004). This is true especially of education in the family context, whereby not only the importance of family bonds (cf. Karen 1998) is meant but also the more or less conscious intentions and expectations, wishes and dreams that move

people to have children. In a noteworthy interview on "Universals in Raising Children", Bronfenbrenner (1992, pp. 51 et seq.) stresses "the development of a highly charged irrational emotional bond to another human being" as the crucial prerequisite of good parenting: "Somebody has got to be crazy about the kid." Furthermore, it is of tremendous advantage if this "craziness" is grounded in social support structures, for example, involving a third person, preferably but not necessarily of the other sex, who can comment, compensate, help, criticize, and moderate by offering new perspectives and thus open up new latitude for action, someone who is simply there. Small wonder, then, that the two-parent family continues to be seen as the crucial context for the child's socialization. Quoth Bronfenbrenner once more, it is "hard, hard work being all alone with a child" (Bronfenbrenner 1992).

The third elementary precondition on our list of the constants in education is often overlooked: time! There is, I would posit, a unique time quality in education, pedagogical time, so to speak, the significance of which makes itself felt in various ways. No one knows better than teachers that learning, the build-up of mental structures and the development of insights, takes time—so much so that one is reminded of Gorbachev's proverbial (in Germany) admonition that life punishes those who come too late, i.e., in our case, who need too much time or go the long way. And then there is the often-made observation that what Johnny does not learn John never learns, i.e., that certain learning tasks are best and most easily tackled at certain auspicious times in life, on time, so to speak. Not to forget the problem that arises trying to bring parent time and child time into sync, beginning early in the morning when the alarm goes off and continuing all day long. The time problem can be more clearly grasped in the light of recent sociological theory, for example Hartmut Rosa's impressive study on "acceleration" (2005) in which he looks at the "changes in the time structures in the modern world". Modern society, Rosa finds, is an "accelerated society" characterized by a structural and cultural mélange of "technological acceleration" and "increased living speed resulting from greater scarcity of time resources".

Time passes more slowly at school, because work there is subject to certain "anthropological speed limits" (Rosa 2005, p. 139) that are set by maturation, development, and learning. Education must insist on "deceleration". Educational processes resist acceleration. Other systems may tend toward acceleration, but pedagogical processes and institutions remain "islands of deceleration" in the torrent of modern life (Rosa 2005, p. 143). This is not a new insight in the history of our discipline. Rousseau (cf. Kraft 1997) knew it already. We read in *Emile*, for example, that in education one must always lose time in order to gain it—selective deceleration as an acceleration strategy, we call that nowadays.

The idea of a unique "education time" in which the dynamic of cultural and societal developments is pedagogically slowed down and methodically extended and stretched leads us to the fourth constant: Education demands not only its own time but also its own spaces in time and loci in which it is organized and institutionalized. Institutionalization here can be understood in Gehlen's sense as a "cultural prosthesis" where something which is not present in nature, or only insufficiently present, is placed on safe footing and taken out of the realm of chance. Education as a social function cannot, like most other interactions, stop just any old where and start up

again later. Learning implies duration and thus its own spaces, implies organizations that serve no other purpose.

Historically, over the centuries, education has become increasingly exclusively organized, a process that has taken place in connection with compulsory education. School is not life, as the Latins knew, but going to school is not something that is left to the discretion of the pupil, or his parents. Different societies have approached the organization of education in different ways. Closed systems such as the former East Germany have solved the problem differently than open societies. The inherent logic of organizations can distort or falsify the purpose for which they were founded, or miss it altogether. It is not easy to change such organizations either, as we have seen in the ongoing debate on school forms and preschool offerings in this country. The stage of economic development of a society, of course, is important too. In some countries of the Third World, parents of education-hungry children must out-and-out hide their offspring from school, not because they see no value in education but because children are indispensable as labor. The exclusive organization of education is thus by no means a matter of course, as obvious as it may seem to us here.

This brings us to the fifth and last prerequisite and constant. The pedagogical triangle is always embedded in a sociostructural situation. I shall discuss this final aspect in two dimensions, the material dimension and the normative dimension.

It goes without saying that the material dimension has huge influence on education. German government reports and, for example, the 2007 UNICEF study on "Child Poverty in Rich Nations" show that relatively small deficits in material resources can have a disproportionately negative effect on the course of an individual's life and lead to increasingly constrictive social exclusion. Two variables are of particular importance here, the degree of integration in the job market and the realized or realizable individual educational level. The effect of these two factors on the actual life of children is shown by the first World Vision study of children (2007) and the more recent study of child poverty by the University of Bielefeld, the latter using qualitative methods that show how material poverty manifests itself in the subjective experience of children (cf. Andresen and Fegter 2009). However, whatever research one consults, educational level, educational participation, and parental educational aspirations are clearly the crucial variables. We know, for example, that an increase in reading proficiency in elementary school by as little as a single standard deviation increases the likelihood of the child's gaining entry to 'Gymnasium' by more than 10 %. We also know that poor educational background and low household income as manifested in family attitudes towards education drastically reduce the likelihood of the child's taking advantage of early intervention and other preschool education and childcare offerings (cf. Rossbach and Blossfeld 2009).

To be sure, more money alone does not seem to be the key to greater fairness and efficiency in the educational system. Empirical studies using the so-called life-cycle perspective (Wössmann 2008) show that it is crucial to invest money in the right area at the right moment. In Germany, compared to other European countries, investment of public money is relatively greater in later education than in early education. In other words, Germany spends too much money at levels where education cannot effectively redress social inequalities and too little money at levels where it can.

The sociostructural framework manifests itself not only in material terms but also normatively. Education is unthinkable without normative demands. "What does the older generation expect of the younger?" Schleiermacher asked in his famous lecture in 1826. This is a question which cannot be answered purely on the basis of the pedagogical triangle. Instead, the larger social power structure, whether teachers like it or not, provides answers in powerful ways: implicitly in thought patterns and mentalities that run through everyday life (for example as to whether young people should give older people their seats on the bus), explicitly in the legal framework of education, and in public discourse on educational questions. What is taught and learnt at school must be buttressed by and linked to what goes on around us. It is connected with a kind of protopedagogical forestructure (cf. Winkler 2006, pp. 143 et seq.), an implicit concept of what is proper educated behavior, an implicit consensus on how children and adolescents are to be dealt with and on the norms and rules that govern such dealings. Education can never be "better" than the world it is a part of.

In premodern social structures, daily social intercourse sufficed to anchor proper behavior; it did not have to be taught explicitly. This has changed completely. Social modernization processes have increasingly made a problem of both parenting and education, whereby, according to postmodernist cultural criticism (cf. Winkler 2006, pp. 181 et seq.), the effects of three developments intensify one another: the exponentially increasing dynamism of social change, the subversion of the national welfare state by global capitalism, and the reduced cohesion of cultural patterns by mass-media dilution and ephemeralization. The structure of public space has changed profoundly, with not only the major narratives seeming to disappear but also the many smaller and greater borderlines so important for parenting and education being effaced, causing normative orientations seemingly to melt away. With all social spheres in the grip of "disembedding", a multitude of individualization mechanisms are triggered. As media-based learning becomes universalized, pedagogical activities lose their legitimation and self-education becomes the norm.

To be sure, cultural criticism has been a fixture in our inventory almost from the beginning of the history of education. The pedagogical mind has a predilection for taking a stand against social conditions it sees as detrimental to education; it invents alternative worlds or pedagogical "provinces", even states. However, there is no escaping society as it is. Criticism of late-modern social structures is not primarily a moral challenge to pedagogical thinking but rather an operative challenge. Increasingly, social structures pressure education to perform. This does not place limitations so much on pedagogical mechanisms as on the way we think about them, our pedagogical illusions. Empirical studies show this: Education and parenting are increasingly experienced as hard work, with parents decrying the lack of social recognition for their efforts (cf. Forum Familie Stark Machen 2009).

The educational system is only an instrument in the conductorless orchestra of modern functional society. But of course it is expected to play on key. This is the final and perhaps ultimate constant in education.

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Compulsory Common Schooling and Individual Difference

Robin Barrow

The argument for a common schooling, in the sense and with limits outlined, is that there are some things that all should know and understand, should be able to do and should enact; social cohesion and harmony are partially dependent on a common outlook and a set of reference points. But there are also some understandings that are necessary to developing one's autonomy. The object of a common schooling is thus, both to make individuals "fit for purpose" as citizens and to develop their autonomy and individuality.

Introduction

The provision of education for all by the state is a relatively recent phenomenon. The idea that all children might be entitled to the same, or at least a similar education is even more unusual in historical terms. Through most of recorded history, the education of children has been the concern of their parents, much of the time not even regarded as an obligation or responsibility on their part. It has not been regarded as compulsory, it has not been publicly funded, there have been few formal schools (as distinct from governesses, individual tutors and the like) and it has tended to be a matter of more interest to the well-to-do than to the poor. An exception to this generalization has been the attention paid by particular interest groups, most notably religious organisations, in conveying and spreading their view of the world as widely as possible. Nonetheless it remains true that for the most part the notion of providing education on a large scale, let alone of the state providing a common education for all, has seldom been seriously entertained.

Yet today, at any rate in so-called advanced democratic societies, it is widely taken for granted that the state ought to ensure that all children receive a good education (access to education, indeed, is often cited as a criterion in estimating the quality of

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life in a given society). It is also generally assumed in such societies that the education should be provided free of charge to individuals, and there is a pervasive, though by no means universal, assumption that the education provided should be broadly speaking a common one and that the state's obligation should be matched by the individual's participation. In other words, somewhat in the manner of a carrot and a stick, while state provision of education is seen as an entitlement for the individual, taking advantage of that provision is seen as an obligation.

These introductory remarks, of course, already invite certain questions, which, if not particularly difficult to answer, are nonetheless important. In particular, what do we mean by "education" here? And is our concern—*should* our concern be whether the state is the provider of a common education or whether a common education is provided? Without providing a full analysis of the concept of education, which has been done many times before, I should make it clear that I am not referring simply to passing on basic social norms and life and trade skills, such as parents, guilds and the like, have always striven to do (and not without success). I am assuming that by "education" we mean developing a broad understanding across a range of worthwhile subject-matter, understanding which, though it may be indirectly if not directly related to such concerns as employment and good citizenship, also has a direct role to play in increasing the capacity of individuals to make sense of their world and to make informed choices in life[1]. In respect of the second question, I should make it clear here that I regard the questions of whether, on the one hand, all should have access to education and, on the other, whether it should be provided by the state as quite distinct; and each of those questions I regard as distinct from the two further questions of whether giving everybody equal access to education means providing the same curriculum in the sense of the same subject matter, and whether, if it does, it also means presenting that subject matter in the same form and manner. My answer to the first three questions will be affirmative, while to the fourth it will be negative.

Historical Background

It is interesting to note that while the practice of providing a common education for all is a recent phenomenon and while the idea of it could only be said to have become widely accepted in recent times, advocacy of such a view is as old as recorded thought. Plato clearly argued for a state system of compulsory education in the *Republic* (1955) and *Laws* (1960), though he did not advocate a common schooling for all. On the contrary, his view was that the state, in the form of wise overseers, should carefully observe the growing children and, marking broad differences between their perceived inclination towards what we might term academic, bureaucratic and vocational or

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[1] The definitive study of the concept of education remains that of Peters (1966). My own views on the concept are most fully explicated in Barrow (1981), and my views on the nature of conceptual analysis in Barrow (2010).

trade interests, separate them accordingly as time passed. It is debatable to what extent Plato believed that the individual is born with a certain immutable nature and to what extent he saw an individual's development as responsive to environmental factors, but it cannot reasonably be denied that he was aware of the importance of both nature (what we would now refer to as genetic factors) and nurture (environment)[2]. Thus, he clearly argues for a compulsory state education that begins as a common education before branching off into distinct branches.

Aristotle likewise took it for granted that the state should control schooling and he, unlike Plato, explicitly claimed that education should be the same for all, his argument being that education is a process of moulding the individual to suit the "form of government" or, as we might say, to meet the values, understandings and expectations of one's society, and, "since the whole city has one end, it is manifest that education should be one and the same for all, and that it should be public and not private—not as at present, when everyone looks after his own children separately and gives them separate instruction of the sort which he thinks best; the training of things which are in the common interest should be the same for all." (*Politics* 1337.21. ff. (1962) But see further below). Not surprisingly he goes on to praise Sparta, a state that with its rigid system of state supervised upbringing proves the exception to the historical rule I have referred to.

But, however convinced these two thinkers may have been, their assumptions were not in any widespread or serious way shared by their fellow citizens. While Aristotle tutored Alexander the Great and a few of his close associates, there is no reason to suppose that the Macedonians in general received any kind of formal education, let alone at the hands of the state (or Royal Family). And while Plato and Aristotle both "taught" and headed "schools" for young adults, the Athenians for the most part received no formal education, and those who did received it at the hands of schoolmasters (often slaves) who were poorly paid, little respected and taught them little more than basic skills of reading, writing, number and musical performance.

Not only there has been an absence of state provision of education throughout most of our history, notwithstanding the arguments of such as Plato, but also there have always been a few who actively argued against and opposed the idea of state provision. Some, such as Rousseau, were not in fact explicitly opposed to education for all, and while certainly sceptical of the state, meaning here the ruling faction, he might nonetheless have been willing theoretically to accept the idea of state responsibility in some form. But with his conviction that the individual should learn from nature and by experience, and, furthermore, learn on an individual basis, Rousseau is clearly not to be counted as one who would support a state system or a common curriculum in any meaningful sense. Similarly, while A. S. Neill, Bertrand Russell and John Dewey clearly would have approved of providing educational opportunities to all children, they can hardly be seen as supporters of the notion of a common compulsory schooling being provided by the state. Others, who likewise may well have supported

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[2] A strongly critical view of Plato, suggesting that he believed in a naive theory of heredity is to be found in Popper (1966). My criticism of that view is to be found in Barrow (1975) and Barrow (2008).

the idea of education for all but who cannot reasonably be seen as supportive of a state system of compulsory common schooling, would include those such as Ivan Illich who regarded the very institutionalization of education as objectionable[3].

There are also a number of parents who choose to "home school" their children, which, whatever the individual reasons they may have for this decision in each case, presumably means that they do not see the value of a common system of schooling, at any rate for their own children. Finally, we should remember the independent sector and, in particular, the large number of "faith schools" of one kind or another. While one can no doubt reconcile the existence of private schools with support for a state system, ultimately a discussion of a compulsory common schooling needs to make some comment on them.

Contemporary Concerns

Today, concerns about the idea of a common compulsory schooling would surely include: the possibility that it infringes on individual freedom (or, as it would commonly be put, on the rights of parents and/or children), the argument that while not a bad idea in theory it is "failing" in practice, and the view that a common schooling leads to a uniformity, which, some might add, inhibits the development of a creative, critical, entrepreneurial spirit that is badly needed.

On the first point, some would simply argue that in the name of freedom a parent or perhaps a child should be able to choose the provider and the type of education that they want (which is presumably part of the thinking behind recent developments in England and Wales such as the rise of Academies). Others, notably some Republicans in the USA, seem to fear state control on the grounds that it is currently too liberal: parents need to remove their children from a godless state system that talks about evolution and the like. On the second point, the media are prone to seize upon a variety of indicators, ranging from poor results on international standardized tests, alleged dumbing down of standards in national credentials and even social problems such as the kind of rioting and looting that recently broke out in both the UK and Canada (for quite different proximate causes). On the third point, I would suggest that if schooling is to blame in any way for a nation falling behind in economic terms it is to do with ill-conceived ideas about how to develop "creativity", "critical thought" and the like, rather than anything to do with having a common state system of schooling.

But the big problem, if not the one most often recognized or talked about, is surely that the "good" for the individual and the "good" for society that thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle were confident would best be served by a state system, is itself now contested. Plato and Aristotle assumed a common system would serve the good because they assumed more or less that what was good would be clear and agreed

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[3] See Rousseau (1972), Dewey (1973), Illich (1971), Neill (1961). See also Barrow (1978), which contains critiques of each of these theorists.

to by all. What the various types of opposition to a common schooling all imply is that this is not so. Citizens of any given so-called "Western liberal democracy" have different, often radically different, ideas of the good, and that is why some have quite different ideas of what schooling should involve and hence object to a common system, the more so, if it involves a compulsory common curriculum. My response to this in what follows is to argue that it is precisely because there are different and competing ideas of the good that we need a common schooling; for, given the diversity of values that is to be found we need to equip each individual to make sound and informed choices when making their own decisions. We need, in short, to develop their autonomy, which implies not simply making one's own decisions, but being genuinely in control of oneself and one's future. I am truly autonomous only if I govern myself in accordance with my true ultimate wishes and interests and with a true awareness of the options potentially open to me.

A Compulsory State System

I am arguing, then, in the first instance for a compulsory state system of education. This is to say that the state should make educational provision available for all, and that every individual should be obligated to enter into education. It does not necessarily mean that the individual has to enter the state system. To some, the issue of independent schools is of great concern. In general, they are thought to advantage the well-off and to be socially divisive; in particular faith schools are sometimes criticised because of fears about what they teach and the possibility of indoctrination. But provided that the schools in question provide a good education (and do not, for example, indoctrinate), it is difficult to see why we should be particularly concerned about their existence, if we are assuming the continued existence of the state in its present form, including, for example, differences in wealth, a fair degree of freedom to spend one's money as one chooses, and consequently a great variety of differing life chances and choices.

Of course, if one repudiates this society and is committed to, let us say, a more Marxist vision, then one would want to sweep away private schools, but only as part of a broader sweeping away of difference. In our society as it is, there is surely no more reason to stop the wealthy spending their money on schooling than to stop them spending it on libraries, foreign travel or a number of other things that might contribute to one's education.

Similarly, while it can hardly be denied that the independent sector is divisive in the sense that it maintains a division between those whose wealth allows them to experience it and others, it is hard to believe that the abolition of such schools would make much difference to the overall problem of social difference and divisiveness. There is, perhaps, some plausibility in the argument that while the rich and (presumed to be) influential stay outside the state system it will not receive the full attention and support it needs. But as against that, many independent schools provide a very good education, many excellent teachers who teach in them would not choose to teach in

the state system, and, being severely practical, it is economically beneficial to the whole that the wealthy should pay for the education of their children rather than add the cost of their tuition to the public purse. But in any case, the issue of independent schools in a free and democratic society seems to me to be quite distinct from the argument about whether and in what sense a common schooling should be available to all.

"Compulsion" is an emotive word, and for most people it is essentially pejorative; yet, many things that may be unwelcome in themselves, from surgery to taking exercise, from breaking a promise to hurting somebody's feelings, may nonetheless be justified, even necessary, on occasion. And so it surely is with compulsion. It is also undeniable that compulsion implies enforcement of some kind. I am not "compelled" to do something if no kind of penalty befalls me, if I don't do it. But we do not have to accept that there are necessary connotations of coercion, dragooning, physical force or other kinds of intrinsically unpleasant enforcement or indeed that the fact of compulsion necessarily implies something unwelcome. Many things are compulsory that do not irk us, such as having to drive on one side of the road.

Schooling, Education and Curriculum

The more important questions are how we are to understand the terms "schooling", "education" and "curriculum", and what, more precisely than so far stated, it is that we think should be both compulsory and common to all.

"Schooling" I take to be a broad term encompassing all that children may learn while attending school, including but by no means confined to education. By "education" I refer to the broad understanding that constitutes the development of the mind, which of course may be and generally is substantially acquired through schooling but does not have to be. By "curriculum" I mean the overtly planned program of study, what might also be called the "syllabus"; I do not include either the manner of presentation (i.e. organization of material and teaching methods) or the so-called "hidden curriculum" (i.e. those implicit lessons such as the virtues of punctuality or honesty which are conveyed while teaching the syllabus). I keep the notion of curriculum narrow and distinguishable from the hidden curriculum and teaching style purely for the sake of clarity and precision of argument: what is true of the syllabus may not be true of aspects of the hidden curriculum or have anything to do with teaching methods, while the manner in which we teach may have to be considered separately from whatever it is that we are attempting to convey.

It is important to note that, while these are prescriptive clarifications of my usage, I am not making the claim that this is "correct" usage. I am making explicit certain distinctions that obtain in fact between, first, the many things that children learn when at school ("schooling"), second, the ideal of an educated person ("education") and, third, what specifically one proposes to teach ("curriculum"), as well as the distinction between primary and overt content, such as, say, math, and implicit lessons, such as the consequences of hard work or the effects of playing the class-clown, whether the teacher is aware of them or not.

Of these, it is the attempt to provide an education that should be guaranteed to all (albeit, as will be elaborated later, different individuals will ultimately assuredly attain to different degrees of education). And the aim of providing all with equal access to education does not necessarily imply the same type of schooling, the same manner of teaching or presentation of material, though it does necessitate the same curriculum in the narrow sense. That is to say, all students should be given a similar opportunity to gain understanding of, say, math and history, though how either one is presented and taught might differ dramatically among different groups of students, i.e a common curriculum, but not necessarily a common approach to teaching or a comprehensive or common classroom. Thus variety and individualism are written into the idea of a common education as I understand it.

Exceptions and Qualifications

It must also surely be agreed that there will always be some exceptions: we are proposing an ideal policy here, but there will in practice always be some individuals who are exceptionally situated with regard to mental, physical or behavioural considerations that may require special provision. More needs to be said on this later, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that my argument does not entail the conclusion that the entire system from kindergarten to post-secondary institutions should be common or uniform.

There is also the question of for how long this common education should continue. So, more specifically, the suggestion I am putting forward is that, allowing for some exceptions, the expectation is that all children shall be provided with a common curriculum until the age of 16. The age stipulated is inevitably debatable though not necessarily or for that reason arbitrary. We know from the experience of the UK tripartite system that, whatever its merits (and I am trying to recognize and retain its many benefits), there was widespread concern, first that the age of 11 was too early and second that although in theory the system allowed movement of back and forth between grammar, secondary or technical schools, in practice most people's future was determined by the 11 plus examination, the particular form of which was itself also open to criticism. It seems altogether more reasonable to regard 16 or 17 as an age at which to make decisions about an individual's likely future interests and inclinations. One might reasonably say that would be even more true if we waited until the age of 20 or 21, but we face the practical need to make a decision that allows for further study and learning before the individual has to join the work force, and it is simply unrealistic to imagine that it can be postponed until people are 27 going on 30.

So the argument at this point is that the vast majority of children shall be obliged to attend school and pursue a common curriculum until the age of 16, though the manner in which the subject matter is organized and taught, need not be uniform; indeed, it should ideally be tempered in relation to the particular strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers, differing physical environments and of course, within reason, the

individuality of students. Implicit in what has been said is the assumption that whether there should be a range of types of school or a strictly comprehensive approach is an entirely distinct and, I venture to suggest, relatively insignificant question. There are familiar arguments for the comprehensive school to do with social experience that are certainly valid as far as they go; but the first matter to decide is how best to provide education and it may well be that different kinds of school are appropriate to different people (including for example the possibility of boarding for some). However, I am neither going to argue for any particular system here, nor against comprehensive schools; I am merely stressing that that is a further question.

Inclusion

One thing that is to be questioned is the desirability of the "inclusive" classroom. The question here is one of degree. I am certainly not arguing against either schools or classrooms that contain a mix of students in terms of background, interests or ability, but I am questioning the avowed policy of jurisdictions such as British Columbia, Canada, that explicitly pride themselves on pursuing a policy that seeks to enrol even serious cases of physical, mental or behavioural problems in the regular class room. As a matter of fact it is arguable that policy and practice are confused and inconsistent in as much as, for example, quite a number of school districts also talk about "exceptionality" and run programs for, say, gifted children or simply divide students into different math classes in relation to their ability. But, nonetheless much of the rhetoric, many policy statements and much practice enshrine the view that ideally all children should be enrolled in the common classroom.

Once again, one appreciates that there is a social argument for including children with various severe problems in the common classroom, just as there is for a common school. But when it comes to the classroom, the basic argument here being advanced as one that must at any rate be considered, and either accepted or rejected with clear and convincing reason, is that *educational* needs must take precedence over *social* needs. Whatever the advantages to any of those concerned from a social standpoint of encountering a deaf child, an unruly child, a child with psychological problems, a quadriplegic child or a child with severe language difficulties in the classroom, they are surely outweighed by the difficulties caused to both teachers and students in such a situation. The "solution" of providing specialist teaching assistants is surely quite inadequate and implicitly an acknowledgment of the futility of the policy. Rather, what is required is the use of "setting" according to current preparedness and/or the suitability of different types of teaching to different kinds of students.

Further, at about the age of 16, the varying needs of society and the different talents and inclinations of individuals fairly obviously suggest the need to move on from a period of common education, to a time of more specialised learning. As Aristotle also noted, and not inconsistently with his view that education should be one and the same for all, "individualised education is as important as individualized medical treatment" (*Ethics* 1180) (1953). The recent tendency in many countries to re-label

all institutions of tertiary learning as 'universities' is to be resisted, as is the tendency to assume that every branch of study needs to prove itself "academically". There are after all thousands of occupations and a wide range of very different people. Not every trade or profession requires further specialist academic study and nothing is gained beyond vagueness at best, or confusion at worst by calling all places of higher learning, from military establishments to engineering schools, by the same name, and implying that they are essentially similar. The recognition that preparing people to be computer programmers is quite different from educating them as physicists, might also help to remind us that not every trade requires significant theoretical study.

Setting by Aptitude

Words come in and out of fashion in education as everywhere else, and one word which is currently out of favour, but which we would perhaps do well to re-introduce, is "aptitude". I mentioned "preparedness" earlier as a criterion for organizing students in sets, and "aptitude" is surely the word that best captures this notion of preparedness. Setting is to be sharply distinguished from streaming. The latter refers to the practice of rating an individual as being in some all round sense an A student, B student or whatever, and thus, typically, in schools that employ streaming, students deemed of comparable ability are grouped together for most if not all subjects. Setting, by contrast, is subject specific, so that one might be classified as an A student in Math but a C student in French and a B student in chemistry. The very fact that one is focusing on particular subjects or types of study also implies that the consideration that matters is the current aptitude of the student and not some putative innate ability.

The whole question of the extent to which one is innately predisposed to shine or do well at a given subject is a very open one, but it is absolutely certain that what a person can successfully do or cope with at a given stage depends on prior preparation or experience in the subject, as well as any innate ability and also on the individual's commitment and interest. In other words, the proposal is not to categorise individuals as being innately suited to some subject, but to recognize that at a given point in time some students are better equipped to study math, say, at a certain level while others are suited to a different level. There are thus no judgments implied as to a person's innate talents or potential, merely a practical assessment of where various individuals stand in relation to the suitability of particular study.

Of course, one admits that the judgment that certain individuals are better suited to study in one group than others is indeed a matter of judgment, not something that can be precisely measured. But that is an unfortunate fact about many decisions that have to be taken in education, and it is vital that we do not let the desire to be scientific lead us into proceeding only where measurement is possible. The judgment that some are more suited to the level of a particular chemistry class and others to another, is something that teachers should be able to make. Unlike judgments as to an individual's innate intelligence or their overall academic ability or their overall scholarship, aptitude refers to this combination of ability, current preparedness and inclination.

Developing Autonomy and a Common Culture

The argument for a common schooling, in the sense and within the limits outlined, (i.e. a common curriculum pursued by all, but by way of setting in terms of aptitude, annually reviewed, and quite possibly with consequent variation in both teaching methods and the presentation and organization of material) is that there are some things that ideally everybody should know and understand, and be able to do and enact, both for the sake of the individuals themselves and for the sake of society as a whole. It is, for example, clearly to the advantage of the individual and important to developing their autonomy that they should understand the nature, the limits and the dangers of misusing or confusing science, history and philosophy. Both making sense of their lives and the world, and their scope for choosing how to live will necessarily be enhanced by some understanding of the nature of religious claims and of works of art. And while it is certainly not logically necessary to read literature fluently in order to think lucidly and imaginatively, it is hard to conceive of a more likely route to critical open-mindedness than easy immersion in the great writings of the past and present.

But society as a whole will also benefit the more widespread such understanding is. This is partly because a common education contributes to a degree of common outlook on which social cohesion and harmony are to some extent dependent, and partly because a world in which people in general are more open-minded and knowledgeable is likely to be both a safer and happier world. Without going into the large topic of multi-culturalism, it is perhaps worth adding in this context that, notwithstanding the merits of recognizing and respecting diverse customs and practices, it should be evident to all that there can be no such thing as a successful society where there is not to some extent a common culture. It may here be argued that one of the purposes of a common schooling is to provide that common culture and, more specifically, that a common education provides a common understanding of how we frame the world.

In short, while a diversity of study, apprenticeships and training schemes are necessary after a certain age, both to allow the individual to develop the burgeoning self along the wished for lines, and to provide society with the diversity of talents that it needs, prior to that, it is a common curriculum that is required, though the manner of the student engagement with that curriculum may well vary in response to the aptitude of given students at given times.

State Control

Ensuring that all children (or, realistically, the vast majority) receive a common education by way of a common curriculum, and indeed ensuring the provision of various suitable alternative types of tertiary schooling (to use the word in the American sense) in practice requires state control. Only the state can ensure that there is suitable provision for all, only the state can ensure that no child is held back from schooling.

Whether private institutions should be allowed to continue alongside a state system seems to me a separate and in reality, not very important question, though it obviously is important that any such independent institutions should be answerable to some educational body representing the state and that, specifically, they should be committed to the same curriculum (again meaning the same subject matter, rather than necessarily the same teaching methods and organization). If there is no state control, the likely losers will of course be the already disadvantaged: those whose parents do not value or do not have education themselves, those who cannot afford to pay for education privately.

While the sort of society without a schooling system envisaged by Illich and others could work in theory and might even have some advantages, such as leading to more innovative thinking and less unnecessary deference and trust in "experts" who are not actually always correct, and while some of his concerns about the institutionalisation of education (most obviously the fundamental point that we run the risk of confusing the trappings of education with education itself) need to be taken seriously, in practice it is predictable that in a society without a system of schooling controlled by the state it would be the weakest (which by no means necessarily means the least deserving or the least able) who would go to the wall.

In principle too, the sort of free and open approach to schooling advocated by such as A. S. Neill could fit into the state system as advocated here. The reasoning would be along the lines that certain children can most profitably be brought to engage with the common curriculum only over time and in the context of a lot of freedom including the freedom to choose not to attend lessons. The reason that there is no necessary incompatibility is of course that Neill's theories are essentially about method, whereas my argument is essentially about content. Nonetheless, except in exceptional cases (and of course a great many Summerhill students have been relatively exceptional in that they have been found to have real difficulties with the type of schooling that the majority do not find particularly hard to profit by) it is not clear that there is any reason to recommend Neill's approach as a useful one in the norm.

Conclusion

Of course the underlying and overarching fear of most of those who, for whatever given reason, oppose a state system of compulsory schooling with a common curriculum, is fear of conformity and mindless subservience to the state and the status quo. This I have tried to suggest is groundless. Illich had a point when he claimed that institutionalization led to an uncritical acceptance of authority in the case of the Church and the Armed services. But those institutions were deliberately designed to instil obedience and loyalty of one kind or another to higher powers of one kind or another and their representatives. Schools by contrast are in the business of education, which is to say developing autonomy and the critical mind.

Of course a school system can be put to malign use and can simply indoctrinate as is generally the case in totalitarian states. But that can be true of independent schools, particularly certain faith schools, too. The problem then is not schooling, state provision, or even state control. The problem only arises if society has a faulty conception of education.

As to the notion that our system is in fact failing, as witnessed by the riots mentioned earlier and a number of other social failings, it is surely to be rejected out of hand. No doubt some schools do fail in that they are unsuccessful in educating or socializing some of their charges, but it is manifest that in such cases the responsibility lies elsewhere. Generally speaking, people do not lie, cheat steal and commit acts of violence because of anything that schools do, but for social reasons. The fact that the vast majority of citizens remain well-meaning, honest and decent, even in trying times, suggests that something about their upbringing is quite effective, and that something is probably the provision of education by our schools. But it is important that while as much freedom as possible be given to individual schools and teachers to determine how to group their students and how to teach them, the state should insist on a common curriculum for all.

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Education, Liberty and Authority: Justifying Compulsory Education

Geoffrey Hinchliffe

Introduction

One question concerning compulsory education concerns its authority. How can the compulsory nature of education ever be justified? For compulsion cannot be only justified by instrumental reasons, no matter how pressing. Therefore, if education—in the form of schooling of some sort—is to be accepted as compulsory, it must be because it is in some way authoritative. Educational authority is political in nature and so its final justification is to be found not in educational but in political discourse.

I wish to sketch out the outline of a theory of educational authority, based on liberty. That is, the justification of educational authority proceeds from a certain conception of liberty which not only provides the basis for the authority to educate but also furthers the cause of liberty itself. The concept of liberty I am interested in exploring is known as republican liberty and I will first of all explain what is meant by this term and the implications this has for the nature of political authority. I will then explore the nature of educational authority. Finally, I will drill down more deeply into the question of educational authority by focussing on teacher authority. I will argue that teacher authority is closely linked to the public character of education and the public role that teachers perform.

Republican Liberty

We are all very familiar with the concepts of negative and positive liberty elaborated by Isaiah Berlin (1969), but I wish to take a different concept: that of freedom = being free from domination. Whereas with negative liberty I am free providing I am not being interfered with, the threat of domination or subjugation is sufficient to impair my freedom taken in the non-dominative sense. The paradigm case is that of the slave whose benevolent master affords him a far better life than that led by the impoverished

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freeman: yet the latter is not subjugated in the way that the slave is even if the master refrains from interfering in the slave's life. This kind of freedom is often referred to as republican freedom and its historical genesis has been traced by Quentin Skinner (1998, 2008) whilst a more analytical treatment has been undertaken by Phillip Pettit (1997). There are two implications of republican liberty, as I shall refer to it: first, that political authority is such that each person is free from domination and, second, that each has the resources or powers so that domination can be resisted. These two features are not independent of each other: because though arrangements in civil society and the state must be such that no individual is subjugated yet it is only through conditions established by the state that individuals can develop resources to resist subjugation, whether individually or collectively.

Thus, a further implication of the concept of republican liberty is that it cannot be successfully elaborated without addressing the basis of political authority. Historically, the rejection of republican liberty is associated with the rise of rights-based political discourse and the substitution of negative liberty for republican liberty. Thus, Skinner (2008) has shown how the concept of negative liberty was developed by Hobbes partly in order to repudiate the idea of republican liberty then gaining ground in England, in order to advance the conception of political obligation elaborated in his *Leviathan*. Richard Tuck (1979, 1993) has also shown how the seventeenth century rights-based theorists Grotius, Hobbes and Puffendorf rejected not only the concept of republican liberty, but also the whole structure of Aristotelian thinking that went with it. The recovery of the concept of republican liberty for contemporary political discourse also implies an elaboration of a non-rights-based account of political authority which is, however, Aristotelian to this extent: civil society is seen as logically prior to the individual, the implication being that rights are constituted through the polis and cannot be appealed to as attributes founded outside and against the polis.

The most accessible historical account of republican liberty is to be found in Skinner's short book, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Skinner 1998). Before the mid-seventeenth century there was both a historical experience of, and in some instances a practical engagement with, liberty in ancient Rome, the Italian city states of the fifteenth century (especially, Florence before the Medici) and in seventeenth-century England. He argues that Hobbes was particularly concerned to undermine claims that liberty could only flourish in conditions of self-government. Since for Hobbes, liberty was signalled by 'the absence of externall Impediments' (Hobbes 1996, p. 91), it is manifest that the *kind* of government under which one lived was immaterial as to whether one was free: what really counted was the extent to which it left you alone. Skinner contrasts this with the 'neo-Roman' outlook which can be summarised by the view of the historian Livy for whom the possession of *libertas* involved the ability 'to stand upright by means of one's own strength without depending on the will of anyone else' (quoted in Skinner 1998, p. 46). Hobbes, however, quite deliberately refrained from speculating on what the nature of freedom or of a free person might be and confined himself to the examination of acts that were unconstrained.

It is Skinner's contention that the concept of negative liberty, associated with Isaiah Berlin's celebrated article 'Two Concepts of Liberty' is essentially Hobbsian in its theoretical provenance (see Berlin 1969). What Skinner further suggests, however, is that negative liberty is inadequate because it is possible to live in a state of dependency even if one is not being interfered with. The mere awareness of dependency can create a situation in which persons behave in such an anticipatory, proactive way that the need for exercising any constraint never seriously arises. Also, we are all familiar with situations in which persons (sometimes ourselves) avoid saying certain things and take care not to stand out or draw attention to ourselves because to do so may invite the disapprobation of those in authority and those, especially, who can make things worse for us should they so wish (see Skinner 2002, p. 257). A further corollary of this kind of servitude is that innovatory acts or acts of courage become rarer and Skinner cites the impact of the works of Tacitus and Sallust on early modern republicans as they sought to draw parallels between the servile flattery of the Senate towards some of the Roman Emperors and the behaviour of courtiers in the reigns of James 1 and Charles 1 (Skinner 2002, pp. 260–261). Hence the claim that there is a historic third concept of liberty that not only includes absence of interference but also specifically includes absence of dependency.

There is also a need for recognition to be built into the very understanding of what liberty consists of. The moment we abandon the stance of negative liberty, then liberty immediately becomes relational in which a condition of my being free is that I am recognised as a liberty-bearing agent. It makes all the difference in the world as to whether a person is *recognised* as a liberty-bearing person. If he/she is not, then he/she is ripe for being treated as subordinate and dependent. Interference therefore always stands in need of justification, but attempts to make a person dependent—servile— can never constitute only mere interference because such attempts are premised on the specific non-recognition of a person as liberty bearing. The concept of negative liberty is therefore defective because 'absence of impediments' falls short of recognising someone as liberty-bearing.

The familiar account of positive and negative liberty needs to be supplemented by an account that distinguishes natural liberty from civil liberty. If natural liberty is 'the absence of external impediments', then civil liberty, by contrast, is constituted through a normative order. Thus, whereas with natural liberty any constraint is an impediment on my liberty, with civil liberty constraints may be justified in the name of liberty itself. Civil liberty takes the point of view of all those who are part of the normative order. Natural liberty takes the point of view of a fictitious person outside of it. It is the concept of civil liberty which underpins that historical entity, republican liberty.

But, civil or republican liberty requires two conditions. First, it requires the development of individual powers necessary to resist dependency and servility. This is the only lasting barrier to constant interference and they can only be developed within a normative order: a reliance on natural liberty is not sufficient. Thus, civil liberty rests on the recognition of a certain value in persons of independent spirit who are 'strong evaluators' (Taylor 1985), i.e. self-formative and self-directed.

Second, civil liberty requires a normative order. The appeal of natural liberty is very real: it seems to provide the promise of liberty *outside* a normative order so that the agent relation to that order is prudential. The difficulty is that a system of natural liberty is no guarantee against dependency because the threat of dependency is perfectly consistent with non-interference. Proponents of natural liberty affect to despise all normative orders, calling on them only for purposes of security; yet at the same time, it is only through a normative order that persons can be treated and recognised as liberty-bearing agents. This is the paradox of liberty: it can only survive and flourish within a normative order. This means that the authority of that order needs to be recognised since freedom is only made secure through the authority of a normative order. Political authority, as Hobbes was the first to fully understand, rests on the most slender of reeds: human recognition (not force).

The Role of Educational Authority

Education plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of republican liberty. We have seen that the avoidance of dependency requires that persons are self-formative and self-directive and therefore the provision of education must be designed to bring this about. The provision of education therefore belongs to a normative order that is based on civil liberty rather than natural liberty. Now, from the standpoint of natural liberty, no state or normative order generally could ever have the authority to take a child out of its home and put it through its system of enforced schooling. The very idea seems preposterous (see Tooley 2007). Yet from the standpoint of republican liberty, a system of education based on natural liberty is equally unpalatable. For example, parental choice regarding educational provision certainly gives liberty to parents. But, it also re-enforces the dependency of children and students on parents. It also strongly risks making parents dependent on independently funded education providers. Advocates of parental choice have the huge advantage of support from an impeccable quarter: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document, article 26 which states: 'Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children'. But, this 'prior right' is a right only conceivable in terms of natural liberty, a theoretically flawed concept of liberty which neglects the normative grounding of liberty.

Yet, the course of action that was pursued in many western countries post-war is equally unpalatable: a system of state-directed education that has dependency enshrined in nearly all aspects of its provision. State direction of education reached its zenith with the UK 1944 Education Act in which 80 % of children were consigned to state-provided inferior education (in the form of secondary modern schools) and which, through selection, created an educational apartheid with the top 20 % of children selected for an academic education in grammar schools. The state, using local authorities as proxies, assigned children to their designated school, with no room for discussion.

What, then, is the basis of this authority? There are two different kinds of answer to this question. The first asks 'how is educational authority justified' and the second asks 'who or what is justified to be in authority'. The answer to the first question can be construed in terms of justifying reasons: the relevant authority instructs me to do what I would have reason to do in any case: it is simply that through acknowledging the relevant authority I am more likely to secure what I have reason to want. So, since I want to have my children educated (say), acknowledging the appropriate educational authority is the best way of achieving this (see Raz 1990, p. 129 for a more formal exposition of what he terms the 'normal justification thesis'). One can see an immediate advantage in this line of thought, namely, that providing my wishes respecting my children are provided for it does not matter too much *who* or *what* is in educational authority. It does not matter whether educational authority is claimed by the state, a local authority or merely the school itself. But, one can also see an immediate disadvantage with this approach which is that educational authority may warrant a type of education for my child that goes far beyond anything I might have reason to want for her. It may insist that the child is given an 'academic' education concerning which I can see no value; it might insist on standards of discipline that I consider to be outrageously brutal; or it might insist that my child be introduced to religions and cultures that from my point of view have very little merit.

The difficulty with the normal justification thesis is that authorities—any authority—have the habit of inventing new reasons for acting which did not exist before that authority came into being. It is not simply that authority creates obligations where none existed before; it creates new reasons for acting as well. It does this because the scope of authority extends well beyond an individual or subset of individuals—and the reasons for action tends to track this broader scope. Thus it is that citizens find themselves supporting causes, through taxation that they did not know even existed before it was pointed out to them. And thus, it is that citizens and parents may find themselves having to accept actions of educational authorities that they (the parents) find not so much innovative but downright bizarre. The upshot is that the justification of authority through reasons that I would act on myself if I were able to needs to be extended by means of an acknowledgement of the *public* role of authority. And this means that I myself also must see myself as a member of the public for whom reasons apply, reasons that may be different—possibly very different—from reasons that would apply if I were just an individual. Authority creates individuals who have public identities, and those in authority therefore have a public role as well. This extends to the teacher herself who is obliged to enact a form of educational practice that may go far beyond what parents might wish for their children. Nevertheless, they (the parents), generally speaking, take on trust that what is taught is for the good of their children. And although it is natural for parents (in their role as parents) to want the best for their children to whom they have a natural duty of personal care, what is also happening is that children are being educated not merely as children of a particular parent, but as children who will soon be full-fledged members of the public.

Thus, education has an inescapable public role and it is not for nothing that in England the private schools of Eton, Harrow and so on have historically always been

known as public schools, even though access is restricted to the very wealthy. Thus, the answer to the second question concerning the justification of authority—namely 'who or what is justified to be in authority' becomes rather important. Given the public scope of education it matters that the source of educational authority is one in keeping with its public character: this I term a well-founded educational authority, namely an authority recognised by children, parents, employers and members of the public. Yet at the same time, all recent UK governments have emphasised that what educational authority they do exercise is in the name of parents: it is the latter who truly have authority. But, it is clear that the authority to educate cannot rest with parents, once the public role of education is conceded. If it did, schools and colleges would be obliged to comply with potentially any and every parental wish for their children. And because successive governments in the UK have insisted that their educational policies are enacted in the name of parents it is hardly surprising that some parents really do expect schools and teachers to comply with their precise wishes and get very cross if they do not. Herein lies one of the problems regarding teacher authority: it is sometimes challenged not just by children and students (if only!), but by the surrogate educational authority wielded by disaffected parents.

Does educational authority therefore come from the state? In the UK, the 1988 Education Act (and its successors) conferred tremendous authority on the Minister of Education who is responsible both for the content and the delivery of the curriculum in schools. Moreover, the Minister has the power to close schools and to change the governance of a school in defiance of the wishes of both parents and teachers. With nearly half of all secondary schools opting out of local authority control in favour of Academy status, the Minister now has direct authority for more than 1,000 schools in the UK, even if day-to-day school governance is devolved. If current trends are maintained, the state, in the form of the Department of Education is set to become not only the main source of educational authority in the UK but also having direct authority for school governance as well: the Minister can appoint a new head, for example. Yet given the *public* scope of education, to base the source of its authority on a single government minister seems odd and is scarcely well-founded. Contrast this position with that in California where there are more than 1,000 School Districts, each with an elected Board of Education. These district boards themselves report to County Boards which are also elected. The only divergence from this eminently democratic-based system of governance is at the State level where the State Board of Education is appointed by the State Governor, although the state senate must ratify appointments. Yet, despite this well-founded system of educational authority, schooling in the State is in more or less permanent crisis. The reason is not far to seek. In terms of funding for public education, California would need to spend around US$ 16 billion extra per year to reach the national average of state spending in the USA. The surprise is not that there is a growing Charter Schools movement, but that it is not greater than it is—currently around 5 % of children in California are in Charter schools (see CSBA 2010). In California, the system of education can be truly be said to have a public reach yet confidence in it is weak, primarily, I suggest, because of low funding.

The contested nature of educational provision reflects the contested nature of educational authority. From the standpoint of republican liberty, educational authority can be neither vested in parents or the state. Rather, educational authority is by its nature distributed and needs an elected body to reflect the variety of legitimate interests there are in educational provision, of which the parental interest is also one. This suggests that schools—all schools—need to be sanctioned and legitimised through a single point of authority, the legitimacy of which is recognised by all stakeholders and citizens. Moreover, this point of authority needs to be demonstrably educational in character so that authority extends only to education and not to other sundry, doubtless important services. Indeed, it is vital that education is *not* seen as another form of service on equal footing with public utilities and social welfare. Education is not a service and neither are teachers service providers (to be so would merely make teachers dependent on service users and so undermine *their* liberties).

As far as England is concerned, there is a case for re-visiting the experience of the School Boards which existed in that country from 1870 to 1902 (see Simon 1965). These were formed in order to supervise the implementation of elementary education and the members of the Boards were elected through a wider franchise than existed at the time for parliamentary elections. A variety of persons succeeded in being elected—including women, professionals, employers, representatives of religious organisations together with a fair sprinkling of radicals. The Board system was closed down by the Conservative government of Lord Salisbury and the responsibilities of the Boards were transferred to Local Authorities. Hundred years later those responsibilities are gradually (though with increasing acceleration) being reduced as educational authority (in the UK at any rate) is dispersed directly to parents (who can set up their own 'free schools') or to business and religious sponsors, with the state directly financing a growing number of secondary schools through the Academy programme.

It is suggested that re-vitalised School Boards, with elected representatives could act as a conduit for the expression and establishment of equality of self-expression on educational matters. Moreover these discussions could take place at the appropriate local level. The idea would be that a Board could sanction a variety of schools in its area of jurisdiction. Even 'free schools' could be set up with this big difference: unlike the free schools in the UK today such free schools would carry the stamp of educational authority. Historians have explored the relation between School Boards and parents (Auerbach 2009) and also explored the way in which School Boards acted as a forum for local debate and discussion in a way rarely seen (in England, at any rate) these days. In this way, liberty-bearing agents would take part in sustaining the authority structures of education, an activity which itself plays a direct role in forming those human powers required for the exercise of liberty.

Teacher Authority

I now propose to explore one aspect of educational authority in the light of the above-mentioned brief analysis, namely teacher authority. R. S. Peters in his chapter on Authority in *Ethics and Education* suggested that a teacher was in possession of two

types of authority. First of all, a teacher is 'in' authority in so far as he/she has the right to 'decide, promulgate, judge, order and pronounce' in accordance with procedural rules backed up by a normative order. For Peters, this order is rule-governed and therefore it determines the sphere and scope of teacher authority, that is, his/her right to decide and promulgate on educational matters. In particular, this designates the right of a teacher to instruct and request in the classroom with the expectation that this authority is acknowledged by parents, children and the public. Secondly, Peters suggested that the teacher was also 'an' authority in so far as she was in possession of certain knowledge and expertise concerning subject matter.

I do not wish to challenge Peters' basic distinction (see Peters 1966, pp. 238–240). For reasons to be explained, I do wish to modify slightly the way in which a teacher can be 'an' authority so that a teacher is better thought of as an authority on educational practice as well as certain types of subject matter. I also wish to suggest that subject matter itself, in its disciplinary form, has an authority in its own right—indeed it has an authority over both teachers and learners alike and I shall try to explain why this is so. However, the major purpose in the rest of this chapter is to suggest why it is that that teachers struggle to be both *in* authority and *an* authority. Finally, I will suggest why the supposed 'authority of the subject matter' cannot help out either, or at least, not as much as could be hoped for.

For teachers to be 'in' authority in the way that Peters suggests, they need to be able to exercise authority on the basis of, and in the context of, both a well-founded and well-funded educational authority. Teachers are the visible, tangible face of educational authority. Just as educational authority has a public scope, so the authority of the teacher is public in character. There is, however, the other dimension of authority that Peters identified, namely that the teacher is 'an' authority as well. Peters suggests that this kind of authority is disciplinary-based and is challengeable in the way that being 'in' authority is not. For whilst I may make a poor decision as a teacher with respect to some matter of school discipline and order, the authority I have to make that decision does not rest on its particular merits. By contrast, my authority to pronounce on some matter of knowledge can always be challenged through evidence and argumentation: as Peters points out, 'nothing is made right on (my) say so' in this respect (Peters 1966, p. 240). But, I think that it is important to recognise that the scope of this kind of authority is broader than discipline-based knowledge. Educational practice can be seen as having three elements—process, content and development. By 'process' is meant those different kinds of learning activities and the pedagogies that support them. By content is termed those knowledge and skills that our teachers are supposedly master of, at least provisionally. Content may be construed as composed of combinations of (though not necessarily all three elements to the same extent) knowing that and knowing how; it may be organised along the lines of Hirst's forms of knowledge; it may be topic- or interdisciplinary-based. But however construed, process engages with content to produce pupil and student development which can be identified and evaluated across a range of cognitive, practical and creative set of skills and understandings. I suggest that the teacher is *an* authority on all three elements of educational practice—process, content and development, and not only content. Teacher authority—that is, the authority 'on'—is

diminished if she is no longer seen as having any particular expertise on any or all of these three strands. For the scope of teacher authority needs to extend across the whole of educational practice.

This is a matter of some importance because even if educational authority is well-founded, teachers may lack authority simply because social and historical factors have contributed to an unwillingness to recognise that teachers may ever be an authority on educational practice. Interestingly, writing in the 1960s, Peters comments that in the USA, 'teachers are hired to promote ends which the parents consider they know almost as much about as the teachers . . . they are at the mercy of school boards who decide matters of salary, curriculum and courses . . . and teachers are expected to conform closely to the norms of the local community both in and out of school.' Thus, merely because educational authority is founded on a democratic basis this is no reason to suppose that, as a result, teachers will be regarded as having authority on educational practice. The educational authority itself, whatever its basis, needs to recognise teacher authority in respect of educational practice. This is not the same as teacher autonomy, which is a quite different idea. Teachers can never be autonomous as long as they derive their authority 'in' from an educational authority. The only time one might want to regard a teacher as being fully autonomous with respect to authority is if educational authority itself no longer deserves acknowledgement; then one may indeed transfer one's allegiance to a particular teacher and regard her as both the agent and source of educational authority. But, such a move would be *in extremis* and could only be justified if an educational authority had been taken over by racists, fascists or suchlike.

The Public Character of Education

I have insisted on the public character of education and this may be disputed on the grounds that there is no unique public sphere as such. The classical account of the public sphere can be found in Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) in which the rise and fall of the bourgeois—liberal public is traced. But, the central contention of Habermas—that there is an 'ideal-typical' public sphere in which competing views can find a voice—has itself been subject to criticism. Nancy Fraser in her essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere* (1997) has summarised a range of research, concluding that there are many publics and doubts if there ever was (or could be) a 'single' public. Moreover, these different publics may come into being and then gradually fade away; some publics may compete with each other (e.g. faith and secular publics); and sometimes one public may supplant another. To be wedded to the idea of a single over-arching public is misguided because it assumes the presence of a single normative discourse that can in some way include a range of diverse perspectives whereas the strong likelihood is that a single public discourse will end up failing to recognise and failing to accommodate all the various publics that happen to exist in most of today's societies.

These matters have been taken up in a recent series of articles in the journal *Educational Theory*. For example, Kathleen Knight Abowitz (2011, p. 486) has described the activities of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in Austin, Texas, and its attempts to influence public schooling through parent assemblies and questioning of school officials with a view to promoting greater self-governance at a local level. It has to be said, in reading Knight Abowitz's descriptions of local politics one gets the distinct impression that as far as teachers are concerned matters have changed little since Peters' remarks on the American teacher 50 years ago. They still appear to be regarded as little more than hired hands, to do the bidding either of died-in-the-wool school board officials or of the dynamic leaders of new-found pressure groups or 'publics' ('Achieving publics for public schools requires leadership habits and skills spread across school organisation and across multiple civic sectors . . . parent leaders participate in trainings and public actions . . . they learn how the school system works including curriculum and budget . . . ' Abowitz 2011, p. 482). It would appear that much has to be done before some teachers are recognised as both in authority and an authority.

But, the main point I wish to make is that far from this being an example of a counter-public, it strikes me as exactly what one would expect in a public arena where educational priorities and goals are in dispute. The idea of there being a single public does not imply that somehow there is a single public discourse. It is rather that there is a single arena—a public space—in which inequalities and lack of empowerment gets recognised. In a different article in *Educational Theory*, Terri Wilson explains how Habermas's concept of the public sphere needs to be supplemented by the theory of communicative competence so that the order of rational discourse is precisely aimed at recognition. It is not that there is a normative order to which emergent publics must conform: it is rather that this normative order is itself created precisely through rational argumentation at the level of practical discourse (Wilson 2010, pp. 657–659). The model of counter-publics may allow for a particular public gaining some of its objectives, but this is quite different from a recognition that those objectives are legitimate. Thus, the idea of a public sphere does not rest on a consensus so that differences are eliminated but rather on the idea that differences can be recognised and then following up the implications of what this recognition might mean.

Epistemically, Donald Davidson makes a parallel point when he argues against the possibility of different conceptual schemes that entail that we are, each of us, the prisoner of our own scheme. Davidson argues that there is no 'fixed stock of meanings, a theory neutral reality' (Davidson 1984, p. 195) which can provide a ground for comparison between schemes. But, he does think that translation from a sentence uttered by *A* into sentences used by *B* is possible through the attribution of beliefs resultant on sentence interpretation. We can form a picture of what a speaker holds to be true and what she holds to be false and in this way even the most divergent beliefs can be understood. The only stipulation in this process is that of epistemological charity: as he puts it, 'if we want to understand others, we must count them right (correct, GH) in most matters' (1984, p. 197). Davidson's ideas on interpretation therefore provide an epistemic basis for rational discourse: it holds the

promise that attempts to work towards rational discourse are not doomed before we start.

I take it, therefore that Habermas and Davidson offer us different ways in thinking about the coherence of the concept of a public. If the idea of the public were incoherent, in the way that Nancy Fraser suggests that it might be, then the future for establishing educational authority and, following on from that, teacher authority, would be difficult if not impossible. Teachers would end up as hired hands with no more authority then that permitted by those who employ them.

However, I suspect that there will be some not entirely convinced by these arguments concerning the public character of education and teacher authority. The 'public', they may feel, either amounts simply to what is state-directed and in the absence of such direction is monopolised by powerful interests and corporations. However, suppose members of the public are construed as liberty-bearing agents as suggested in the earlier analysis of republican liberty—agents who are not merely free from arbitrary interference but also free from arbitrary domination. The suggestion, therefore, is that this liberty is given substantive support through appropriate authoritative structures which are founded on the acknowledgement of agents as liberty bearing in the sense described. The public authority of education would then stem from its role in supporting and developing those human powers needed to resist domination. Teacher authority would then be an integral part of the authoritative provision of education and exercise of liberties. The public character of education would then be based not on the needs of the state, teachers and parents, but on the needs of liberty-bearing persons including not only children and students but also adults giving teaching and support. One upshot of this is that teachers could no longer be regarded as mere service providers or hired hands, required to do the bidding of the state, of employers or parents. It would also have consequences for the curriculum: in particular, it would not be designed around training for servitude (nor for that matter, training for future mastery).

Conclusion

Suppose—and this seems highly unlikely for the foreseeable future—a well-founded educational authority could be established and the public role of education were recognised by all the various 'publics' that now exist. Would this then solve the problem for teacher authority? I argue that it would not, at least, not completely. The reason is that the authority of the teacher is continually tested in the classroom, even in cultures in which there is a tradition of receptive learning. The testing I have in mind is not merely that of a disciplinary nature in the behavioural sense. Even when behavioural problems are minimal, teacher authority may still weaken. For the teacher, in the eyes of the learner, takes on the ownership of the curriculum, the subject matter. The learner has to be convinced that the subjects and skills are actually significant and this often involves a transformation of learner preferences and beliefs. The curriculum itself must carry authority and it is the teacher who bears

its weight. Sometimes this weight is difficult to bear, no matter how experienced or accomplished the teacher and no matter how sophisticated the learner might be. For the learner is always sceptical and what is surprising is how many people outside the profession assume that the default position of the learner is one of 'willingness'. The best one can hope for is that the learner is willing to be convinced that what they are being asked to do is worthwhile. The learner has to take this on trust.

Now, if the aim is to convince the learner that the mental struggle of learning is necessary for instrumental reasons no exercise of authority is required by the teacher: all that is needed is a demonstration of means-end reasoning, although even this can sometimes be tough. One ends up relying on the circle of the outcome-based assessment, where the only motive for undertaking study is achievement in examinations. This in itself often provides insufficient reason. Yet, it may be far more difficult to require from pupils the hard work needed just because the teacher says so. As we know, the paradox of learning is that its importance cannot be recognised until one has accomplished all the hard work. Often it happens that the learner does it 'for the teacher'—but it is not always a good idea to rely on one's own personal magnetism as a teacher to motivate. One can also, of course, resort to tricks, gimmicks, prizes and rewards—all in a day's work. But, there are also times, I suggest, when both teacher and student may recognise the authority of the subject matter itself—when the poem, the story, the chemistry experiment, the idea—commands the attention of everyone. Its authority is presented not so much as a bunch of facts, theories and interpretations, but as an experience to be negotiated and tried out. The subject matter holds authority because it always holds out the promise of better things to come. But, this promise can be shattered by the logic of performativity which merely promises a dystopia in which subject matter counts for nothing.

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Compulsion and the Educational Conversation

Kevin Williams

Introduction

The metaphor of education as a conversation that informs the philosophy of Michael Oakeshott is attractive in many respects. But neither Oakeshott himself nor those who have endorsed the metaphor have considered whether the notion of education as a conversation is compatible with the imposition of compulsion. The metaphor foregrounds the tension between compulsion and the inter-generational sharing that can be a feature of teaching and learning within the school context. This chapter considers whether conditions can be identified and defended that would make compulsion an acceptable feature of education as a conversation. The following conditions are proposed as reconciling commitment to a spirit of conversation with the presence of compulsion:

- tactful respect for the genuine opinions and beliefs of young people, especially where controversial issues are involved;
- commitment on the part of teachers to engage the young people in learning
- willingness to accept the limits to compulsion and to allow young people to make choices for themselves, however much adults may wish to keep them engaged in the educational conversation.

The chapter includes analysis of sample situations where these qualities are exhibited as well of others where they are absent. To this end, the argument advanced draws both on literary texts as well as on educational and philosophical sources.

Conversation: Contemporary and Historical Resonance

Several philosophers have affirmed the potential of the metaphor of conversation to enhance our understanding of the activities of teaching and learning. Most notably

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in recent times Michael Oakeshott has given explicit and eloquent expression to the relationship between conversation and education:

> Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of . . . conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. (Oakeshott 1981, p. 199)

His work offers an important source of understanding of the nature of conversation as a pedagogic practice. Indeed, in the words of Paul Standish, for example, we have scarcely begun 'to realise the rich significance of the idea of conversation as this runs through Oakeshott's thought' (2000, p. 168). Trent Davis (2009) believes that the metaphor has 'genuine implications for the lived "conversations" that people can and do have' (p. 398) in the educational context. Hogan (2010, pp. 108–121) provides a masterful analysis of the approaches to conversation in the work of Oakeshott, Gadamer and Alastair MacIntyre. The parallel with Gadamer is very explicit in Gadamer's notable description of human beings as being constituted by 'the conversations that we are' (see Hogan 2010, p. 119). Elaborating on Oakeshott's work in analysing the activity and influence of the teacher, Terry McLaughlin (2008, p. 225) also refers to the notion of conversation.

> The wide ranging sorts of influence over pupils that the teacher has to exert in the 'conversation between the generations' that constitutes education means that the teacher must be a *certain sort of person* who communicates not only knowledge and skill but also (parts of) him or herself.

Tasos Kazepides (2010) makes helpful reference to the metaphor in *Education as dialogue: its prerequisites and its enemies*, although he finds conversation less appropriate in the educational context than 'dialogue'. The precise pedagogic value of the metaphor, however, is foregrounded by Bruffee (1995, pp. 87–98) in a chapter entitled 'Peer tutoring and the "Conversation of Mankind"'. A fine account of conversation that is compatible with much teaching and learning is to be found in Nicholas Burbules's classic analysis of the relationship between different forms of communication in education. Burbules defines conversation in terms of a dialogue in the form of an 'open-ended discussion in which the aim of intersubjective understanding, rather than the answering of any specific question or problem, is foremost' (Burbules and Bruce 2001, p. 20).

Of course, the conversation metaphor is not a new one. Oakeshott takes it from Hobbes and Montaigne and it also appears in the work of Cardinal Newman (1901) and Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century (see Williams 2007). 'The study of books is a languid and feeble process', writes Montaigne, 'that gives no heat, whereas conversation teaches us and exercises us at the same time' (Montaigne 1963, p. 286). If the interlocutor is a person of 'strong mind and a tough jouster, he presses on my flanks, he pricks me right and left, his ideas stimulate mine . . . and raise me above myself' (pp. 286–287). 'Agreement', he believes, 'is an altogether tiresome constituent of conversation' (p. 287). Acceptance of disagreement is very important because in conversing we encounter the world as 'a school of inquiry' (p. 293) where 'only a sour and arbitrary nature . . . cannot tolerate an attitude different from its

own' (pp. 293–294). The disposition does not come easily and 'needs a preliminary apprenticeship' accompanied by 'long and constant instruction' under the tutelage of someone willing to provide appropriate 'correction and guidance' (p. 304).

Conversation: Its Conceptual Geography

The first feature of conversation is the pleasure and enjoyment that it provides. Conversation appears, writes Oakeshott (2004, p. 187), 'whenever talk is indulged in for its own sake, without ulterior motive', and it must be distinguished from transactional or instrumental discourse, that is, of discourse where our concern is with the expeditious satisfaction of wants. With genuine conversation 'we do not ask what it is "for"' (Oakeshott 1981, p. 98) because the point of conversation lies within the activity of conversing itself, i.e., in the pleasure, stimulation and enlightenment that it provides. By contrast with adversarial intercourse, conversation requires a 'readiness of sympathy', a 'naïve pleasure in the exchange of ideas' and a 'generosity in giving and taking' (Oakeshott 2004, p. 193). 'At once an exercise in politeness and in tactical humility', an episode of genuine conversation concludes 'not when one triumphs over the other, or when each agrees to differ, but when all simultaneously discover that each has been right all the time' (Oakeshott 2004, pp. 193–194). An apt illustration of conversation that is conducted both in a convivial manner and prompted by a concern for understanding is to be found in an incident in one of Georges Simenon's (2008) novels entitled *Maigret Tend un Piège*. After a long and sociable evening discussing over dinner the psychology of a serial killer on the loose, Maigret and a famous psychiatrist discover that they share a view of the individual's profile. The author wonders about the provenance of this shared understanding. He concludes that over the course of the long session, the two men 'had turned the subject over in so many of its aspects that afterwards it was difficult to determine what came from one of the them and what came from the other' (p. 37, translation my own).

The second feature of conversation is linked to the first one and it refers to its non-adversarial nature. According to Montaigne (1963, p. 305), the adversarial disposition has place only in conversations where '(o)bstinacy and heated argument are the surest proofs of stupidity'. Oakeshott, like Montaigne, takes particular pains to deny the adversarial character of conversation. Conversation is to be firmly distinguished 'from argument, from a debate and from a symposium' (Oakeshott 2004, p. 187). Participants are not engaged in 'the propagation of a belief' (Oakeshott 2004, p. 188) but seek rather 'a partnership in intellectual pleasure' (Oakeshott 2004) where those who are involved 'have everything in common except their opinions' (Oakeshott 2004). According to Oakeshott, the greatest enemies of conversation are the 'disputatious', 'those who talk to win' (p. 189) and who suffer from 'the lust to dominate' (p. 190). These are the individuals who are either unwilling or unable to listen to and hear what others have to say and who conceive their interlocutors as opponents in a situation where 'each is trying to establish his own point and to

convict the other of error' (p. 193). To apply two terms coined by Gilbert Ryle (1973), listening is the task that is incumbent on any participant in a conversation and hearing is the achievement.[1]

The non-adversarial nature of conversation is linked to a third feature, namely, its open-ended quality. This means that genuine conversations have no definable end point and they can be suspended and taken up again on future occasions. This open-ended character points to a relationship between conversation and education because the principal activities with which education is concerned, in particular science and history, are also open-ended and have no terminus prescribed or prescriptible in advance. Conversation is a central activity in much teaching and learning in both senses of the origin of the term. One is the sense of simply associating with others and the other turning around thoughts and ideas with others. As a form of association with other people, conversation can refer to adults and young people mixing together in the context of organised learning and this in itself could be said to be educative. In its second sense as a shared exploration of ideas, conversation features not only in much moral education but also in the teaching of many subjects across the curriculum. It can be pedagogically fruitful in promoting understanding within the major school subjects and is an essential aspect in the teaching of religion, literature, history, geography, economics and social studies. Conversation also arises in using teaching skills such as problem solving or group work. When considered as a pedagogic practice, however, conversation can encounter significant challenges and these need next to be examined.

The first series of obstacles to conversation within the teacher–learner relationship arises whether or not compulsion is involved. These obstacles occur where controversial issues are in question. Whether or not compulsion is present, the same principle applies, namely, tactful respect for the genuine opinions and beliefs of young people. Controversial issues can concern different spheres of human activity but for present purposes I shall concentrate on politics.

Obstacles to Conversation in the Educational Context

An irony of the choice of politics to exemplify the obstacles to conversation in the educational context is that Oakeshott considered politics to be 'extremely eligible to be a conversational art' (2004, p. 195). Political conversations, however, have a troubling propensity to degenerate into mere affirmations of well-rehearsed positions on practical issues. Oakeshott (2004) relates this tendency to the time of the Reformation in Europe when the 'new dogmatic principles' impelling the religious reformers had a baneful influence on political discourse. 'Dogmatic politics' came to overrun Europe 'by barbaric armies of abstract intelligence' (Oakeshott 2004).

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[1] It is interesting to note that the notion of listening has come to assume an importance in philosophy of education. A whole issue of *Educational Theory* was recently devoted to it (see Haroutinian-Gordon and Laverty 2011).

Fortunately humankind was 'saved by the perception that politics, alone among subjects of discourse, belongs solely to the realm of conversation' (Oakeshott 2004). As a result, 'dogmatic intelligence was met by conversational intelligence, and what we now call "politics" is the by-product of this encounter' (Oakeshott 2004). Those who wish to converse about politics must be vigilant in resisting to the forces of 'barbaric dogmatism' (p. 196). Oakeshott writes approvingly of the understanding of politics in ancient Greece as a 'poetic' activity where speaking was undertaken 'not merely to persuade but to compose memorable verbal images and in which action was undertaken for the 'achievement of "glory" and "greatness"' (Oakeshott 1981, p. 202, note 1). It is interesting that the production of eloquent images is a feature of some political discourse (Obama is a master practitioner) and, as I shall show, political conversation in the educational context can require the unpacking of images.

In David Denby's (1997) volume, *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf and Other Indestructible Writers of the Western World*, the author gives an example that illustrates this as he and his classmates struggle to converse about the image of colonialism in Joseph Conrad's short novel, *The Heart of Darkness*. The discussion of the book leads to tension between an African American and a Jewish student, two students who had never quarrelled before (p. 416). The book gives rise to the classic adversarial polemic that Oakeshott so rightly indicts. The discourse brings an 'edge to their voices that suggested an animus that went beyond mere disagreement' (Denby 1997). The awkwardness, indeed 'anger' generated in the room prompts the others to stir 'uneasily' and to look at one another in 'wonder and alarm' (Denby 1997). The professor, fearing that he had 'been striking sparks that threatened to turn into a conflagration', 'quickly turned the conversation away' to focus on the use of the metaphor of 'darkness' (Denby 1997, p. 417). Where conversations raise beliefs that are rooted in the core of individuals' identity, Oakeshott's description of conversation 'as the most hardly sustained of all the accomplishments of mankind' (1981, p. 200) seems very apt. One reason for this is that the virtue of genuine listening to, and hearing, the voice of the other is not easily acquired and exercised.

Obstacles to productive conversation can, however, be even greater where national and ethnic feelings are involved. Frank O'Connor's (1968) short story, *Guests of the Nation*, provides a memorable example of how excessive national sentiment can corrode human sympathy. During the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921), a group of Irish republicans is holding two British soldiers hostage and a bond of friendship and human solidarity develops between captors and captives. Yet, when ordered to execute their captives/friends, the republicans do so, albeit with great reluctance. But even today, some Irish people would find it almost impossible to discard the baggage of history and condemn the murderers. Egocentricity can take the form of an ethnocentricity that runs very deeply. In making conversation about this text a genuinely pedagogic practice where listening occurs rather than a confrontation between points of view, teachers have to exercise great care and tact informed by moral vision.

It is also important not to neglect the challenges to conversations about politics where issues of social class arise. As part of preparing students to use role-play and

discussion in the classroom, I devised the following scenario for use with a class of 16-year olds who have entered senior cycle after completing the Junior Certificate. The class has planned to have a meal in the local restaurant, *MacFries*, to celebrate their examination results. A serious problem, however, has arisen. In support of their demand to be allowed for a pay increase, a strike has been called by the young employees of *MacFries*. Half of the employees are immigrant workers and their pay is 50 cents an hour less than workers in an equivalent multi-national chain restaurant. The pupils have just received a request from the strikers to support them by respecting the picket and boycotting the restaurant. There is no other restaurant in the area which will do (*MacFries* is very cheap), so unless they pass the picket the celebration will have to be cancelled. The strike committee has also called on the pupils to sign a petition in support of their demands. In a workshop, I model the kind of conversation that might be conducted in a classroom. The conversation with the students can be quite heated with participants failing to listen to, and to hear, one another as the scenario prompts deep feelings about the philosophy and politics of work and about social class and immigration. One outcome of the process is to alert the students to the sensitivity of conversations about class issues in their teaching.

Sex and gender can also prompt fraught conversations of a political character, and the challenges that arise where sexual content and gender issues enter into the educational conversation are captured again in a chapter in David Denby's (1997) volume. He describes a session on the work of Simone de Beauvoir where, following an exposition of her main ideas, 'the conversation grew testy' (p. 393). The expression 'testy' is used again to describe the atmosphere on another occasion (p. 403). As Denby explains, the 'conversation about feminism was awkward, the most awkward we had all year' (1997). He suspects that the male students fear that they are being victims of a blanket indictment as 'louts' (Denby 1997). This situation reflects some of the tensions that I have experienced in my teaching career in addressing these issues.

A full account of the conversational disposition would need to address the resistance by the obstacle of political sentiments to sympathy with others. There are obvious implications of this undertaking for teachers of history and civics who wish to expand the boundaries of human sympathy of their students in order to enable them, in the words of Fred Dallmayr (2001), to take others seriously 'in their lifeworlds' or 'lived contexts' (p. 346). 'In genuine conversation', as Chris Lawn (1996) argues in his article on Gadamer and Oakeshott, we 'learn something about ourselves as we enter sympathetically the horizon of the other' (p. 272). One task of the educator is to encourage the sympathetic imagination required to enter into conversation. The need for a conversational disposition, including willingness to listen to others and to hear what they have to say, is also very acute where religion is concerned, especially as religious and political differences can go together as in Northern Ireland, Cyprus and the former Yugoslavia.

Conversations addressing the political themes can be reconciled with the recognition of opposing views that, although perhaps incompatible, reflect a reading of some aspects of the human condition that can legitimately be affirmed by other 'sane and honorable' (Donoghue 2002, p. 177) women and men. Many of the features

of the conversational disposition—attentiveness, tact responsiveness, openness and availability to another person are all captured in the Italian word *disponibilità*. The openness required involves a capacity to abandon egocentricity, that is, seeing everything only from one's own perspective, and to decentre into the minds of others. If an educational conversation is conducted in the right disposition, different but plausible, readings of historical and political events can be disclosed. There is a metaphor used by Oakeshott in his account of political activity that fits well with the conversational approach to teaching political issues. In the practice of politics, there is neither a 'safe harbour' nor 'a destination to be reached' (Oakeshott 1981, p. 155). Likewise, in the classroom there are questions to do with colonialism, national identity, social class, immigration and gender that do not offer final answers that will engage universal acceptance. Different readings may be offered of these matters and may be considered 'viable' to use a metaphor of the literary critic Denis Donoghue (1968, p. 288) in respect of the poet Wallace Stevens. What, then, are the implications of this argument for conversation as a pedagogic practice where political content is concerned? Irrespective of whether the conversations occur in the context of compulsory schooling, tactful respect is necessary for the genuine opinions and beliefs of young people, especially where controversial issues are involved. In appraising the politics of the past and of the present, generous and imaginative conversations can enable learners to realise that people of goodwill can embrace different versions of historical events and different perspectives on current politics. Yet, where compulsion arises, the potential to conduct fruitful conversations is even more fraught.

Compelled Conversations?

The actual context of school can provide an obstacle to conversation as a pedagogic practice because this context normally assumes the presence of compulsion. Young people can be resistant to educational activities as David Halpin, a former teacher, illustrates through this telling example. He recounts how he spent much frustrated effort in trying to gain the attention and interest of a very difficult pupil who decided to leave school without taking any examination. On leaving the school, the young man proudly announced that the teacher had never succeeded in teaching him anything. When asked why he continued to come to class, the young man replied, 'I simply wanted to see if you would ever give up' (Halpin 1997, pp. 2–3). Young people can resist the learning that the school offers, and these can be described as learning refusers, or they can resist the whole school experience, and these can be described as school refusers. The difference is that some people may actually enjoy being at school because of the opportunity that attendance provides to socialise with peers and, indeed, with sympathetic adults. Others, the school refusers, may be present solely because of legal duress and resist everything to do with school.

It is important not to romanticise or sentimentalise the learning necessary to participate in the educational conversation. This learning is more like that entailed in

learning a new language rather than the less arduous learning involved in acquiring one's mother tongue. Where this learning occurs in schools, teachers must take into account this institutional context in order to successfully promote educationally fruitful conversation. There are two features of the teacher–pupil relationship within the school framework—it is between an adult and a child and also between an individual and a group. Teaching in a school context, therefore, requires the exercise of an institutionally appropriate form of authority and the imposition of a certain control. Without this, the conversation can be frustrated.

Here is an example of a teacher who wishes to converse with his students but who fails to take this context into account. In his autobiography, *Another Country: Growing up in 1950s Ireland*, Gene Kerrigan writes of the torment that befell a young 'nice priest' (1998, p. 55) who was a chaplain-cum-teacher in his high school in the early 1960s. Kerrigan describes the priest as having a 'fresh, open mind, a soul yearning to enhance our spirituality within a changing, questioning society' (1998, p. 56). His aim was to get the boys 'talking in the vernacular of the day about eternal truths' (Kerrigan 1998). Willing to mingle with the pupils, he sat on an empty desk in the middle of the classroom rather than behind the teacher's desk.

> Smiling, open to dialogue. He wanted to be our friend.
> We ate him alive . . .
> He wanted nothing but good for us, he wanted to approach us on our terms, he respected us.
> And we laughed in his face . . .
> He offered friendship, we smelled weakness . . . .
> We mistook love for vulnerability and we seized him by the throat. (Kerrigan 1998)

In this incident, the institutional role expectations frustrated the desire of the teacher to engage in conversation.

Contractualism and 'Cultural Courtship'

Pádraig Hogan uses the suggestive metaphor of a 'cultural courtship' (Hogan 1995, p. 170) to refer to the relationship between teacher and taught in the school context. The teacher is the conduit of the 'authentic voice of the subject' which he/she must enact in an 'engaging yet faithful idiom; an idiom which addresses the sensibilities of the pupils in an inviting and challenging manner' (p. 170). In his most recent volume, Hogan (2010) gives a long and probing account of how this might occur in practice in respect of teaching French to a reluctant learner. Hogan imagines a situation between a teacher of French and a recalcitrant pupil whom he calls Billy Doyle. The teacher's frustrations are expressed through his thought processes given in the first person.

> We are now in our fourth week of term and Billy Doyle has so far produced no homework, or just a few untidy lines. He shows no appreciation of the trouble I've taken to make French interesting. He made a farce of the oral exercises during group-work on Monday . . . He shouldn't be doing French at all because he has neither interest nor aptitude, ... (p. 98)

This disruptive activity is a feature of Billy's behaviour in other lessons also and the teacher wonders if he might succeed in having him suspended. Hogan then proceeds to represent the scenario from Billy's perspective.

> This French is just stupid. I hate it. Nothing sounds like it's spelled. The whole language is for ponces if you ask me. The role-plays we do in group are ridiculous and I am not going to look like a ponce in front of the others . . . . The French teacher is a waste of space . . . . Maybe if I got suspended I could get my weekend job on weekdays as well. I could give some of the money to Ma. (p. 99)

There is, therefore, a great gulf of understanding between Billy and the teacher. Indeed, it may well be that none of his teachers is aware of the trying circumstances of Billy's life. Billy believes that part of the reason for the negative attitude towards him by teachers is that his mother has neither a husband nor long-term partner.

Hogan proposes that the teacher make the time to have a long conversation in the conventional sense in order to devise a contract regarding the conduct of future lessons. Billy would have to be offered a guarantee of confidentiality and each would have to make an effort to listen to the other and to learn to view the world from the other's perspective—an effort which would require 'something like provisional change of heart of the part of each' (Hogan 2010). Each would have to be willing to listen to the other's perception of the lessons. The teacher would have to acknowledge the reasons for Billy's perception of French but offer him the opportunity to work with other students. Rather than the conventional role-play dialogue in a French tourist office, the pupils could design role-plays based on being refused entry to a disco or on being challenged by the police. By coming to such a 'negotiated settlement' (p. 100) or contract arrangement, Billy would still have to work but he and the other would be given a change in the design of the content for the French conversations that would be conducted in class. Hogan admits that such an intervention will take time but through an effort of 'heart as well as mind' (Hogan 2010); the disaffected Billy may come to accept not an order but rather the teacher's invitation to join in the literal and metaphorical conversation of learning French.

Yet, even with all the sensitivity that it is humanly possible to muster, children may not wish to engage in the educational conversation and, therefore, it is necessary to consider what limits there are to compelling children to learn.

Respecting the Choices of Children

Are there limits to the right of adults to compel children to learn (that is, to force them to learn regardless of the children's own wishes) but even to coerce them into learning (that is, to force them to learn in spite of their own wishes)? I propose to focus in particular on the latter situation, i.e. on the use of coercion in education, (remember that many children compelled to learn would do so anyway if they were given a choice in the matter) and then I shall try to apply some suggested guidelines to one practical example.

We must remember that there are limits to what we can force others to do against their will. It is possible, in principle, even under conditions of the most extreme coercion to resist the author of such coercion, as happens in the case of martyrs. The formal freedom which is presupposed in the notion of human agency cannot be taken away, even by a creator. We cannot ensure certainty in endeavouring to convert others against their will to our purposes and so our power can never be absolute and irresistible. This formal freedom inherent in the nature of human agency, then, sets limits to what human beings may be made to do against their will by force or by the threat of force. In the educational context, therefore, moral considerations apart, the use or threatened use of physical force alone cannot guarantee learning in a situation where the pupil is absolutely determined to resist it. Where his/her will is unshakeably set against it we cannot force a pupil into making an effort to understand something, let alone into understanding it. And, although this may appear fairly self-evident, it is not always honestly faced in our school systems. Where, for example, a young person absolutely refuses to learn a particular school subject or to engage in a particular school activity, he/she cannot be forced to do so.

Such, then, are the actual limits to what we can force others to do against their will. But, are there limits to what we should try to force young people to learn against their wishes? In determining these limits, three factors ought to be taken into account. Firstly, there is the age of the young person, as normally one expects that children will become more capable of reaching mature decisions as they grow older. Accordingly, the situations in respect of a 6-year old and a 16-year old are different. We would not tolerate a 7-year old opting out of the study of his/her vernacular language or of Mathematics and we would hardly wish to force all students to study musicianship. The years at which the greatest difficulty will present itself are those of the junior cycle stage of secondary school. Even here, however, I would argue that as adults we cannot assume that we always know better than the child himself what is in a particular child's interest. Moreover, we must be careful to distinguish arguments about what is in the child's interest from rationalisations which are really concerned with what is in the interest of the administrative convenience. I am not condemning arguments based on genuine administrative/resource constraints but rather I am asking that they not be disguised as being in the interest of the child. There may be no administrative mechanism in a school to provide for a young person of, say, fourteen who just does not want to study business, for example, and this may be the only reason that the child is forced to remain in the business class. This, however, should be admitted as the reason for continuing with the situation and the interests of the child should not be disingenuously represented as the reason.

Secondly, we must take into account the importance of the activity to the young person's future life. Here, I would argue that considerations of utility are paramount and such considerations would justify strenuous efforts to try to help even reluctant young people to become literate and numerate and to promote their physical health. Young persons who are dysfunctional in these areas are not only disadvantaged with regard to the prosecution of their own material welfare but they also risk becoming a burden to others in society. Thirdly, we should take into account the degree of familiarity which the young person can reasonably be expected to have with the

subject. Where students have had long experience during their schooling of a particular subject or activity, they are in a good position to judge whether to continue with that subject or activity; however sensitively the conversation, in which the subject is given expression, is conducted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is appropriate to draw together the strands of this chapter. Conversation is an appropriate metaphor for educational activities, yet in dealing with sensitive issues about which people have deep feelings, it can be very fraught. Where the institutional context of the school introduces the element of compulsion, it can be especially challenging. It is, however, possible to conduct conversation in this context of initial pupil resistance where there is reciprocal agreement to the procedures used in teaching. But with the best will in the world, there are limits to what we can and should compel pupils to do.

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Compulsion Without Coercion: Liberal Education Through Uncommon Schooling

Naoko Saito

Reconsidering the Notion of Freedom in Compulsory Education

> Culture, which is the study of perfection, leads us . . . to conceive of true human perfection as harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and as a general perfection, developing all parts of our society.
>
> —Matthew Arnold (1994, p. 8)

These lines were written by Matthew Arnold, the British poet and critic, in the mid-nineteenth century. The prevailing spirit here of harmonious perfection of humanity, which he says is the task of our culture, resonates with the idea of *Bildung*—an idea that has become part of the German heritage, inspired most famously by such thinkers as von Humboldt, Schiller, Hegel, Gadamer and Adorno, and that still continues to have influence in the education of humanity. Roughly speaking, *Bildung* is the cultivation of self through initiation into culture, in the process of and for the sake of their mutual perfection, which means education for humanity. Though it originates in German culture, it has spread across cultural borders, and hence, its original meaning has been transformed in the particular contexts of foreign cultures—even though the original German word, *Bildung*, continues to be used. Indeed, it is difficult to translate the German term, *Bildung*, into a single term in other languages. In English, one might be tempted to paraphrase this with the expression "liberal education." The connotations of "liberal education" itself, for example in British culture, are, however, quite diverse (Løvlie and Standish 2002, pp. 324–335). In Japanese, it is translated as *Kyo-yo* whose literal translation into English is "cultivation." (The two Chinese characters that represent *Kyo-yo* [教養] mean "teaching" and "nurturing"). Still this particular word in Japanese, without familiarity with the German philosophical background, does not fully capture the original connotation of *Bildung*. This amorphous and fluid, and yet, powerful concept of *Bildung*, itself exemplifies its representation of human nature—ourselves being always and already translated

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into the foreign, which is a crucial aspect of cultural initiation. As Paul Standish points out, with reference to Gadamer, "'To seek one's home in the alien, to become at home in it' . . . is necessary for a spirit whose being consists in the return to itself of what is other" (Standish 2002, p. iii). We might say that confronting the difficulty of translation in itself and undergoing the experience of alienation and separation are aspects of cultural initiation. The task of *Bildung* for "harmonious perfection" carries a fated tension between initiation into what is called "common knowledge," "common culture," "common standards" and "common humanity," on the one hand, and the liberation of human potential, on the other. In the practical scene of education, this is the issue that liberal education needs to take into consideration.

This task of liberal education and *Bildung*, its cultivation of human nature in the round, must involve, so I shall argue in this paper, a philosophical question concerning the nature of *compulsory education*. One of the crucial tasks of compulsory education is how to initiate students into the body of common knowledge and to have them acquire common language. To measure the degree of success in such initiation and acquisition, educators and policy makers need common standards. The dilemma which they confront then has to do with the extent to which the compulsory nature of education should permit the space of freedom. Compulsory education by its nature entails a tension with freedom: and vice versa, freedom within the scheme of compulsory education tends to be narrowly defined in terms of the degree of deviation from the common. Freedom is typically associated with the liberal concept of the autonomous self. The philosophical question I shall raise in this paper is how we can reconsider our relationship with "common" standards, "common" knowledge, a "common" culture and a "common" language while at the same time reconsidering the nature of the human subject. I shall draw attention to the way that such dichotomy has suppressed a hidden dimension of human nature and how the goal of cultivating autonomous subjects narrows our concept of human perfection. I want to explore then if there is any alternative scope for freedom and to explore ways in which harmonious perfection does not have to be the matter of simply keeping a balance between freedom and cultural initiation.

It is in service of this particular task that I shall re-examine the significance of American philosophy (that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Dewey and Stanley Cavell) as American transformation of the tradition of *Bildung* as anti-foundationalist perfectionism. One of the central figures who sheds light on to the dilemma of compulsory education is John Dewey. In a special issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Bildung *in Postmodernity*, Lars Løvlie and Paul Standish discuss the "pragmatic transformation" of *Bildung* by Dewey and Rorty, which inherits and yet, goes beyond the original German tradition (Løvlie and Standish 2002, pp. 320–323, p. 333, p. 335). Indeed Dewey's philosophy of education provides us with an initial link between *Bildung* and American philosophy. Dewey is the figure who thinks that the idea of human subject that is narrowly associated with autonomy and freedom is misconceived, and, in his anti-foundationalist thinking, he takes what might be called a liberal-communitarian stance. His attempt to resolve the tension between progressive education and traditional education still has relevance today, and this is true with respect to our reconsideration of the nature of compulsory education. Dewey's reconfiguration of *Bildung* in the American context in his times is peculiarly American in that, as Løvlie and Standish argue, "Dewey's

inclusive view effectively did away with the elitism of German bourgeois humanism" (p. 322). And this American spirit of criticizing and reconstructing democracy from within, by common men, in their daily lives, is still viable today. As Dewey says, "democracy must begin at home" (Dewey 1984, p. 368)—from within the neighbouring community, from within one's native country and most importantly from within each individual. This requires the cultivation of the democratic spirit of friendship (Dewey 1988, p. 228) and open-mindedness (Dewey 1980, p. 183). In this respect, personal growth is crucial for the growth of democratic culture, and, especially for Dewey, "communication" is crucial to create such a democratic culture. In *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey says that man tends to consider either A or B terms. His philosophical task is to present an alternative vision of freedom as one that is released only in one's relation to community. Dewey's philosophical contribution is his anti-foundationalism, his going beyond any easy dualism between freedom and social control and between the autonomous individual and the community. In the global context of democracy today, a more radical way of overcoming dualism is needed than the one Dewey envisioned in the early twentieth century. In the philosophical context that confronts us—after the differences between modernity and post-modernity, and between liberalism and communitarianism—an alternative discourse sufficient to go beyond such dichotomisation is called for, as a means of exploring in a new way the cultivation of harmonious perfection. To respond to this difficult challenge, a further translation of *Bildung* is required within American philosophy. This necessitates a more radical way of reconfiguring human subject and the vision of liberal education, while at the same time reconfiguring the discourse on compulsory education.

In view of this task, this paper tries to detabilize any dichotomous relationship between compulsion and freedom, and by presenting an alternative vision of *liberal* education—a kind of education in service of the harmonious perfection of the human subject. This will involve re-engagement with common language, common knowledge, common standards and common humanity. As a pointer beyond Deweyan ways of overcoming dualism, and in search of more radical ways of replacing the human subject, and indeed of re-placing the subject of philosophy itself, I shall first introduce Paul Standish's attempt to go "beyond the self" in his *Beyond the Self: Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Levinas and the limits of language* (2012a). It shows that the re-placement of the subject of philosophy is a condition for us to reconfigure liberal education, while at the same time, to go beyond the dichotomy of compulsion and freedom. It also points us to an alternative horizon of American philosophy, beyond Dewey's pragmatism: this involves a reconsideration of the subject of *Bildung*, and it is to be found in the American perfectionism of Emerson and Thoreau as revived by Cavell. Following the orientation of the re-placement of the subject Standish shows to be possible, I shall further develop the possibility of Emerson's and Thoreau's American perfectionism as a hopeful, radical re-placement of the subject of philosophy and, by implication, of the re-envisioning of liberal education. The anti-foundationalist perfectionism of these writers points us, first, to an alternative concept of *the subject in translation*. This will guide us to another path towards "compulsory" education,

through the entangled relationship between freedom and cultural initiation. In conclusion, I shall present an alternative vision of liberal education—Thoreuvian liberal education through *uncommon schooling*. I shall try to show how this will help us re-conceive compulsory education—towards compulsion without coercion.

Replacing the Subject of Philosophy: Starting with Paul Standish's *Beyond the Self*

Beyond the Myth of Autonomous Self and Reconsidering the Nature of Liberal Education

In *Beyond the Self* ([2012a](#)), Paul Standish explores an alternative notion of the human subject, one that exceeds dichotomies of autonomy and care, of liberalism and communitarianism, and of the modern and the "post-modern." Indeed its attempt is to bridge different streams of thought and discourse in academic language, spanning divisions between Heidegger and Wittgenstein, between analytical (Anglo-American) and European (continental), and between Asia and West. Through such bridging, it seeks a richer orientation of the philosophy of liberal education. Standing on a contact point between Wittgenstein and Heidegger, and between post-structuralism and the American philosophy of Cavell and Emerson, Standish explores a movement beyond the self through the mediation of language. By implication, this involves our re-engagement with what is called "common standards," questioning anew the concept of freedom in liberal education, the idea that the human being becomes free only through initiation into tradition.

In the Preface to the book, Standish indicates three backgrounds against which his thought has been formulated. The first is the dominant way of thinking that has been affecting British society and education in the past 20 years. This is characterized by the "closed economy" that is to be thematized in Chap. 9. The second is a certain narrowing of the analytical stream in British philosophy of education, which has continuously affected people's ethical ways of thinking with regard to how education is to be conducted and which has defined such concepts as autonomy, liberal, subject and authenticity. A dialogue with this mainstream tradition of British philosophy of education is an inevitable task for Standish. From within this context, and beyond its limits, the author's position has been manifested as an alternative stream of philosophy of education. The third is the places of Heidegger and Wittgenstein in Anglophone philosophy. In an environment where analytical philosophy has been dominant, the way the author connects and re-interprets these two thinkers through the idea of the "limits of language" tends to be suppressed or considered to be peripheral. These three backgrounds constitute the tradition in relation to which he tries to work, and provide the linguistic contexts from within which and beyond whose limits his language has been tested and created. Confronted with them, Standish's motive in writing the book is to present an alternative horizon of education, in which the hidden relationship between the self and language can be revealed. Being

engaged with these limits, such key concepts as liberal education and autonomy are reconstructed. Without being completely negated, they are modified in the author's pursuit of an alternative vision of the good life—towards the American philosophy of Cavell and Emerson, and towards the post-structuralist thought of Levinas, both of which are characterized in terms of perfection without final perfectibility. The idea of receptivity, which permeates the first part of the book, is developed later in criticizing the essentialism of Heidegger and through the evocation of an "education otherwise," along the lines of Levinas.

In this general structure, the critique begins with his opening account of the virtue of humility, and the force of this is expanded and elaborated through the chapters on language, the human subject, and autonomy and authenticity, all of which can be said to unfold from that opening account. It begins with the critique of the rational-assertive mode of language and its false assumptions regarding the designative nature of language (the representationalist paradigm). At the centre of the criticism lies the idea of the "limits of language." This is presented in relation to the virtues of *receptivity* and *humility*, which are said to characterize the relationship between the self, the other and language "beyond the self." A shift of thinking takes place from the "rational-assertive" mode to the "receptive–responsive (feminine)" mode of language. This simultaneously means the re-placement of the subject of philosophy, the displacement of the excessive prominence of the idea of rational autonomy in Western modern philosophy. The re-placement of the subject returns us to the experience of myth and wonder, while taking a turn towards a kind of other-regarding virtue. It does not, however, mean to privatize or mystify the other as the unknown, or to humiliate or abrogate the self. The turn from masculine to feminine modes of language does not mean a reactionary turn from rationality to irrationality or to the emotive. Rather its point is to remind us of the possibilities of our attention to the alternative dimensions of experience and reality, those that are covered over by the rational-assertive (masculine) mode of language and thought. The contrast here corresponds to two economies of thought that the author develops towards the end of the book: the closed economy of exchange and satisfaction, on the one hand, and the open economy characterized by endless obligations, on the other. In the latter, the more we respond to the demands of the other, the more our responsibility to the other deepens and intensifies. Beyond our use of language that is justified in the logic of rationality, this alternative reason and rigor of thought is proposed.

One of the significant implications of the book's attempt to re-place the subject of philosophy *beyond the self* is to reconsider and reconstruct the idea of liberty in liberal education. The dominance of the ideal of rational autonomy and a particular configuration of the human subject have affected the way we conceive liberal education and its underlying assumption about freedom. The multiple senses of "liberal" are apt to cloud the significance of this phrase. It is true that the idea itself ranges from the liberal education proposed by Anglophone analytical philosophers (R. S. Peters, Paul Hirst, Robert Dearden in the UK, and Israel Scheffler in the USA), who had adopted the methods of conceptual analysis (the dominant form of philosophy in mainstream Philosophy departments) in order, so it was claimed, to bring a new rigor to philosophical enquiry into education (Standish, Preface), to the educational philosophy of Dewey (in the US, at least), and to the ideas of Michael Oakeshott.

The lineage of these thoughts stretches back, on the one hand, to the political philosophy of J.S. Mill and, on the other, to Plato and classical Greek thought (one that is featured by initiation of the young into the tradition of thought and inquiry for the gradual development of their mind). But the critique of rational autonomy, and of the conception of human subjectivity that goes with it, was well underway in Continental philosophy, even as liberalism of this form persisted to be the dominant framework for Anglophone moral and political philosophy. In the years since the heyday of Peters and Scheffler, the term "liberal education" has been claimed by those who put emphasis on autonomy and choice, and who see themselves as working in the tradition of thought that descends from Mill. There is some tendency, furthermore, on the part of those who use these terms, to equate liberal education with analytical philosophy of education. Standish argues that this recent tradition of "liberal philosophy of education" (John White or Harry Brighouse) has eclipsed the more rich and more distinctive aspect of the ideas developed by Peters and Scheffler, who inherit a tradition of "philosophy of liberal education," in which the turning of the learner from illusion and towards truth, via a kind of (non-sectarian) cultural initiation, was seen as a realisation of human freedom (Standish 2012a, p. 15). In some ways, this is something like *Bildung*. And the critique of autonomy is far from a total rejection of this value, but rather a painstaking recognition of the conception of subjectivity it generates and the limitations of this in human experience. From this perspective, Standish's attempt to re-place the subject of philosophy is grounded by his real concern with how to realize an "economy of higher education" while inheriting a richer tradition of philosophy of liberal education. To achieve this, he tries to release the language of education from its poverty. His proposal of a receptive–responsive (feminine) mode of language is intended to go beyond the limited language of liberal philosophy of education.

Standish attempts this by bridging different streams of thought—in the case of this book, between Anglo-American philosophy and continental philosophy, more particularly between Wittgenstein and Heidegger. The context of what has in the past been a mutual shunning of traditions, Standish writes:

> It was obvious that to do so required addressing massive problems of style. There was the prevailing discourse of philosophy of education, in which Wittgenstein was frequently referenced, but perhaps read in a somewhat limited way, and in which Heidegger was more or less unknown. There was the extensive secondary literature on Wittgenstein, which took me into complexities of interpretation that the philosophy of education audience would be unlikely to tolerate. And then again, there was, across a wider gap, the extensive literature on Heidegger, which spoke in an idiom largely at odds with the academic forms of discourse of both the Wittgensteinians and the philosophers of education. To make things even more complicated, there was also the sense that, if I was to address the educational problems referred to above, I must somehow keep in mind the practical educator. This was not to be a purely scholarly enquiry. (pp. 18–19)

In her endorsement for the book, Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, President of the British Wittgenstein Society, writes: "in this excellent work, Paul Standish casts an original eye on the creative tension between analytical and continental philosophy." Standish's attempt to be engaged in the "creative tension" between analytical and continental philosophies is inseparable from the way the relationship between Heidegger

and Wittgenstein needed to be recounted: and in turn that relationship is integral to his attempt to reconfigure the relationship between the self, the other and language based upon the ideas of receptivity and humility. The attempt has been developed further in the latter part of the book towards Levinas' idea of otherness and Cavell's ordinary language philosophy (itself an interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy). In a sense Standish's turn from Heidegger to Levinas is mediated by Cavell (who is heavily influenced by Wittgenstein) and Emerson: the book opens a possibility of a dialogue between post-structuralism and American philosophy. His attempt to translate these different streams of thought requires the destabilization of discourse in philosophy and calls for a mode of dialogue that is not one-sided—dialogue that cannot even be assimilated in the mode of exchange and reciprocity.

The last but most important contribution of *Beyond the Self* lies in its questioning anew the "practicability" of philosophy. On the one hand, Standish expresses concern with neo-liberalism and the culture of accountability, those which assimilate our thinking and language to the closed economy. On the other hand, he criticizes the dichotomous way of thinking that opposes the practical (the ordinary) and the scholarly (the philosophical). From his critique of the language of curriculum, to his envisioning of "education otherwise," and then "towards an economy of higher education," Standish tries to liberate the language of education from the dominant discourse of politics and economics, and to regain the autonomy of language in philosophy of education. The strong orientation towards otherness that is presented via Levinas in opposition to the principle of exchange is tied up with the virtue of humility in the horizon of an *aneconomy*—one that tends to be obliterated in the discourse of justice and mutual recognition. This again, however, does not mean to retreat into an unworldly and spiritual dimension or into what is alleged to be a non-linguistic, primordial state of mystical experience. The book presents us with an alternative notion of transcendence, what in another book the author calls "transcendence down" (Standish 2012b, p. 25) from within ordinary, common life: downward is the direction of "beyond the self." In encountering the language of practice in education, philosophers themselves undergo the feeling of disturbance. This is not simply a matter of applying theory to practice, and it is not an abrogation of the rigor of philosophical thinking in acquiescence in practice. Rather this is a condition for replacing the subject of philosophy in an orientation towards otherness.

Reconsidering "Compulsory" Education: A Turn Towards American Philosophy

The attempt in *Beyond the Self* of the re-placement of subject of philosophy has thus shown an alternative way of working towards harmonious perfection in liberal education, beyond the dichotomous schema of freedom and cultural initiation. Standish destabilizes our stereotypical dichotomy between initiation, into tradition and freedom as a matter of reaction or deviation from such tradition and makes us reconsider the meaning of "liberal." By doing so, he points us in an indirect way

to the alternative idea of compulsion that does not have to be opposed to freedom. This should affect the way we perceive our relation to our common knowledge and common culture. Beyond the ideal of autonomy (which was alleged to be the condition of human freedom), the idea of the self, is advanced in this book, centering on the concept of humility and receptivity (which is suggested to be the condition of human freedom). And through a contact point between Wittgenstein and Heidegger on the limits of language, the book demonstrates that such radical re-placement of the subject of philosophy necessitates our re-engagement with language. Through the limits of language, and in view of "what cannot be said," the book opens the horizon of our life in which our selves are always in a transitory border between the inner and the outer, between the private and the public—as it were in the process of translation. And such a sense of standing on the border disturbs our conventional mode of dividing into camps of A and B, a tendency that typically constrains our thinking about "compulsory" education. It also moves us out of the mode of thinking in which we think of going "beyond the self" as a kind of project to be achieved, a realizable substantializing of the self. To think "beyond the self" involves rather a transcendence of. From the perspective of otherness, towards which our responsibility is never satisfied, it points us to the notion of *incommensurability*, in which any mode of comparison or juxtaposition is destabilized. This lays the way for an alternative horizon of anti-foundationalism, exceeding the opposition of the absolute ground and the lack of such ground, and, by implication, of the "modern" and the "post-modern." Such an alternative anti-foundationalism, philosophically speaking, is more radical than Dewey's pragmatism. This Standish shows by introducing us to another stream of American anti-foundationalism found in Cavell and Emerson. *Beyond the Self* opens an alternative path between Europe and America for the common task of replacing the subject of philosophy, and it does this via its examination of the nature of language. I shall further explore this tenor of anti-foundationalism from the side of American philosophy. My ultimate goal is to show a richer, though an oblique, way of re-conceiving compulsory education.

Radical Re-placement of the Self in American Transcendentalism

In the map that is presented by Standish, I shall contextualize American transcendentalism, to enhance its radical re-placement of the self beyond the idealization of autonomy, and to show its implications for re-conceiving the nature of liberty in liberal education, and more in general, towards a richer notion of compulsion.

Emerson proposes an anti-foundationalist way of self- and cultural transformation. The Emersonian response to the antinomy of the inner and the outer (and for that matter, of the private and the public, of the particular and the universal) is encapsulated in his statement: "the inmost in due time becomes the outmost" (Emerson 2000, p. 132). This echoes Cavell's reinterpretation of Emerson, which he calls "Emersonian moral perfectionism" (Cavell 1990)—an idea of perfection that is not aimed at the final state of perfectibility, but that lays emphasis on the ongoing process

of perfecting. Emersonian perfectionism is characterized by "goallessness" (Cavell 1990, p. xxxiv): the path of perfection is "not up but on" (p. 10). This echoes Emerson's idea of expanding circles—the idea that [o]ur life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that round every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning" (Emerson 2000, p. 252). This he calls the "law of eternal procession," saying that "[p]ermanence is a word of degrees. Everything is medial" (Emerson 2000, p. 253). This sounds similar to Dewey's idea of expansive growth, and yet there remains a crucial difference from the latter. Cavell puts an emphasis on the discontinuous moment of drawing a new circle (Cavell 1992, p. 135; Cavell 1990, p. xxxiv). In the anti-foundationalism of Emersonian perfectionism, individual impulses produce moments of discontinuity in continuity in cultural reconstruction: it cannot simply remain a pre-given cultural gift: in Emerson's words, there is "a residuum unknown, unanalyzable" (Emerson 2000, p. 254). A strong focus on the innerness of the self, again, resonates with the European tradition of *Bildung*, whose aim is to cultivate the innate power of an individual and to marry this with that person's cultural and social development. In Emerson's version of American liberal education, however, such innerness serves to create and criticize democracy from within.

In order to further tap the potential of the anti-foundationalist element in Emerson's American perfectionism, it is particularly important to take cognizance of Cavell's re-reading of Emerson's and Thoreau's transcendentalism from the perspective of ordinary language philosophy. Through the limits of language, and in view of "what cannot be said," we have seen that Standish's *Beyond the Self* opens the horizon of our life in which our selves are to be found in that transitory border between the inner and the outer, between the private and the public. The radical nature of the self implied here can be further elucidated through Cavell's American philosophy. Cavell says that the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau underwrites ordinary language philosophy (and, by implication, that language plays a crucial role in transcendence) (Cavell 1984, p. 32). Cavell's philosophy of ordinary language is not merely a matter of linguistic analysis: it has social, cultural and political implications. This is demonstrated in the emphasis, within the language community, on the "we" (Cavell 1979, p. 20).

Cavell's approach to language, though apparently similar to Rorty's contingent creation of new vocabularies, is permeated by the sense of tension, struggle and even of abyss in one's relation to language. For Cavell, language not only serves as a bridge between the human being and nature, providing "the cherishing mother of all significance," as Dewey says (Dewey 1981, p. 146), but also constitutes a rift: it demands not only sharing and continuity, but also separation. This is most distinctively captured by Thoreau's and Cavell's idea of the "father tongue"—"a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak" (Thoreau 1992, p. 69; Cavell 1992, p. 15). Thoreau and Cavell, while not negating the role of the "mother tongue," say that the human being needs to gain distance on the mother tongue, in order to "be born again." If the mother tongue is characterized by the immediacy, typically represented by spoken language, the father tongue is represented by the indirectness of the written word as

"the maturity and experience" of the mother tongue (Thoreau 1992, p. 68; Cavell 1992, p. 15). We are as humans fated to this dual relation to language, and hence to inheritance and innovation. Re-engagement with the father tongue is a way of sustaining the space of what Cavell calls "the daily, insistent split in the self that being human cannot . . . escape" (Cavell 2004, p. 5). And this is the only means through which transcendence can take place. Thoreau expresses this with the phrasing: "the volatile truth of our words continually betrays the inadequacy of the residual statement" (Thoreau 1992, p. 217; Cavell 1992, p. 27). Truth refuses to be finally fixed: it is "instantly *translated*" (Cavell 1992). Thoreau's anti-representationalist view of language is characterized by transitivity and volatility, which is echoed in Cavell's idea of *philosophy as translation* (Cavell 2014). Thoreau says: "We should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side" (Thoreau 1992, p. 216). Language is prophetic here. This temporal nextness, going beyond what is, invites the self to transcend itself. Thoreau continues: "I desire to speak somewhere *without* bounds; like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments" Ibid. Thoreau's father tongue occasions the undergoing of such disjunctive moments of awakening and rebirth—but only from within its embeddedness in the mother tongue. We must stand on precarious ground, alert to the sense of our being on a border, between past and future, inner and outer, private and public and fall and rebirth. This, however, is no middle way. Emerson's thinking is not Dewey's intelligence, Cavell writes, for "[t]here is no middle way between, say, self-reliance and self-(other-) conformity" (Cavell 2003, p. 9); and "[l]anguage is not, as such, either public or private" (Cavell and Standish 2012, p. 157). What is at stake in Emerson (and Thoreau) is the very moment of "conversion or transfiguration," and this is a kind of transcendence. We find ourselves on "some boundary or threshold, as between the impossible and the possible" (Cavell 2014). It is translation that captures the risky sense of standing on tiptoe (Thoreau 1992, p. 71), that shows the anti-foundational nature of ordinary language. Translation reveals an impulse to transcendence that is inherent in language. Uncertainty and unpredictability hover over the text. All you can do is to cultivate the ground here and now, to produce writing that "carries its weight with you" (Cavell 2005, p. 221): it is only *you* who can bring about morning. There is a sense here of the mixture of chance and necessity, of the accidental and the fateful. Philosophy as translation does not take up the untranslatable as a problem to be solved. The point is rather that in encountering the untranslatable we can gain some intimation of the way that we are founded, without fixed foundation.

It is this transcendentalist idea of translation that I believe to be fundamental to self and cultural transformation. As Standish interprets Gadamer's notion of *Bildung*, translation in the broader sense explicated by Cavell, Emerson and Thoreau implies a re-engagement with common language. The sense of the ungraspable, what exceeds our grasp, and of the sense of transitory moment, and of standing on tiptoe corresponds to the sense of otherness expressed throughout *Beyond the self.* By the use of the adverbial phrase "in due time" in his statement, "the inmost in due time become the outmost," Emerson indicates that a path from the inmost (the private) to the outmost (the public) is to be achieved. Similarly, in *Walden*, but in a more radical tone and through actually living in the woods, Thoreau proposes that we explore our

"private sea" by being "alone" before we commit ourselves to an allegedly public act. Emerson's and Thoreau's call for starting from the private, achieving *on the way* a genuine sense of the public, its strong sense of the singularity of the self, is a primordial form of American philosophy. In contrast to the more communitarian orientation of Dewey's pragmatism, however, Emerson's and Thoreau's emphasis on the private represents the radial re-placement of the subject, beyond autonomy and towards humility and receptivity, along the lines Standish shows in *Beyond the Self*. Resounding the movement of *Beyond the Self*, and sharing its tenor of thought in incommensurability, the thought in excess of American transcendentalism disturbs the conventional dichotomy between compulsion and freedom, between autonomy and care, between liberalism and communitarianism, and between modern and what is called the "post-modern." When Thoreau heard local tales of the unfathomable depth of the pond, he dropped a plumb-line into the water to measure it, finding, not to his surprise, that "there is a solid bottom everywhere" (Thoreau 1992, p. 220; Cavell 1992, p. 76). Echoing Emerson's phrase "finding as founding" (Cavell 1989, p. 112), this is the Emersonian anti-foundationalist view that "[f]oundation reaches no farther than each issue of finding" (p. 114); this is philosophy "on the way" (Cavell 1992, p. 137). In their philosophy as translation, the untranslatable brings us back to the fact that we need to recreate the criteria of our judgment, testing them against each other. We are invited to rebuild common standard where there is no solid bottom.

Compulsion Without Coercion: Towards Uncommon Schooling

> Alas! What with foddering the cattle and tending the store, we are kept from school too long, and our education is sadly neglected.
>
> —Thoreau (1992, p. 74)

In view of the alternative anti-foundationalism in American perfectionism, we are now introduced into an alternative vision of *liberal* education. Just as Standish re-envisions liberal education through an alternative conception of liberty and freedom, beyond the idealization of autonomy, American philosophy opens a way beyond a conventional framework in which freedom (oftentimes associated with autonomous self) is narrowly defined in opposition to cultural initiation, to social control, or to obligation (with a touch of coercion) to community. This calls for our reengagement with the common, while at the same time, reorienting us towards an alternative sense of freedom—one that is not necessarily exclusive of the common. This will guide us to the reconfiguration of the idea of compulsory education beyond the schema of compulsion as opposed to freedom.

This alternative picture of liberal education along the line of American perfectionism is represented by Thoreau's idea of *uncommon schooling*—Thoreau reread in the light of Cavell's ordinary language philosophy, and in the framework of thinking that is presented in Standish's *Beyond the Self.* Cavell says: "The philosophical appeal to what we say, and the search for our criteria on the basis of which we say what we say, are claims to community" (Cavell 1979, p. 20). The exercise of one's language, testing it together in conversation, is a way of learning "membership in the polis,"

and this involves identifying citizens as "neighbors" (Cavell 1992, p. 85). And yet, neighbouring cannot be simply communal or cooperative. Conversation is an occasion through which each of us discovers our voice, as our own voice, as a right to be recovered. Becoming political is an educational task, and yet it cannot simply be an education of the common good as pre-given. The common things cannot simply be held in common as an a priori matter. Becoming political is the process of the re-education of one's relation to common language and, hence, to one's common human nature. The point here is not the total devaluation of common knowledge (and an reactionary turn into laissez-faire education) or the complete abrogation of common standards (and over-valuation of children's freedom). This is the heart of liberal education derived from American transcendentalism: and education in what Thoreau calls "uncommon schools" (Thoreau 1992, p. 74; Standish 2005). We are constantly standing at a crossroads between inheritance of and deviation from the language community. This is when our re-education of the mother tongue, which is to say, the education of the father tongue, begins.

In Thoreau's uncommon schooling, not only the idea of common, but also the idea of freedom is reconfigured, while at the same time the way we read Thoreau's *Walden* is transformed. *Walden* is often read as a book on nature, a simple life in the woods away from civilized life being romanticized and eulogized. It can then be associated with Thoreau's proposal of free schools. In the light of Cavell's ordinary language philosophy, however, *Walden* is revived as a book on "reading in a high sense" (Thoreau 1992, p. 71), including our re-engagement with classics and initiation into cultural tradition. In its radical re-placement of subject—human subject, the subject of the book, and the subject of philosophy—to which *Beyond the Self* has oriented us, we cannot read *Walden* any more in terms of a simple dichotomy between freedom and coercion, between withdrawal and social participation, and between the autonomous free agent and relational self. Singularity and eccentricity of the self, the otherness of the self, need to be acknowledged in humility and receptivity before and throughout the process of socialization. To repeat, in Cavell's ordinary language philosophy, participation in the language community is an ingredient of our political life, where "the polis is the field within which I work out my personal identity and it is the creation of (political) *freedom*" (Cavell 1979, p. 23).

Furthermore in reading *Walden*, we need to reconsider our approach to what is called "deviation" (implicitly from common standard). We tend to silence ourselves by silencing others in the everyday use of our familiar language. Political speech can anytime risk moralism. American perfectionism is testimony to the belief that one's own voice counts, with the hope that "with a small alteration of its structure, the world might be taken a small step—a half step—toward perfection" (Cavell 1994, p. 50). Greatness is measured by the degree to which each individual can find or realize the best within himself, here and now: it depends upon the extent to which he has committed himself to a further self, in "a continual effort to raise himself above himself, to work a pitch above his last height" (Emerson 2000, p. 255). This is not the principle of levelling up or down, but rather a *raising* of spirits that is equally a challenge for all, each in his own singularity. As Cavell says of Thoreau, the writer speaks to those of "the *middle* class" in "*moderate* circumstances" (Cavell

1992, p. 78), and, that is to say, he confronts them with their lives, the mediocracy in which they acquiesce. This is a task of liberal education to raise common standard, one Thoreau wishes to recreate in the ordinary, the common, "under the skies of Concord," not in Paris or Oxford (Thoreau 1992, p. 74). The pressing task for the Emersonian perfectionist is, how to move the spirit from this middling equilibrium and mundaneness in order to realize an aristocracy within our ordinary lives, to achieve genus for common man. Deviation and difference cannot be measured in terms of the established, average point. Becoming human requires the capacity to acknowledge the uncommon in our common life—to be receptive to what exceeds what we have so far perceived to be common. This requires us to shift our mode of living towards humility, as Standish has shown. This is not simply a matter of giving equal opportunities, but of exposing the human psyche to what it wishes to avoid, to what we cannot avert, the unhandsome part of our condition. It opens up an alternative mode of thinking and orients us towards difference beyond the politics of mutual recognition. In that regard, education for citizenship is education for "isolation" (Cavell 1992, p. 85), for learning how to build the most sincere relationship of neighbourhood with others: isolation is a necessary condition for participating anew in the common. The notion of political participation is then to be realigned with what Cavell identifies as "a confrontation which takes the form of a withdrawal" (Cavell 1984, p. 50).

If this is the orientation of Thoreauvian liberal through, the notion of compulsion is transfigured, towards what might be called *compulsion without coercion*. Liberal education in American perfectionism is in a sense "compulsory," or to use American transcendentalist term, "fateful." But this cannot be flatly equated with coercion or obligation. It presents an alternative space of autonomous individuality, a conception that the political discourse of liberalism, centering on rights and freedom of choice, tends to cover over. Or in other words, American transcendentalism presents us with an alternative vision of human freedom as the power that can be released only through one's engagement with fate. Replacing the subject of philosophy along the lines of Standish's *Beyond the Self*, this will guide us to the vision of education for humanity that serves to the cultivation of receptivity to otherness. This can be called an alternative horizon of cosmopolitan education without solidarity, of harmonious perfection without unity.

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On the Justification of Compulsory Schooling

Anders Schinkel

Introduction

Most countries in the world have some system of compulsory schooling. This usually entails compulsory school attendance for children between certain ages, as well as certain (general) requirements set by the government regarding curricular contents and quality.[1] This system constitutes a huge intervention in people's (most obviously the children's) lives—children are required to spend a significant portion of their lives in educational institutions, and parents are punishable if they fail to do what they can to make sure their children attend school. The system has been called 'the most compulsory system in our society' in terms of its extension, duration and intention (significance; Aviram 1986, p. 51). Advocates and critics of compulsory schooling agree on one thing: compulsory schooling stands in need of justification.[2] They obviously disagree about the possibility of providing one.[3]

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[1] In the Netherlands, for instance, children are legally required to attend school between the ages of 5 and 16, and until they are 18 if before that age they have not acquired a diploma.

[2] With regard to the interference with children's lives, one may wonder why state intervention would require a strong justification, whereas parental influence over children's lives tends to go undiscussed or even unnoticed. The latter seems to be the result of the common assumption of a parental prerogative to decide how their children are raised and educated. I share this assumption, in the sense that I believe the state's claims in this regard to be secondary (in most cases) to those of the parents. An argument for this, which I cannot present here, would include the idea that the parents have the primary duty to take care of their children and act in their best interest, and that therefore they must also have a right to do these things. Furthermore, the parents normally have the greatest (personal) stake in their children's well-being (both for the children's sake and their own), due to their special relationship with them—a relationship in the quality of which they also have a great interest. Of course, none of this amounts to saying that children are owned by their parents or are an extension of them, or that parents can decide about them however they please. Nor does it mean that parents do in fact always act in their children's best interest.

[3] One of the best known critiques of compulsory schooling, apart from the work of deschoolers like Ivan Illich (1975) and Paul Goodman (1972) and a critical pedagogue like Paulo Freire (2007), is

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My main purpose in this chapter is to develop an idea of what such a justification would have to look like. If a candidate justification of compulsory schooling is to have a chance of being successful, what kind of justification will it have to be? I will argue that it must be concrete and contextual, rather than abstract, and that it must be both pragmatic and principled. I will also argue that, apart from such a theoretical justification, there is another kind of justification in play, a 'historical justification'—justification seen as a process of 'proving itself' (or failing to do so) in the course of time. The theoretical justification must refer to the historical justification, and vice versa. I will end the main body of the chapter, in the section 'On the Grounds of a Justification of Compulsory Schooling', with some further suggestions as to the grounds on which a justification of compulsory schooling must be based, with special attention to the general aim of education. I conclude the chapter by looking at a few possible objections and further questions.

In the course of this chapter I develop (in outline) a view of the (general) aim of education and its relations to education's extrinsic and overarching ends; in the context of the present text this serves the main purpose of showing what a justification of compulsory schooling entails, but it is important enough on its own to be mentioned as a secondary purpose of the chapter.

What a Justification of Compulsory Schooling Must Look Like

The Justification Must be Concrete and Contextual, Rather than Abstract

In *practice*, any defence of compulsory education *will be* a defence of a *particular* (not necessarily existing) system, or a particular type of system, of compulsory education, most likely (in this day and age) of compulsory *formal* education, and any critique of compulsory education will in fact be a critique of a particular system of compulsory education. Hence, criticizing the deschoolers, Callan (1983, p. 46) argues we should distinguish carefully 'between the diversity of institutions that can properly be called "schools" and the very limited number of forms which schooling takes in the present technological age'. The principles advocated by deschoolers such as Illich could very well be realized in some form of school, so Callan argues—it

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Krimerman (1978). Other (radical) critiques are contained in Rickenbacker (ed.) (1974). Reagan (1973) emphasizes the need for a justification, and suggests some criteria it would have to meet; so does Callan (1983). Callan (1988) offers a paternalistic justification of compulsory schooling, based on the value of autonomy. A cautious justification of (some form of) compulsory schooling, in some respects similar to what I will suggest, is also given by Haydon (1977). Chamberlin (1989) offers a defence of compulsory schooling, which Williams (1990) attempts to buttress. Kleinig (1981) adopts an intermediate position, concluding that none of the main arguments for compulsory school attendance are really persuasive, but that 'there are no obvious alternatives within the existing social formation' (p. 201). Aviram (1986) calls the justification of compulsory education a 'neglected moral duty'.

is not schooling as such the deschoolers are actually against, but only some of its current forms.[4]

At the *theoretical* level any defence of compulsory education *must be* a defence of a *particular* (real or imagined) system, or at least a particular type of system, of compulsory education, and likewise for critiques of compulsory education. Why? Why can we not provide a justification (or critique) of compulsory education in the abstract, i.e. without reference to a specific (type of) system and to particular historical circumstances? Let us first consider the highest possible level of abstraction. It would then be possible to *reject* (the possibility of justifying) compulsory education in the abstract, only (a) if compulsion and education were necessarily at odds with each other, or (b) if compulsion as such could never be allowed.

(a) If no form of compulsion were compatible with at least some form of education, the idea of compulsory education could be rejected without reference to any specifics of the system or the situation. But in fact it is not true that all forms of compulsion are logically at odds with all forms of education; nor is it the case that all forms of compulsion are contingently opposed to all forms of education. For instance, where school attendance is compulsory (as it is in most countries) education can still occur within schools—educational aims need not be thwarted by the fact that education is, in this sense, compulsory. People who think compulsion and education are necessarily at odds tend to confuse compulsion with coercion, as various authors have rightly pointed out.[5]

(b) A rejection of compulsory education in the abstract would also be possible if compulsion of whatever kind were by definition unacceptable—or, at any rate, if compulsion of children were always unacceptable, assuming we are concerned with the education of children. Compulsion of adults is generally regarded as more difficult to justify than compulsion of children. Nevertheless, some authors, such as Krimerman, find compulsion (in principle) no less morally problematic in the case of children than in the case of adults (1978, p. 86–87). Even Krimerman, however, does not reject compulsory education purely on the ground that it entails compulsion, for he recognizes that compulsion of children (as of adults) can sometimes be justified, i.e. that paternalism can be legitimate (p. 87–88). I don't think it requires argument to show that compulsion of children is not by definition unacceptable; various forms of compulsion are clearly necessary during child-rearing, in children's best interest. Furthermore, simply because education of some form is both inescapable and necessary for children—even if it is only in the form of socialization—and because children's desires are not naturally in harmony with this necessity, education will also inevitably contain elements or moments of compulsion.[6] So an abstract rejection of compulsory

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[4] He applies the same reasoning to Paulo Freire: his teaching took place outside the framework of the Brazilian school system, but nothing prevents Freire's ideas 'from giving shape to educational institutions [which] would be recognisable as schools' (p. 47).

[5] For instance, Katz (1977), Kleinig (1981), and Callan (1983).

[6] Haydon (1977, p. 10) remarks that "it would be inappropriate to say that anyone is compelling the child to be socialized" if "no part of the process of a child's socialization can be separated out from

> education on the ground that compulsion as such is unacceptable fails. The scale, type and purpose of compulsion will have to be specified.

If the above is correct, compulsory education—or even compulsory schooling—also cannot be *justified* in the abstract; a justification must refer to a particular system of compulsory education or schooling, and to particular social and historical circumstances. It must be concrete and contextual. The reason mirrors what was said above: it is that although not all forms of compulsion are always unacceptable, some forms of compulsion *are* always unacceptable, and some are *sometimes*, or for certain purposes, unacceptable. Specifically, although compulsion and education are not necessarily incompatible, not all forms of compulsion are compatible with all kinds of education. I take this to be self-evident. Therefore, we will always need to specify both the type of compulsion and the form of education or schooling involved. Furthermore, we need to specify the societal context for both, because the necessity for compulsion (if it exists) will derive partially from this context, and both (some of) the aims and contents of education will be strongly related to it. To give a very crude example: in our kind of society, literacy must be among the aims of education, and learning to read and write will therefore be part of the curriculum; but this was not always a condition for the justifiability of a particular child's (in some sense compulsory) education.

The above considerations concerned the highest possible level of abstraction; what about intermediate levels? Perhaps if we specify 'compulsory education' a bit more, though still without reference to a concrete system or particular societal circumstances, we can find a justification (or come to see that there is none) on this intermediate level of abstraction. This is in fact what Aviram suggests—as a first step—where he (also) distinguishes between abstract and concrete justifications. Aviram (1986, p. 54) argues that a rational justification of compulsory education requires 'a clear formulation of the conditions the justification has to meet in order to be valid' and 'a clear characterisation of the object of justification'. The 'Principle of Legitimate Paternalism' determines the conditions the justification has to meet, and the object of justification is the 'compulsion basic to c.e.' (c.e. being compulsory education).[7] Now, Aviram suggests that the characterization of this compulsion has to be done twice, once in the abstract (formally), and once concretely (empirically). The former in the context of a justification of the different elements of compulsion in the abstract, the second as part of a justification of those elements as they are given

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its day-to-day living and growing up in the family and the wider community". I agree; I would also not say the child is 'compelled to be socialized'. But the child's socialization will include elements and moments of compulsion.

[7] The Principle of Legitimate Paternalism is the third part of Mill's Principle of Liberty, summarized as follows by Aviram (1986, p. 53): 'According to this principle, the infringement of a person's liberty is a prima facie evil [the first part, AS] unless it can be justified either as necessary for the defence of other persons' vital interests [second part, Harm Principle]; or as necessary for the defence of his (or her) vital interests [third part, PLP].' The conditions it sets are (in short) "that there should be good reasons to believe (1) that the human beings on whom paternalistic measures are imposed are heteronomous, and (2) that these measures are necessary for the protection or enhancement of their autonomy' (1986, p. 53).

concrete shape in existing educational institutions. The elements in need of justification, according to Aviram, are: 'the compulsion to attend school', 'the compulsion to study and prove knowledge of certain curricula', 'the compulsion to attend school for a certain period of time determined in advance' and 'a universal compulsion, which is a compulsion directed automatically towards all members of a given age group without regard for individual cases' (1986, p. 55).

These elements are indeed specifications of the meaning of 'compulsory education' that still leave plenty of room for different concrete interpretations; in that sense they are still abstract. However, as Aviram (1986, p. 55) says, they are the compulsory elements in 'the prevailing system of compulsory education' (in any or all of its variants). In other words, they pertain to a general type of compulsory education system prevalent in societies of a particular kind (namely, present-day Western societies). In so far as these elements may be justified (or rejected) 'in the abstract', then, it is because they are already to some extent concretized. According to Aviram, if we wish to know whether a specific system of compulsory education can be justified, we must first ask (and answer) the (abstract) question: 'Can a universal and determined compulsion to attend school and study a certain curriculum there be justified in light of the PLP?' (1986, p. 56) But consider what a positive answer would look like: it would inevitably be a conditional affirmation, saying that a certain kind of compulsion, on a certain scale, is justified if the school and curriculum are such that they realize certain educational (and perhaps other) aims. Furthermore, what those educational aims should be, and what kind and amount of compulsion can be justified, depend (in part) on features of the societal context, so that more conditionals would need to be added. In short: even if an 'abstract' justification of compulsory schooling were logically possible, then surely for practical reasons a theoretical justification of compulsory schooling must be concrete and contextual.

The Justification Must be both Pragmatic and Principled

To have a chance of being successful a (candidate) justification of compulsory schooling must be *principled*, firstly, in the sense that it must ultimately refer to a statement of the general aim (or aims) of education, the concrete interpretation of which will vary somewhat over time, but the formulation of which is not taken to be completely relative to time and place.[8] This general aim constitutes (or should constitute) the 'first principle' of educational practice and policy. Secondly, the justification must also be 'principled' in the sense that it must agree with moral principles, in particular principles of justice. Even if some form of compulsory schooling would be ideal for realizing the general aim of education, it would be unacceptable if it were in conflict

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[8] Although some may wish to speak of aims (plural) of education, even on the most general level, in the section 'On the Grounds of a Justification of Compulsory Schooling' I will present a brief statement of a single general aim of education, which is why henceforth I will speak of the general aim, rather than aims, of education. On lower levels of generality there are, of course, multiple aims.

with principles of justice.[9] Moreover, the criterion of justice determines *when* (i.e. at what point) state compulsion in the field of education is justified, while the aim of education, together with its overarching and extrinsic ends, determines *to what end* compulsion may be used.

The justification *must* refer, ultimately, to the general aim of education, since, as Reagan (1973, p. 2) also pointed out, compulsory school attendance alone cannot be justified, and reference to external advantages compulsory attendance might bring are not sufficient either (for they might be better served by other institutional means). Compulsory school attendance can only be justified (if at all) if it refers to the *content* of education, and this must be determined and justified by reference to the *aim* of education—or, as Peters would say, to an idea of what education *is* (1970, p. 28).

The justification must be *pragmatic*, in the sense that at any given time the question is what (system of education), within the confines of the morally justifiable, will best serve the general aim of education. No element of any educational system and no educational practice as such is sacred; moral principles apart, what matters is: does it serve the aim of education better than any available alternative?

There is a further important sense in which the justification must be pragmatic: education not only has (intrinsic) aims, but also relates both to certain *overarching ends* and to certain *extrinsic ends*.[10] Examples of possible overarching ends are: human flourishing or, more encompassing still, the flourishing of both human and non-human life in sustainable ways. Such overarching ends are answers, not to the question as to the *aim* of education, but to the question *what education should, ultimately, contribute to*. (Thus, they include, but also go beyond, a minimal statement of moral acceptability.) We would not continue our educational practices if, for instance, they were consistently at odds with human flourishing or the integrity of society. In fact, we expect education to contribute to these things, and if it clearly failed to do so, we would attempt to reform them. These ends are not *purely* extrinsic to education, but neither do they constitute its intrinsic aim. They do, however, partly *limit* education's intrinsic aim, as do certain extrinsic ends, to which I now turn.

Education also serves legitimate goals that are external to it. The education system is part of the way in which a society 'reproduces' itself. Now, although no society has an a priori right to guarantee its continued existence in exactly the same form, only with new individuals filling in the gaps left by the retired and the deceased, insofar as a society enables the realization of value (economic, scientific, aesthetic or of some other kind) on a collective and individual level, it has a legitimate interest in securing the ability to continue doing so. A system of education that pays no heed to this societal interest—that 'produces' no new scientists, accountants, technicians and builders, for instance, but only poets and philosophers—will fail to serve both the collective interest in education (which includes individual people's interest in the education of others) *and* individuals' extrinsic interest in their own education.

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[9] Principles of justice can obviously be specified in various ways; I will come to that issue later.

[10] I have discussed discuss the relations (and tensions) between the (general) aim of education and its overarching and extrinsic ends much more fully in Schinkel (2013).

These extrinsic ends can be seen as secondary to the overarching ends, as instrumental in realizing these, but in practice they serve as independent justifications of (compulsory) education.

Finally, a third important pragmatic consideration is: what are the alternatives? Is there an alternative that serves the aim and the external ends of education as well, or better? And would the absence of legal compulsion mean the absence of compulsion altogether? Presumably not; isn't there a 'whining school-boy' in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, 'with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like snail unwillingly to school'? (And this is a play in which one of the protagonists feels his older brother deprives him of the education he desires and deserves!)

As said, the concrete interpretation of the general aim of education will vary over time, depending on the circumstances, the climate of opinion and the common sense of the time, and so on. So, one part of the justification of compulsory schooling will derive from a pragmatic, contextual interpretation of the general aim of education, and therefore from a perspective internal to education, which is by and large a child-centred perspective (in the sense that its focus is on the intrinsic value of education for the child). Another part derives from the pragmatic, contextual interpretation of the extrinsic ends of education, such as the reproduction of society in its various aspects (e.g. its valuable institutions and various types of infrastructure), and its enabling individuals to make a living for themselves. This perspective highlights the extrinsic benefits of education for both the children and society as a whole. Behind these, and partly limiting these, are overarching ends to which education is expected to contribute.

It is worth nothing that, although these perspectives may sometimes clash, no *fundamental* gulf separates the aim of education and its extrinsic ends. Some of those goals are directly connected, and all are (or should be) indirectly, but ultimately, connected to values aimed at and realized in education. Among the more specific aims of education, or specific instantiations of its general aim (for which, see the section 'On the Grounds of a Justification of Compulsory Schooling'), are the appreciation of moral and aesthetic value, and the development of knowledge and understanding of various kinds. The realization of these aims and the concrete embodiment this acquires depends on the existence of various social structures and institutions, and vice versa. That said, realization of the aims of education will, of course, not always happily coincide with maximizing its extrinsic benefits either for individual children or for society.

Theoretical Justification and Historical Justification

There is a sense in which a system or an institution can justify its own existence, more or less the same way a new employee who was given the benefit of the doubt by the appointment committee can justify their decision by performing very well, thus proving he/she deserves the job. An important difference, of course, is that in the case of the employee his/her employer had a vacancy to fill and was, therefore,

well aware of the fact that there was a job to be done. With new institutions, this is not always the case. Sometimes it is only after some time that it becomes clear what gap the institution filled, and people may find themselves wondering how they ever got on without it. That is the good case, of course; an institution may also fail to justify itself. I will call this kind of justification, this process of 'proving itself over time', 'historical justification'.

Nowhere was compulsory schooling introduced without severe debate. Various kinds of (theoretical) justifications were offered, some stronger than others; in The Netherlands, for instance, the introduction of compulsory schooling (in 1900) was defended on the basis of a need to counteract parental neglect of their duties towards their children, but also on the more dubious ground that it was necessary to educate and civilize the people—read: the lower classes (De Graaf 1999, p. 41–42). In practice, whether an institution is erected or not depends on much more than the strength of its theoretical justification. But over the course of an institution's existence there will be moments of taking stock, when the question as to its legitimacy is made explicit. In the case of compulsory schooling a perceived failure of the school system to realize educational aims may give rise to such a moment of stock-taking. Such moments give theoretical justifications some (potential) historical efficacy, as they interact with the process of historical justification.

Conversely, theoretical justifications will refer to that process. Paternalism that at one point, given the (poor) functioning of the school system, was judged to be illegitimate, may at a later date be found acceptable, on the ground that the system has proven its value and efficacy. Also, the system may be judged, in retrospect, to constitute an appropriate response to historical changes in society (and the world) as a whole—something that is often only visible after some time.

This brings us to an interesting, paradoxical problem. Once a particular system of compulsory schooling is in place, the question will occasionally arise whether that existing system can be justified. The question whether some *imagined* system of education could be justified—better, perhaps, than the existing system—will seldom arise, though it is important and useful, and of course played a role at the onset of compulsory schooling. The problem is that the status quo is always more easily justified than something new and as yet only imagined. As I said above, often it is only once something *is* there and has been there for some time that it becomes clear whether it *deserves* to be there. The paradox arises because, on the one hand, the (long-standing) existence of a system of compulsory schooling constitutes an epistemic advantage when we need to judge its merits and legitimacy, because we simply know more about it and its consequences, whereas on the other hand this introduces the danger of status quo bias (an irrational preference for maintaining the status quo; see Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988, where the term was coined), which is obviously an epistemic disadvantage.

I cannot pretend to be able to solve the problem of the status quo bias, but I think the following might be a useful suggestion. Once we are used to something's existence, we are very good at explaining why it *should* exist, even if there are many powerful objections raised against it. What is useful to do in such a case is to wonder whether, if it did not already exist, your justifying reasons would be enough to call

it into being, and in the exact form in which it in fact exists. That will often prove much more difficult to affirm. This way, a historical justification that is accepted too easily may be disarmed by an attempted theoretical justification that treats the existing system as a merely imagined one. Apart from this, I would also suggest that it is not irrational that the requirements the justification of an imagined system need to meet before we are persuaded are stronger than those we set for the justification of an existing system, if that is not clearly unsatisfactory. It is not irrational to choose *certain* benefits over merely promised, and therefore uncertain, higher benefits.

No theoretical justification or historical justification is complete by itself. It is not merely the case that the one cannot help referring to the other, they *should* refer to each other. A theoretical justification should refer to the process of historical justification, firstly, because otherwise a claim to the effect that without compulsory schooling certain injustices would arise, persist or return would be without substance. And secondly, because without this it would risk irrelevance. It is not enough to say that the theoretical justification should include a historical element; that would be to underestimate the degree to which the theoretical work and the historical process occur separately, in parallel. Part of this process is all the things that are *done* by institutions in order to justify their own existence; historical justification is for an important part a process of gaining acceptance. But without theoretical justification it runs the danger of turning into nothing but a process of establishing itself and gaining silent approval. And even if it is more than that, theory is necessary to maintain an awareness of the status of a successful justification: it may be provisional, valid only under specific (non-ideal) circumstances.

On the Grounds of a Justification of Compulsory Schooling

It is the compulsion in compulsory schooling that requires justification. On what grounds could it be justified? Firstly, it can only be justified (if at all) by the ends it serves, and in the absence of better (non-compulsory or less compulsory) means to attain them. As said, the aim of education and education's overarching and extrinsic ends together determine *to what end* compulsion may be used. It is a *necessary* but not sufficient condition that the ends are worthwhile.

Secondly, the criterion of justice determines *when* compulsion is justified— namely, when abstaining from compulsion results in an injustice. This includes a justification of paternalism, for to abstain from compulsion can only be called unjust if the individuals who might have been compelled cannot justifiably be left to their own devices. So, among the grounds of a justification of compulsory schooling is also an explanation of why children (up to a certain age, presumably—but the use of the age criterion also requires justification) cannot be considered competent to judge for themselves in the matter of their own education. Because my space is limited here, I will simply assume that a justification of paternalism can be provided, and only discuss the aim of education and the criterion of justice somewhat more extensively. With regard to the latter, my focus will be on the children's interest in

education; I leave the collective interest in education—also a potential ground of justification—aside here.

The separation of the questions 'to what end' compulsion may be used and 'when' it is justified is to some extent artificial, of course. They are not wholly separable, for the end is qualified by the 'when' to become the qualified end that may justify compulsory schooling: *just* access to the world, i.e. access to the world that is adequate in light of the criterion of justice. For convenience sake, however, I will treat these questions as separate.

The General Aim of Education

There are probably few, if any, topics in philosophy of education that have generated as much interest *and* controversy as that of the aim(s) of education (see Marples (ed.) (1999) for a range of different views). Not only has there been strong disagreement about what the (central) aim of education is or should be—for instance, autonomy has been a favourite candidate for quite some time, but has also been rejected (see Hand 2006 and references there) and to some extent superseded by well-being and human flourishing (e.g. Brighouse 2006; White 2006); it has also been questioned whether we are really able to identify and justify education's 'ultimate aims' (Haji and Cuypers 2011). I believe it is possible to identify a general aim of education, one that expresses our sense of what education *is*, of what makes a certain practice or activity *educational*. Such an aim should also illuminate something about the various forms of education around, as well as their more specific aims. Below I will give a brief statement of what I take the general aim of education to be. My proposal requires much more elaboration and justification than I can provide here; I have discussed it more extensively in Schinkel (2013), where I also explained more fully why well-being and human flourishing must not be seen as aims of education, but rather as overarching ends—as aims of life, if you will, rather than of education.

The general aim of all education, I suggest, is to provide each child (or each learner), or help each child develop, the best possible access to the world available to (or attainable by) that child. 'Access to the world' includes both abilities and opportunities for value creation, and abilities and opportunities for the appreciation and evaluation of what the world has to offer. The two go hand in hand; the ability to create value depends on the ability to appreciate value, and the latter is enhanced by the former. In some cases, one can only truly appreciate something when one knows what it takes to create it.

Clearly, there can be debate about what counts as valuable, and about the meaning of 'best possible access'.[11] Education should open up the world, but surely not all of it; there are parts of it we would not want our children to gain access to. 'Access to

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[11] Cf. Peters (1970, p. 25): '[A] connection between "education" and what is valuable does not imply any particular commitment to content. It is a further question what the particular standards are in virtue of which activities are thought to be of value and what grounds there might be for claiming that these are the correct ones. All that is implied is a commitment to what is thought valuable.'

the world' is not indiscriminate, and implies value judgements; this is where the aim of education relates to its overarching ends, which set limits to the kinds of access to be provided.

There are many kinds of (intrinsic) value: intellectual, moral, aesthetic, religious, artistic, emotional, historical and so on. Access to the world can be more intellectual or more physical, more directly embodied. What is required depends on the child in question, its talents, capacities, inclinations, temperament, etc. Education should not be defined purely in terms of intellectual development. There are many forms of access to the world. Some level of intellectual understanding is necessary, but beyond that it is optional. With regard to the body, no form of access (through the senses) taken by itself is crucial. As Whitehead (1968, pp. 29–30) says: 'The experiences on which accurate science bases itself are completely superficial. The blind and the deaf are capable of the ultimate greatness of human life. They are deprived of its walking sticks'.

More specific aims of education can be related to its general aim: to pass on knowledge and stimulate its construction is an aim of education, because it is necessary to provide access to the world. It is not an end in itself, unless we understand it as doing so. To initiate children into a social world, a language, a form of life, a value perspective, a discipline, or some particular practice, are ways of providing access to the world; therefore, education aims at the development of the capacities needed for these things. A carpenter's apprentice learning to recognize different kinds of wood and their characteristics thereby gains access to the world; and so does a student mechanic getting to grips with the functioning of car engines.

Moral education does not merely consist in providing access to a specific part or domain of the world, but in disclosing the world in a particular way, in offering a particular kind of access to the world as a whole. It involves both value creation and value appreciation. Aims of moral education like openness and responsivity to (the value dimension of) the situation at hand show that moral education is not just education in a particular domain, but a specific instance of education as such, sharing the same aim in a specific form. The same applies to aesthetic and, arguably, religious education.

With regard to formal education, the above statement of the general aim of education also illuminates the purpose of the different subjects on the curriculum. For instance, the subject of biology, firstly, provides access to the world *through* (the lens of) the study of biology (its concepts, techniques and instruments), and secondly, provides access to the world *of* biology, to the discipline, the literature and the scientific community. The latter becomes increasingly important as the pupil progresses in the subject, and especially at university. The same applies to the other subjects on the curriculum.

Education, understood in this way, enables individuals to find their way in the world and make a living—this connects the aim of education to its extrinsic ends.[12]

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[12] See Winch (2002) for an interesting alternative view on the relation between education and such ends as being able to make a living; Winch is prepared to speak of such ends as aims of education, because he does not limit the use of the term 'aim' to intrinsic aims.

It also crucially enhances people's enjoyment of the world in its various dimensions, as well as their enjoyment of their own mental and physical prowess, skills and abilities. In this way, it may contribute to the overarching end of human flourishing (which is not to say that this is *the* overarching end). It would be bad to be deprived of this altogether, but these things obviously come in degrees. The question is when children's access to the world must be judged to be so limited as to justify compulsory education of some form.

The Criterion of Justice

I have said that the justification of compulsory schooling must be pragmatic; that the question is what, at any given time, *best* serves the aim of education. I should qualify this, for the justification cannot be perfectionist. Similarly, the aim defined above (in terms of the provision of the 'best possible access') is an *ideal* aim. The *actual* aim of educational practices cannot be anything else than to improve, and help children improve, their access to the world, to guarantee (but even that is an ideal) *adequate* access to the world. In formal education, there also tends to be less emphasis on the fact that education should help provide the best possible access to the world *available to each particular child*. The means to provide such individual attention are often simply lacking.

Education must be adequate. We cannot justify compulsory schooling if it is merely somewhat better than an adequate non-compulsory alternative. The difference must be such that we can speak of deprivation or significant disadvantage where children have to make do with the alternative—it would have to be *unjust* to allow them to go without the kind of schooling that is to be made compulsory, either because the aim of education is not attained to an adequate degree, or because important extrinsic ends are not (sufficiently) realized.

What could provide us with the criterion of justice? Here, again, we must turn towards the overarching ends to which education is expected to contribute. Education—and the extent to which it realizes its aim and its extrinsic ends—must be adequate in light of the overarching ends we expect both education and those extrinsic ends to contribute to. Although I believe the ultimate overarching end should be understood in holistic or ecological terms, for the sake of simplicity I will here take human flourishing as an example. A certain threshold of flourishing would then determine the criterion of justice. There are, of course, many possible interpretations of human flourishing, but it seems to me that the capabilities approach developed (in different ways) by Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000, 2006) has a natural fit with the presented conception of the aim of education, and therefore seems particularly suited for use in this context.[13]

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[13] As Hinchcliffe and Terzi (2009a, p. 387) note, the application of the capabilities approach to questions relating to education has only recently begun. This body of literature is growing fast, however; see, for instance, Saito (2003), Walker (2003, 2005), Walker and Unterhalter (eds.) (2010), Unterhalter (2003), Terzi (2010), Otto and Ziegler (eds.) (2010) and Hinchcliffe and Terzi (eds.) (2009b).

'Capabilities' are substantive freedoms for being or doing what people have reason to value; they are abilities and real opportunities for valuable forms of functioning. Nussbaum specifies ten 'central human capabilities' necessary for a life with dignity, such as 'life' and 'bodily health', but also the capability to live with (concern for) others, both human beings and animals, and to have a measure of control over one's environment. She uses 'the idea of a *threshold level of each capability*, beneath which it is held that truly human functioning is not available to citizens' (2006, p. 71). The goal is to get everyone above this capability threshold.

What makes the capabilities approach especially interesting for our present purpose is that it can also be understood as specifying, at a very general level, the capabilities people require to be able to gain adequate access to the world. People do not depend wholly on education for the development of these capabilities. The question is where education is necessary for it, and its lack bound up with an unacceptably low capability level. An individual's education can be judged to be adequate if it enables him/her to live a dignified human life (the interpretation of which, to complicate things, is partly a contextual matter).

The capabilities approach may be useful to determine when children have *adequate* access to the world; that does not mean, however, that we need to be satisfied with (offering or providing) education that does not attain anything beyond that. We are concerned with the threshold above which *compulsion* is justified, not (primarily) with what constitutes 'good' education. What is especially important about the capabilities approach is its focus on *real* (actual) abilities and opportunities, rather than how the system functions on paper. (So again a focus on the concrete and contextual.) Capabilities are *real* opportunities—what one can actually be and do—and are therefore types of access to the world.[14]

The use of the capabilities approach as the criterion of justice leads us to the view that when, in a particular country, everyone's education is adequate in this sense without compulsion, there is no justification for compulsory education of any kind. This raises a difficult question, however, but one which must also be answered if we wish to know whether (a particular system of) compulsory schooling is justified in a certain context. The question is whether, or to what extent, unequal access to the world that constitutes an inequality *above the capability threshold*, if it is related to differences in (non-compulsory) education, may justify some system of compulsory schooling to counter it. The intuition behind this question is that above the capability threshold, large and undeserved inequalities are still possible—and if they are both undeserved and large, this seems unacceptable. The following considerations may help to mitigate this objection. The capability threshold is not absolute, but (to some extent) flexible and contextual, which means that in 'richer' societies (richer in more than the narrow economic sense) the threshold will be higher than in others. What may count as a decent and acceptable life in rural India may not count as such in The

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[14] They must not be confused with skills and capacities, as the term 'capabilities' may be used in everyday language. The 'role of education in promoting capabilities', as Klasen (2010, p. 105) writes, 'must (. . .) be related to increasing the freedoms to choose among functionings one has reason to value'.

Netherlands. There is injustice in this fact, to be sure, but in our non-ideal world it is nevertheless a fact. What a 'life with dignity' means depends to an important extent on positional goods, or on goods with positional aspects; the value of such goods to their possessors depend 'on those possessors' place in the distribution of the good' (Brighouse and Swift 2006, p. 474). The (social and economic) value of education is a case in point. This influences the application of the capabilities approach in such a way that large inequalities that do not push anyone below the capability threshold are unlikely. This is all the more so because 'having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation', 'being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others', and therefore 'provisions of nondiscrimination' on various bases are explicitly included by Nussbaum in her list of central human capabilities, under the seventh capability, 'affiliation' (Nussbaum 2006, p. 77).

It is worth noting, finally, that the question as to the justification of paternalism can also be couched in terms of the capabilities approach: it needs to be shown that whereas adults may choose not to convert their capabilities into functionings, or not to develop their capabilities any further (or even let them go to waste), we cannot simply allow children to decide for themselves whether to develop their central capabilities. My intuition is that this can be done—Archard's (2004) approach seems to me to be very reasonable, for instance—but as said, I cannot argue for this here.[15]

Concluding Remarks

In any attempt to justify or criticize a system of compulsory schooling a view of the aim(s) of education will—and should—play an important role. I have defined the general aim of education as that of giving or helping each child attain the best possible access to the world available to that particular child. But what access to the world is available to children will depend on the situation and the context in which these children receive their education. Thus, it might be objected that my statement of the aim of education is inherently conservative, placing the bar only as high as the context allows or demands.[16] A further implication of this would be that for some children the aim would be set much higher than for others, introducing a form of arbitrary discrimination. Both implications, if real, would make my statement of the aim of education unsuitable for the justification of any school system whatsoever.

Fortunately, these implications do not follow from what I have suggested to be the general aim of education. I noted in the section 'The Criterion of Justice' that the aim of education as I define it is an *ideal*, and that in practice the actual aim of education cannot be to provide the *best* possible access to the world. In response to the above objection, however, we must make a further distinction on the level of the

[15] Archard steers a very reasonable middle course between child liberationists, who overstate children's capacities for self-determination, and defenders of the 'caretaker thesis', who are prone to understating them; see especially Chaps. 6 and 7.

[16] I thank Michael Merry for putting this question to me; at the 2012 PESGB conference in Oxford, he put the question as follows: 'Doesn't the context *dilute* the aim of education?'

ideal aim; we must distinguish between the best possible access to the world that is *in principle* available to children and the best possible access to the world that is *in fact*, in the given context, attainable. Our view of the former follows from a focus on the individual child and its talents, capacities, interests, inclinations and so on. Educators will often, if not always, notice a discrepancy between the access to the world *in principle* attainable by a child and the best access which the *actual* world allows it to attain—and an even greater discrepancy with what is realistically achievable in the actual world (i.e. the actual aim I spoke of in the section 'The Criterion of Justice'). The occurrence of such a discrepancy means that the context (family background and social environment, societal prejudice, economic deprivation and so on) *obstructs* children's access to the world, so that, for instance, some of their talents go to waste. This gives us a reason to change the context—which will obviously be a long-term and possibly never-ending project, since it involves countering deeply entrenched social injustice. Of course 'context' also exerts a constitutive influence on abilities, talents and so on—it does not merely frustrate them once they exist. Again, this may be a reason to try and change that context. But meanwhile, education takes place in the world as it is, and in that world its aim can only be to help children achieve the best possible access to the world that is actually available to them. How could it be more than that? Thus, these two interpretations of what is available to or attainable by children must be considered together; the 'ideal' interpretation informs the other and guards against conservatism and complacency—the 'actual' interpretation prevents our losing touch with the real world.

In some cases the (regular) occurrence of large discrepancies between the access to the world in principle available to children, given their own potential, and that actually open to them may justify the introduction of compulsory schooling. If and where compulsory schooling can be shown to counter such injustice a strong case for it can be made. A difficult question that remains is whether the *local* occurrence of injustice—e.g. some children remaining below the capability threshold—is enough to justify intervention across the board; whether all can be compelled to benefit some. A short hint of an answer must suffice here: it is questionable whether there is such a thing as a local injustice in this area—the injustice is *societal*, and therefore it would be odd to say that only some would benefit of its eradication, just as it would be odd to say that only those who were formerly discriminated against benefit from the enforcement of anti-discrimination measures. A more just society benefits all—though perhaps not in a narrowly economic sense of 'benefit'.

The really difficult question in some countries that *have* compulsory schooling may be rather whether exceptions can be allowed; i.e. whether some parents and children may be exempted from compulsory schooling. This question has been hotly debated in the USA, regarding the Amish; in Europe the same question arises, for instance, with regard to Gypsies and Travellers.[17] Like the general question as to the justification of compulsory schooling, this question cannot be answered in the

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[17] *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) was a famous case in the USA. For a discussion of compulsory schooling for Gypsies see Liégeois (1988, p. 88 ff.).

abstract; any answer must be concrete and contextual, and both pragmatic and principled. In the case of the Gypsies, for example, there is evidence from a number of countries that compulsory schooling has been counterproductive from both a social and an educational point of view (Liégeois 1988, p. 89–90). In such cases it should not be enforced as a matter of principle.

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Part II
The Many Faces of Challenges Confronting the Compulsory

Compulsory Education Cycles Down

David J. Blacker

The Ideal of Universal Education and Compulsory Schooling

The ideal of universal education is a composite of two conjoined imperatives: a right of *access* to education via government provision and also *compulsory* education secured by police power. It is thus double-barreled, in the sense of possessing twin imperatives to:

1. *extend* the right to the whole of the age-appropriate population[1] while also, at the same time,
2. *require* members of that same population to avail themselves of it.

This double nature distinguishes "education for all" from other basic civil rights, such as speech, religion, and even political participation, where there is rarely any officially coercive element regarding the *exercise* of the right in question. However, strongly a state guarantees freedom of speech, for example, it would be altogether exceptional to *require* citizens to utilize it. Even the most basic democratic right to the franchise has seldom been exercised under formal compulsion in the global North (though there are a few exceptions). There are perhaps elements of "forcible exercise" legal compulsion to be identified in what many would regard as basic rights, such as participation in health care provision or, perhaps, aspects of military service and taxation (although speaking of a "right to be taxed" might be a rhetorical stretch). Such considerations only underscore how uniquely robust has become education's double guarantee.

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[1] Note that in the US the recipient of the right to education is broader than "the citizenry" as, via the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, all "persons" residing within the jurisdiction of the United States are eligible. The broadest consequence of this conception is that it has secured education rights for undocumented immigrant children. See *Plyler vs. Doe*, 457 US 202 (1982).

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This strong pairing of the right to education and compulsion is experienced as *force majeure* exercised against the family unit by the political and economic needs of the capitalist state; with the advent of industrialism this assertion of state power vis-à-vis children blows in as a powerful storm front against the set of previously existing domestic arrangements. The state now asserts its right to a decisively timely and sustained forming of the young and a concomitant further disciplining of the old. The compulsion is formally directed at parents qua guardians, whose failure to comply with state attendance laws provokes legal sanction and even, ultimately, the loss of parental rights and/or incarceration. Although at this point not often thought of as such among the "civilized," the police power of the state lies behind it all, make no mistake. Liberal triumphalism represents this network of coercion as one of its greatest achievements: children removed from mine, field, factory, etc., and brought into a more "proper" setting where they would be positioned for a higher degree of human flourishing, their growth as human beings no longer retarded by their family's myopic need for extra income or hands around the farm. Parents would simply have to delay this potential income stream—or reimbursement, depending on how one looks at the situation—or do without it altogether. No more 5-year olds in coal mines or at harvest (although this latter takes some doing).

Compulsory education and child labor protections were (and are) championed along Kantian lines by idealists as patently morally defensible causes. And so they may be: children are allegedly being conceived by parents and employers as economic instruments rather than as (potentially) flourishing ends in themselves. But calibrating the supply of child labor has always been a functional aspect of the "normal" workings of capitalism, part of its "respiration," one may say, one among a part of a panoply of fail-safe mechanisms ready to be adopted during periods of economic volatility and high unemployment to adjust the labor supply and maintain social stability. Keeping certain segments of the population out of the workforce helps solve crises of unemployment, including the absorption of new wage-earners such as women and minority breadwinners. A degree of social unrest and disruption is thereby avoided until capacity "catches up." It is a costly and elaborate but clever mechanism for helping ameliorate the "bust" part of capitalism's perpetual boom-bust cycles. The universal matriculation thus enabled by compulsory education's legal framework also helps secure a range of cultural "enablers," that is, legitimations of capitalist production such as the instilling of such industrial work habits as punctuality and efficiency, the acquiescence to managerial authority and standardized measures of output, a strict division between work and leisure ("holiday"), an augmented acceptance and psychological dependence on abstract and fungible markers of social worth, such as grades, money, and the like.[2] All these factors of educational production *add value*, ultimately, to the processes of capitalist production. The school graduate, now a credentialed worker, has gained the skills and dispositions necessary in order to increase the future employer's efficiency at capturing and monetizing the higher level of surplus labor of which the more productive educated laborer is capable. Especially production is undergoing automation (as it

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[2] A classic analysis of this process during the advent of US public schooling is Katz (2001).

is in most any competitive environment), the toil of *schooled* workers is so much more *exploitable*. To the martial strains of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*, they and their cohort march off for hire under a promise of augmented service toward ever-expandable profits.

The Golden Era of Schooling as Exploitation

This Golden era of universal education is thus also the Golden era of elasticated worker exploitability. As per the classical Marxist thesis concerning the extraction of profit from workers' surplus labor value, under moderately advanced conditions of production (e.g., moderately advanced industrialization), the educated workers—the "symbolic workers"—simply present more to exploit, the "low hanging fruit" of near-universal basic literacy (now 99 %-plus in Europe and the USA) having provided by far the biggest educational augmentation of labor productivity (Cowen 2011); a once-in-an-age great leap forward that, despite its collective cost, massively increased the capacity of labor to generate surplus for owners, that is to say, their profits, in the form of personal takings and also further capital accumulation. Premised on compulsory education laws, universal schooling has on the whole been immensely profitable. Again, this is not the *only* reason to value universal schooling, and neither is it the only reason it has been championed historically. Profitability is the necessary condition and driving force, although durability is secured only by those institutions that serve the needs of capital.

Yet as Job comes to recognize about God, what capitalism gave, capitalism also hath taken away.[3] Just as the era of universal schooling began with massive changes in the plate tectonics of capitalism, it is now beginning to recede in accord with further changes within those same tectonics. Extending the geological metaphor, from a wide historical perspective, one may see universal schooling as a temporary ontogenetic phenomenon, one that is essentially a byproduct of larger substructural alterations, in the same way the outcropping represented by a mountain is generated from subterranean pressures. Over the historical long run, social institutions are always dynamic as they respond to the push and pull of a range of forces; they come, they change, they go. And even what "they" appear to be is to some extent a temporal mirage, as they—like all other matter—neither appear nor disappear *ex nihilo*. Rather, they are always created out of existing materials and become in turn the materials for *what comes next*—"dialectically" in the would say the Hegelian-Marxist tradition. Schooling does not last forever.

The mutability and finitude of all human arrangements are important to keep firmly in mind here. For one thing, it is never "all-or-nothing" with large-scale social institutions. They are never completely destroyed nor are they ever completely created out of thin air. One may destroy all physical trace of them, in fact, but they will live on, somewhere, somehow, as antecedent to whatever comes next.

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[3] "... the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1: 20–21 (KJV).

This insight entails that one should not expect "compulsory education" to end *full stop* in the sense that school buildings and those designated as "teachers," "students," "administrators," and so on will necessarily vanish. What is overwhelmingly likely—and is in fact already occurring—is that we will have sites populated by youth that are "compulsory" and sites populated by youth where "education" occurs. But, we will no longer be seeing as many sites where youth are subject to "compulsory education." Certainly compulsion will remain for the vast majority as they are warehoused and surveilled in a vestigial educational apparatus that becomes increasingly punitive and carceral in orientation, sites devoted most obviously to social control of "disposable" youth than anything recognizable as "education (Alexander 2010; Giroux 2012)." They will probably even still be called "schools." There will also certainly be "education" occurring at different sites, where a certain, ever-smaller percentage of managerial and technical sub-elites are "educated" to service the apparatus of the tiny fraction of the population represented by the owners of capital, these latter no doubt continuing to populate their glorious and personally fulfilling "voluntary" private preparatory schools and elite universities. So there will still be plenty of "compulsion" and a certain amount of "education," but these two phenomena will be occurring at sites increasingly distant from one another. Compulsory education as a *mass* phenomenon will, if present trends continue, be eliminated. Again, this elimination may not occur in name or regarding its physical infrastructure—in fact, one can anticipate that more sites labeled "schools" will continue to be expanded and built. Rather, the elimination of compulsory education will consist in large part of the alteration of what "compulsory education" had previously meant, at least as a component of a larger ideal, namely, an equipping of all citizens with productive capacities and, hence, a social *place*.

Instead of exploiting them—an exploitation that in retrospect seems desirable compared to mass youth unemployment, e.g., currently over 50 % in such countries as Greece and Spain—the telos of the eroding institutions of compulsory education must now be the efficient managing not of laborers but of the laborless and the population overshoot they represent. Vast segments of the population, especially the rising generation, are simply "extra" people who are no longer needed as exploitable material by capitalist enterprise. The situation with production has changed due to its automation and globalization such that proportionately far fewer of the individuals once comprising the working classes of the global North are needed *as workers*. These people are being cut altogether out of the economic loop through a variety of proximal means: outsourcing, attrition, layoffs, etc. They are being "casualized," which is to say rendered ever-more precarious forced participants in a more stressful, dangerous, and less stable and remunerative subsistence "informal" economy. The autoworker becomes a service attendant who becomes a street vendor or worse (and I mean "worse" in terms of economic stability). How much education do these latter really need? How much will elites tax themselves for such "waste"?

Why is this happening? In short, what has happened is that capitalism has happened or, more precisely, has continued to happen. The dynamics of "normal" capitalist production includes a tendency for firms' profits *in the long-run and in the*

ensemble to diminish if their processes remain static.[4] For present purposes, what is important to understand about this profit-sinking tendency is that, it generates powerful counter forces as capitalist enterprises continually remake themselves in order to keep profits up, as an aircraft must overcome the force of gravity in order to fly. Perhaps, the most important of these counter forces have been present with capitalism since its inception and are inseparable from it: technological advances that provide firms with (temporary) comparative advantages and the need to discipline labor to conform to inevitably changing economic conditions. These processes have always caused mass upheaval and social disruption. History has not halted in this regard.

What is new is that technological change has reached a sort of tipping point in which the advancements have outmoded the need for mass labor, skilled and unskilled. Domestically, first manufacturing and then service work are automated to an increasing extent while technological efficiencies (e.g., communications and transport) allow an exporting of the remaining human labor needs. The factory in Detroit or Leeds closes and the jobs end up in Mexico, China, or Vietnam; the insurance agency or customer support service relocate call centers to Ireland or India. Technological efficiencies, thus create a powerful one-two punch aimed against the working class life that has heretofore been taken as "normal" for generations of Americans and Europeans: first an outright replacement of positions made redundant, from the assembly line to the secretarial suite, and second a brutal global labor arbitrage that places global North workers for the first time in full competition with those from the global South. Thus, the technologies that make possible automation and globalization together provide the ultimate disciplining of labor: the credible threat of *eliminating* it. The most elegant solution is simply to *remove* the jobs by whatever means.

It is a happy short-term situation for the capitalist as labor gets cheaper and cheaper while there is still vestigial systemic demand being propped up by elaborate mechanisms of consumer and sovereign credit and debt. It is a curious situation in which every serious person knows how this all ends in the long run (i.e., the bursting of the various demand-aiding debt bubbles), yet there seems no nonruinous short-term option. So, we are fully strapped into a situation that may be described as the "smash and grab" phase of late capitalism, where hyperfinancialized enterprises are competing to extract what they can *avant le déluge.* Part of that increasingly desperate extraction has to do with raiding traditionally public provisions of health care, schooling, policing, etc., through mechanisms enjoying anodyne public-relations department labels such as "private equity" or "public-private partnerships." As they say, "get them while they're hot": move in—privatize—extract—locate next victim—repeat.

This process comprises its own one-two punch vis-à-vis institutions such as public education:

1. as schools' underlying economic rationale of creating workers for capitalist enterprises diminishes,

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[4] Marx called this "tendency of the rate of profit to fall" the "most important law of political economy." His fullest discussion of it is to be found in *Capital, Volume III*. It is the central focus of Blacker (2013).

2. expenditures for those operations start to seem less justifiable and more "waste-
   ful," rendering them fit only for profit-taking raids by corporate privatizers,
   consulting firms, and the like.

Schools simply become a *target*. No longer needed for the production of long-term
exploitable "human capital," they are "restructured," "reformed", and "privatized,"
that is, oriented toward short-term profit extraction by capitalist enterprises that no
longer *make* but simply *take*. In this, they are no more "capitalist" in the traditional
mode than are the "too-big-to-fail" banks who survive purely by sovereign financial
manipulations in their favor (e.g., central bank bailouts).

Educational Eliminativism

All of this creates the conditions for the elimination of public education as we know
it, an *educational eliminativism*. Capitalism has unfolded such that we live now
in an eliminativist period regarding vestigial commitments to the very idea of uni-
versal public education and, therefore, *a fortiori* compulsory education. Temporal
and spatial *consignment* of young persons will certainly continue and intensify qua
incarceration. Features of those consignments resembling what was once taken as
"educative" will, however, continue to cycle down and, if present trends continue,
eventually phase out altogether.

Because of changes in capitalist production occurring over the last several gener-
ations, we have moved roughly from an era in which the predominant telos of worker
subordination involved *exploitation*, i.e., as per Marx, the extraction of abstract la-
bor value pursuant to capital accumulation and capitalist profit. From the capitalist's
point of view, in the best case there existed a "surplus army" of workers whose exis-
tence would help ensure that labor market competition was kept internecine among
the workers (i.e., worker vs. worker) rather than amongst the capitalists themselves
for workers (capitalist vs. capitalist). In the former scenario, wages tend to fall and
in the latter they tend to rise. The traditional capitalist, of course, wants wages to
fall in order to maximize workers' exploitation and hence, ultimately, profits. It is in
short all about worker exploitation.

In capitalism's neoliberal phase, however, the "more is better" mania for exploita-
tion is replaced by a technologized "less is better" mania for eliminating labor costs.
Both tendencies have certainly always been present in capitalist production, but the
overwhelming contemporary drive toward automation signals the decisive ascen-
dency of the sentiment that wants to eliminate human beings from the production
process. They are merely "costs" to be overcome via the latest technology or, in the
second best scenario, outsourced overseas to far cheaper labor. It was once thought
that the worst thing that the capitalists did was to exploit you such that you ended up
as less than a fully flourishing human being, your very mind and body turned into
another productive gear. Yet as British economist Joan Robinson once remarked,
"the misery of being exploited by capitalists is nothing compared to the misery of
not being exploited at all" (Robinson 1964). In retrospect, it may look as if we never

had it as good as back when they were exploiting us. In that same vein, we may retrospectively comprehend that the only thing worse than undergoing exploitation via schooling is *not* finding a way to undergo it.

This economic eliminativism sets the stage for the eliminativism we are now seeing in education. American public discourse on education has always had its economistic side, but once upon a time the discussions also appear to have at least been tinged with larger concerns of a civic and moral nature. Of late, however, education policies are almost always justified by virtue of their narrow economic utility alone. We should fund X because it is an "investment" in our future, we need Y because businesses require it, we need Z so we can keep up with the global competition. Educators have usually been happy to play along with this mode of justification because, well, it worked to make it rain resources. For a time.

But live by the sword, die by the sword. For what if, instead of businesses needing to see X, Y, and Z in their workers, it turned out that they wanted to see—domestically at least—drastically fewer of them? What if, instead of criticizing schools for not producing workers with enough X, they started criticizing schools for their very existence? This, I contend, is exactly what is happening. Eliminativism in the economy is quite predictably morphing into eliminativism in what was once, in the good old days of exploitation, the primary conveyor belt for supplying human capital: the public school system. A situation in which there is a surfeit of workers becomes one in which there is a surfeit of students, who in turn are well on their way to becoming part of the surfeit of humanity logically slated for elimination.

No longer possessive of much exploitability, these are the people seen purely as costs, redundancies, superfluous, "extra" people, regrettable instances of systemic waste and excess. Perhaps the best place to see these coal mine canaries is in the "planet of slums" overtaking the developing world, such as Mumbai or Kinshasa, where almost everyone there exists outside the "normal" economy and subsists ever more desperately. Closer to home, large swaths of African-American youth in such inner cities as the Baltimore depicted on HBO's *The Wire* provide domestic examples of individuals caught in the grips of a savage proto-eliminativism. For many of these no-longer-exploitables, family life and schooling have effectively ended, and the method of elimination for them is to be tracked via the sinister "drug war" into the largest carceral network in the world, one that has grown by 500 % in the last 30 years and now holds more Black men than were antebellum slaves (Alexander 2010, pp. 59–96).

Elimination by Financial Predation

Supplementary to Marx's theory of the driving force provided by automation qua "fixed capital" is a second root cause of capitalist financial crisis identified a generation ago by American economist Hyman Minsky and later refined by Australian economist Steve Keen (one of the very few to have predicted the US housing crash). Influenced by Marx yet also departing from him, Minsky defends a "financial

instability hypothesis" in which modern hyperfinancialized capitalism's tendency toward instability and crisis is due to "*upward*" forces, namely, the behavior of an elite speculative behavior—the 1 %, if you will, or perhaps more accurately, the 0.1 %. *Pace* Marx, for a variety of factors, it has turned out that it is not so much the working classes that are positioned to precipitate a terminal economic crisis and are destined then to seize historical agency and destroy capitalism. Sometimes the good guys don't win. Instead of the essentially downward instability predicted by Marx ("downward" in the sociological sense of the economic ladder) it is instead an *upward* turbulence ironically generated by elites themselves that is the proximal cause of contemporary economic instability and is thus one of the primary threats to capitalism.[5] In an interconnected speculative environment that allows high levels of leverage-based risk taking (*ex hypothesi* that deregulatory environment having been created by dearth of profitable opportunities in productive sectors), elites can be counted on simply to go too far—especially when government backstops allow them to utilize public wealth in order to hedge their bets, in effect to gamble with the house's money.

Former US Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy Paul Craig Roberts summarizes this rigged game:

> Financial deregulation raises the returns from speculative schemes above the returns from productive activity. The highly leveraged debt and derivatives that gave us the financial crisis have nothing to do with financing businesses. The banks are not only risking their customers' deposits on gambling bets but also jeopardizing the country's financial stability and economic future. . . . It is ironic that the outcome of financial deregulation in the US is the opposite of what its free market advocates promised. In place of highly competitive financial firms that live or die by their wits alone without government intervention, we have unprecedented financial concentration. Massive banks, "too big to fail," now send their multi-trillion dollar losses to Washington to be paid by heavily indebted US taxpayers whose real incomes have not risen in 20 years. The banksters take home fortunes in annual bonuses for their success in socializing the "free market" banks' losses and privatizing profits to the point of not even paying income taxes.

Roberts then asks, "Will the disastrous consequences discredit capitalism to the extent that the Soviet collapse discredited socialism?" (Roberts 2012).

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[5] I do not mean to oversell things vis-à-vis Marx. In fact it is a good maxim never to bet against him regarding whatever "new" economic phenomenon is alleged to have escaped his notice. Marx was more than aware of the potential for credit-fueled upward instability. He even, interestingly, saw in the development of credit "the latent abolition of capital ownership." Marx further explains that "[i]f the credit system appears as the principal lever of overproduction and excessive speculation in commerce, this is simply because the reproduction process, which is elastic and by nature, is now forced (once the credit system has developed) to its extreme limits; and this is because a great part of the social capital is applied by those who are not the owners, and who therefore proceed quite unlike owners who, when they function themselves, anxiously weigh the limits of their private capital." (Marx 1981, p. 572). Andrew Kliman points to this passage as an early discussion of what we now call the "moral hazard" that arises from commercial credit's operative long-term tendency to sever the direction of capital from its ownership, to separate financial reward from financial risk (e.g., CEO's earning bonuses for failing companies, too big to fail tanks socializing their casino losses). I am extrapolating from Kliman (2012).

Given the global interconnectedness of the financial system, this increasingly top heavy speculative behavior causes both an intensifying cycle of crises in which, in a three steps forward two steps backward manner, an increase in the overall amount of debt, as the deleveraging that occurs during the crises never resets all the way back down to zero. Massive—and, really, unimaginable—debt accumulation thereby becomes the shadow twin of capital accumulation. This debt is simply unpayable. All the "austerity" in the world will not repay losses from the 2008 financial crisis that the Bank of England estimates to be between $ 60 and 200 *trillion* (Haldane 2010).

The Minsky financial instability hypothesis proceeds from the inherently cyclical boom-bust nature of capitalist economies, where capital expands and contracts in an almost respiratory manner (as Smith, Marx and others saw from the beginning). For Minsky, however, the analogy stops there. For among elite money managers there are interesting goings on of a psychological nature during these swings. During the growth or boom part of the cycle, especially as memories of any previous serious downturn fades (such as the Great Depression of the 1930s), investors tend to experience success in venture after venture and come to see themselves as immune to any downturn, their confidence only increasing as they go from triumph to triumph in what Minsky called a "euphoric boom economy (Minsky 1982)." This is essentially equivalent what even former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan famously termed "irrational exuberance (Greenspan 1996)." In this environment, the customary psychological hedge of risk aversion may vanish to an almost zero point, as investment bankers note that the more leveraged ventures are the ones that have been making the most money; simply put, in this euphoric environment, more leverage means more profits. Cautious investors are seen to be punished by the market, if not literally by stockholders demanding ever higher returns like "the other guys" are enjoying. This collective experience sends the overall amount of leverage in the system skyward. This mentality extends to average consumers as well, who come to feel as if asset inflation is a law of nature, one conveniently designed to reward them—as if they were all little landed lords collecting rents—for the mere fact of ownership. Never mind, that all the while, it is the bank holding the actual mortgage lever. (I remember being told by a mortgage loan officer during the housing boom of the 2000s that the main mistake borrowers make is "not getting enough house") In sum, this boom period creates a general financial climate of ever-greater risk taking, where "ownership" becomes a mere means toward collecting one's ordained high rate of return.

Previous safeguards against what seem by now to be ancient and irrelevant market downturns are ignored or overturned—on the largest scale such as the US New Deal era's Glass–Steagall Act (The Banking Act of 1933), which separated consumer and investment banking in the wake of the Great Depression and was designed to prohibit banks from speculating with their depositors' money. All this leverage and lessening of risk aversion then sets the stage for a harbinger of financial doom that Minsky calls the Ponzi financier, who meets his current cash liabilities by increasing his amount of debt outstanding (so new creditors pay back current ones), in a trajectory of perpetually augmenting liabilities. The Ponzi financier is crucial because he

creates a situation even beyond the casino-style speculator where assets and liabilities no longer match up in a one-to-one correspondence; *per impossibile*, as a result there is actually more overall debt in the system than there are covering assets. There is no "other side" there to cover investors' losses when the Ponzi strategy inevitably comes crashing down of its own inverted pyramidal weight. When this kind of thing happens on a large enough scale, as in 2008, where various Ponzi-like hedging, insurance, and derivative schemes went awry—via a vast armada of obfuscatory financial instruments that nobody really fully understands—the entire global capitalist system can be placed under threat. The system is so, literally, top heavy with inequality and leverage that it threatens to topple of its own weight at any moment.

Depressingly, as Minsky saw, the cycle of upward financial instability into which we now appear locked creates a situation in which it is darkest not just immediately *before* dawn but right in the middle of the day: any inkling of a salutary boom or boomlet gears up the whole euphoric leverage machine once again, with consequences that bring great devastation the next time. The 1987 stock market crash becomes the 2000 dotcom crash which becomes the 2008 housing crash which will become presumably even worse absent urgent corrective action, of which there appears to have been very little. According to Minsky, the only thing we can count on is that there *will* be a next crash and it *will* be still worse than the preceding one. For the Minskian Keen, the only saving move is the radical one of what he calls a "modern jubilee," where debts are forgiven and savers are awarded cash in order to minimize the moral hazard of prejubilee savers being effectively penalized as their holdings are liquidated when borrowers' debts are cancelled. Jubilee policies are of course highly improbable—for now—but the intensity of an anticipated and even more acute economic crisis may well change some minds (Keen 2011).[6] The alternative is chronic stagnation if not outright collapse and, most significantly for present purposes, a continuation of the eliminativist program.

What may be the educational correlates of this frightening upward financial instability phenomenon? Education mirrors this economic system in which the rich have grown richer and moreover have increasingly insulated themselves against the rest of the population via a geographical stratification where they inhabit a very few US counties in Manhattan, Silicon Valley and a handful of others. As such, public schooling is not really a direct problem for them because of their location and, of course, because of their financial ability easily to opt out of the public system altogether via expensive private schools. However, the influence of this top heavy group is felt less directly, though powerfully, in several areas. First among these are the proliferating schemes to suck wealth upward from what were once public institutions like schools into private hands in order to make them available for speculation. Schools are to be drained of resources and then restructured to function more fully as "extractive institutions," to use the provocative phrase from Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's influential study of elite rapaciousness, *Why Nations Fail* (2011): "Extractive political institutions concentrate power in the hands of a narrow elite and place few constraints on the exercise of this power. Economic institutions are then

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[6] Keen elaborates his "modern debt jubilee" proposal in Keen (2012).

often structured by this elite to extract resources from the rest of society (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012)."

A favored long-term extractive strategy is what David Harvey terms "accumulation by dispossession" via the strategy of privatizing schools in various ways.[7] The championing of school voucher schemes (and precursor "charter" schools), where public money is doled out so that parent-consumers can make school "choices" among, ultimately, private providers, is a prominent policy initiative along these lines. This accord quite nicely with the casino mentality of the too big to fail banks: take educational risks not only with other peoples' children but with public money as well. A second best strategy in the US is to champion so-called "charter schools," which are public only in the sense that they are government funded but they are exempt from many state regulations. The ideology here is that such hybrid schools will demonstrate the wonders of educational competition where the invisible hand will then guide everyone closer to educational success. In the spirit of "follow the money" detective work, the telos of these operations is to funnel money into private ultimately for-profit hands. Like social security and the prison system, the school system is too big a potential treasure house for the money funnels of the great investment houses to ignore. The money will flow upward and there will be that much more to play with.

A second set of strategies involves student loans in the lucrative higher education sector. This is no small scale operation, having recently passed the landmark $ 1 trillion mark, making US student loan liabilities total more than consumer credit cards *and* auto loans. This market is even more directly tied to the financiers than even the K-12 privatization schemes, especially given the growing segment of that market governed by private as opposed to government loans. However, again, just as in the case of the too big to fail banks, the "private" nature of these student loan creditors is rather illusory given that they are either government-backed in case of borrower default and/or nondischargeable for borrowers in bankruptcy. What this phenomenon shares with upward financial stability are its bubble-like characteristics: the overhyped rhetoric and hyperbolic claims about the coming age of "knowledge workers," "symbolic analysts," etc., the outsized expectations for the remuneration associated with the personal "investment" in college, and the credential inflation that fails to keep pace with any actual underlying societal economic needs and where a decreasing amount of formal learning is taking place. Surveying a half century of data, for example, economists Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks report broad based declines in the amount of studying done by full-time US college students, from 40 h/week in 1961 to just 27 h/week by 2003 (Babcock and Marks 2011). My own experience as a college instructor leads me to feel safe in assuming that since that time study rates have remained low or are falling. What to make of such a severely inflationary situation where students are paying more but and getting less in every respect?

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[7] Harvey is adapting Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation." Harvey (2003). A detailed account of accumulation by dispossession by "privatizers" with regard to the Chicago public school system is provided in Lipman (2011).

Finally, there is the rise of what has been termed "venture philanthropy," as exemplified by initiatives, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's $ 100 Million "gift" to the Newark, New Jersey public school system. These lordly dispensations have an inevitably coercive element because they are carrots offered amidst the sticks of chronic and, in more cases, emergency levels of underfunding by states and localities of public schools, especially those in poor urban minority areas. The premise of venture philanthropy in education is that public education policy is not to be seen as a matter of public deliberation among ordinary citizens but rather should be directed by the mega-rich, who are presumed to be experts not just in Microsoft and Facebook but in all policy matters, on the grounds that they are... rich. Wealth is its own justification. Education scholar Kevin Kumashiro further explains:

> Unlike traditional philanthropy, which sought, at least in principle, to "give back" to society, venture philanthropy parallels venture capitalism in its goal of investing capital in ways that earn more. In contrast to venture capitalism, one benefit of venture philanthropy is that it operates under different incorporation laws, providing tax shelters for what are really financial investments. Whereas the financial returns may not be as immediate as those of corporate transactions, the policy foci of today's venture philanthropists indeed reveal the economic incentive of their investments. They overwhelmingly are pushing for the privatization of public education, creating new markets worth hundreds of billions of dollars, as well as for the prerogative to direct how public tax dollars get spent. They target the large urban school districts, experimenting with models they hope eventually to "scale up" nationally, as they have done in Chicago, where the Gates Foundation alone has spent millions on small-school initiatives, school turnarounds, youth organizing, and parent organizing (Kumashiro 2012).

Although there are some outliers, predictably, these initiatives tend always to amount to pushing some corporate structure as *deus ex machina*, including efforts to make over school leaders into CEO-like "managers" (the specialty of the Broad Foundation[8]) provide various Pavlovian material "incentives" for teachers to "add value" to their student-products, "empower" parents to act more like "customers," compete for market share with one another, and the like. The Obama Administration has jumped into the ring and offered its own version of this kind of thing with its Race to the Top initiative, whereby cash-starved schools are thrown money in exchange for further corporate style reforms, with an emphasis on those pretending that standardized test scores can stand in as sales numbers or whatever other quantitative measures of productivity are said to be analogous in the hallowed and infallible business world. As a result, as Kumashiro summarizes, the "result is a philanthropic sector that is inseparable from the business sector, advancing school reforms that cannot help but to be framed by corporate profitability (Kumashiro 2012)." We can fully expect that these corporate reforms will accomplish for American education what JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and AIG have for the American economy, which is to say they will suck it dry of resources, pocket the proceeds and then stand back as the whole thing crashes and burns.

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[8] "The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation's mission is to dramatically transform urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition." www.broadeducation.org.

Compulsory Education Is Dead; Long Live Compulsory Education

Amidst these powerful and increasingly rapacious economic interests, public schooling, in its twentieth century "universal education" form of expansive inclusivity and government provision, is structurally doomed. It is, literally, carrion for the "vulture capitalists" who have now come to view it as a carcass-like amalgam of "waste" and prey. After a century-plus of uneasy but creative mutualism, capitalism and public education are now parting ways. What remains to be seen is whether the public will part ways with capitalism before it drives the entire project of universal education— and the public itself soon thereafter—into history's dustbin. This prognosis does not really require any fancy theoretical machinery or supernatural clairvoyance. On the contrary, all it requires is the simple credulity of taking the elite's favored ideologues at their word. In this connection, there is no better historical example than Margaret Thatcher's presciently apocalyptic 1987 remark that "There is no such thing as society. . . . There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. . . and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations, because there is no such thing as an entitlement unless someone has first met an obligation (Interview for *Women's Own* 1987)." More recently, US presidential candidate Mitt Romney also said as much when he was behind closed doors speaking privately (so he thought) to a group of wealthy donor-supporters in his notorious 2012 "47 %" speech about those allegedly "dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you name it. That's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. . . . And so my job is not to worry about those people—I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."[9] If there is no such thing as society and no such thing as entitlement then there certainly is no such thing as a social entitlement, a universal right to government provision of *any* kind for *those people*, the ones who are unwilling to "take personal responsibility and care for their lives." This willingness to abandon huge segments of the population—"those people"—is as chilling as it is explicit. History shows all too well that when those controlling the levers of power begin to wish people away rhetorically, "those people" are often, in fact, eventually eliminated.

What is stunningly novel here is how large a percentage of the population is to be written off, how many of us are simply *absent* from what appears to be the guiding vision of our self-perpetuating elites. Once upon a time, as per the US Declaration, the people at large declared their independence from distant elite rule. Now elites, secure in their social (and increasingly geographical) distance, are the ones to declare *their own* independence from their compatriots and the mass of humanity in general: a Declaration of Independence from humanity. This is the mad dream of the gated

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[9] "Full transcript of the Mitt Romney secret video," *Mother Jones* (2012).

community, a fantasy of ridding of oneself of dependence upon undesirables ("those people"), a kind of zombie apocalypse from which elites escape and establish an unsullied paradise where there are only heroic individuals and their families. There, they lead shining lives of entrepreneurial virtue, *per impossibile*, with only one another and wholly within their peaceable gated domain. Safely within the gates, there is education aplenty for their own "families," perhaps even histories of what the world used to be like when the useless and menacing zombies outside used to be trained in what were called "schools." As for the idea of venturing beyond the gates, perhaps on some dangerous and quixotic altruistic campaign "for the children" ("some of them *are* cute, it just tugs one's heartstrings") dreamed up by the beautiful souls at the Oxbridges and the Ivies, one can only predict: *not bloody likely*.

By way of conclusion, it is customary to offer a ritualized gesture of activism to make "recommendations" etc. My recommendation is to prepare for catastrophe, within education and generally. Capitalism will not halt and will not stop mutating into newer and ever more deadly forms due to anyone's cleverness or idealism. Social hope lies in the direction of the endogenous generation of opposition, contradictions thrown up by the system's own operation. The masses of people who are no longer exploited or exploitable, in the global South and increasingly in the global North, especially youth, are, as the ones who are unaccounted for in the neoliberal vision justifying the present world system, are the populations who figure as seedbeds of change. Urban riots, occupy movements, Arab Springs, and the like are the tremors. In whatever form, these will only grow stronger and more intense. There is no alternative: the current economic system simply has no place for "those people" and so their restiveness is fated. Unfortunately, much of this will be, as always, self-destructive (e.g., the 2011 London riots). Arrayed against this social instability (or, we may say, "cry of humanity") is the horrifyingly comprehensive carceral and surveillance state along with its vast military and policing forces. As in many areas already, these will become the true new "educators." And "compulsion" is a euphemism for the manner and techniques of social control these armed teachers will exercise.

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The Abnormality of Modern Education Systems in Postmodern Democracies and Its Implications for Philosophy of Education

Aharon Aviram

Introduction: Le Malade Non-Imaginaire, the System's Chronic Illness and Addiction to Incessant Therapies

Imagine, if you will, a man lying on his sickbed, his body riddled with pain. In the next room, his family is wearing the carpet thin as they pace back and forth, sick with concern for his well-being. Dozens of healers and physicians of all kinds are gathered at the patient's bedside, straining to gain a more prominent spot near the bed. They shove concoctions down his throat and force treatment after treatment on his failing body in an attempt to address the patient's variety of symptoms: a Tibetan tonic for the pain in his left arm, massages for his back spasms, experimental medication to control heart palpitation, acupuncture to repress nausea, and so on.

As treatments increase, the patient gets worse and grows weaker. As a result his willingness to try any suggested remedy increases till the point of addiction to the very notion of treatment. The new treatments continue to wear the patient down; he grows weaker and sicker as the growing number of "innovative treatments" cause newer symptoms. The patient, his family and the doctors all grow accustomed to the reality of illness. They perceive the disease as a natural state, as if the patient was never well nor has a chance or a need to be well. The treatments, though still referred to as such, become a constant ritual. All involved can no longer imagine a life without the never-ending treatments, massages and potions. Thus, everyone plays their part—the patient moans in pain, his family is worried and complains that "things cannot go on like this without change", and the ever-growing number of doctors agree wholeheartedly with them and diligently go about the business of nursing the patient to an even worse health.

The above allegory is, of course, a depiction of the gloomy situation to which most compulsory education systems in Western liberal democracies have deteriorated over the last few postmodern decades. The view that most of these systems have been gravely ill in one way or another has been widespread in most Western countries

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over the last few decades. The many cries for help and complaints of academics, report writers, journalists, politicians, public figures, parents, and educators have become a routine, "natural" part of public, professional, and political discourses on education in most Western democracies. This has increased the willingness to invest more funds of otherwise constrained economies in "treatments": projects, reforms, change processes, restructuring processes, innovations . . . on all possible levels: specific schools, countywide, statewide, federal, and international. Still, serious thought is rarely given to the question: what makes present-day reformers assume that their reforms can have sustainable positive results (however defined), given the fact that when looked at from a macro-historical perspective, so many past reforms either failed or did not lead to *sustainable* positive change (Tyler 1975; Sarason 1990; Hargreaves 1994; Tyack and Cuban 1995; Cuban 1999, 2001; Ravitch 2000; Fullan 2007; Payne 2010)?

Who today even remembers the time (until the 1950s or 1960s, depending on the country) when the word "education" was not automatically accompanied by words such as crisis, failure, decline (e.g. in achievement), increase (e.g. in violence or teacher burnout), and then reform, change, or innovation? Today, it is difficult to imagine that education once referred to a process which was perceived as a stable part of tradition and community life (in premodern eras), or a major aspect of the triumphant march of "modernization", "progress" and "socioeconomic advancement" (from the end of the nineteenth century until the 1960s or 1970s). By now, the symptoms of the disease which has plagued modern education systems in the postmodern era as well as the complaints about them and the "change processes" aimed to "solve the problems" have become part and parcel of the educational process.

There are in fact two identifiable levels of symptoms: those of the primary illness and those of the secondary illness.

The symptoms of the primary illness are all too familiar in most Western societies: stagnation or decline in student achievements, increase of disciplinary problems, high and often rising levels of violence among students or towards teachers or the school, high and often rising levels of addiction and alcoholism, decline in the teacher's status in society, high level of teachers' erosion and burnout, a growing feeling that subject matters and methods are not adequate for the twenty-first century and the global economy, failure to adapt schools to the digital era in a way which allows information and communication technologies (ICT) to express their tremendous relative advantages, an almost universal failure to enhance equality through education, and recently rising levels of unemployment of young people whose education was supposed to prepare them for the labour market. The secondary illness consists of the addiction to the unending "processes of change" designed to sooth the pains stemming from the first level illness but end up aggravating them.

All these relate to a huge challenge that education systems face today: transforming themselves into organizations that supply their graduates with the characteristics, knowledge, levels of independence and creativity required in order to lead effective and satisfying lives in the hyper-capitalistic and totally digitized Western democracies (Aviram 2010). Most often, while seemingly engaging with this last engulfing challenge, critics and reformers in fact refer to a specific local problem in only one

aspect of one of the dimensions of postmodern reality while ignoring other aspects of the same dimension or other dimensions as well as alternative solutions. This creates an immense fragmentation of the discourse on this challenge and prevents the formation of integrated diagnostic and prognostic (possibly competing) paradigms. We are reminded of the hectic activity of the healers in the opening fable—each of whom relates only to a tiny piece of the sick man's body and deals with one symptom in light of a narrowly defined scientific or mystical perspective while ignoring the other pieces, symptoms and treatments. It obviously leads to the same result: a continuing deterioration of the man's health.

In this chapter, I will elaborate the diagnosis of the primary illness (first section), the diagnosis of the secondary illness (second section), and then point to the prognosis and the chances of its implementation (third section). Readers might ask themselves at this stage: How did a macro-level analysis and critique of current Western education systems (that is based on an integration of many categories of empirical facts) find its way into a volume of philosophy of education? I believe that the gloomy and seemingly inescapable condition of most Western systems should have direct implications for the philosophy of education—I will shortly point to two of them in the last (fourth section).

The Primary Illness: Diagnosis

The following diagnosis of the primary illness is nothing new. I, and others, published works on this issue, starting from the early 1970s (Aviram 2004, 2010; Aviram et al. 2004; Perelman 1993; Rittel and Webber 1972), and on a declarative level, it has practically become consensus. This diagnosis depicts an ever-expanding gap between the type of education systems that are still dominant in the West (which got their present shape in the height of the modern era) and the postmodern reality which has been forming around them since the 1960s. By now, not only the premise but also the allegory by which it is often expressed have become part and parcel of the discourse: our great-grandfathers would have been completely disoriented had they been exposed to contemporary methods of production, medicine or transportation; but they would have felt quite at home in today's schools, for nothing fundamental has changed. Not only is the system obsolete – the allegory and the statements which ordinarily accompany it have also been worn thin by now.

The new reality is referred to by a variety of names (according to the ideology and aspect on which one focuses), e.g. digital society, information or knowledge society, the age of thinking machines, the era of globalization, hyper-capitalism, the flat-world, postmodernity (which I use here) and fluid modernity. But all names recognize the sharp shift in one or more of the major domains of the human condition that has occurred since the 1960s and is still intensifying. Beyond the endless declarations concerning the need to adapt education to the new reality, referred to by any of its many names, the Western education system (and the other bodies which should hold themselves responsible for the future of society in that regard) has never addressed

the enormous waves of radical changes which have led to the ever-changing nature of all major domains of our lives in the last few decades, nor did it significantly relate to their effects on our lives, on the operation of the system currently in place or on the desired educational response to these changes and their impact on individuals and society.

I have found no systematic discussions about the fundamental questions which should arise when the above issue is seriously weighed. These are the three foremost macro-empirical questions (simple to ask but very complex to answer, which increases the responsibility of decision-makers and academics to systematically and meta-disciplinarily engage with them):

a. What are the defining characteristics of the current educational paradigm?
b. Are they compatible with what emerge as essential aspects of the postmodern reality (in all its major domains)?
c. To the extent that they are incompatible with the world "out there", can the educational paradigm still be functional or effective?

Then there are crucial ethical questions that should also be asked—first and foremost among them are:

a. Are the declared and tacit goals of current education systems and their basic characteristics desirable in postmodern liberal democracy?
b. Even if desirable, if the systems are dysfunctional (i.e., are unable to effectively lead to their desired goals), to which extent is the prevalence of these systems desirable as far as their impact on young people, teachers and the future society at large is concerned?

These are the critical questions. Unless the system and its goals are found to be perfect from all relevant aspects, the following constructive questions should be asked:

a. What are the desirable values that should guide the system?
b. What are the desirable educational goals stemming from these values?
c. What are the constraints and guidelines that should stem from these values?
d. What are the optimal structures (curricular, organizational, and methodological) needed for achieving these goals in light of the constraints and guidelines in postmodern reality?

In this chapter, I focus on the critical questions (I have discussed the positive questions at length in several other places; see Aviram 1993, 2010; Aviram et al. 2010). Further, I will schematically present my answers to the first three macro-empirical questions.

> What are the defining characteristics of the current educational paradigm?

The DNA of today's school is made of four elements, each of which stems from a different historical era. Take any element out of the equation and the resulting organization is very different from what we call a "school". The first element goes

back to the Greek–Hellenic–Roman–Medieval eras. The other three stem from various periods in the 500 years of modernity. I name these four elements: *Platonic*, *Gutenbergian*, *Rousseauian* and *Fordist*.

The Platonic element refers to the ultimate goal of education and its contents. It reflects a conception of education that has been deeply ingrained in the DNA of Western culture, by which education is about learning of the main theories relating to human life (humanities) as well as mathematics and the natural sciences for a non-instrumental reason, or simply for knowing the truths about these realms. In traditional Western culture, holding or seeking knowledge was conceived in itself as elevating human life to the highest level of the developmental ladder. This conception of education is a direct continuation of the Greek and Roman concepts of *Paideia* and *Humanitas* that have later been known as the "liberal conception of education". It was termed liberal because it aimed at liberating the soul from the yoke of matter and material desires such that it can be elevated to a higher spiritual and more satisfying mode of existence and because only those who were liberated from the need to work for survival could afford it. The liberal conception of education has led to the formation of the liberal curriculum, which is centred on the search and knowledge of truths in all domains as the ultimate goal of worthy human life, and hence of education. In late Roman and Medieval times, this curriculum was solidified around the seven liberal arts stemming from the humanities and the sciences (at that stage, mathematics and its derivatives). The earliest systematic and substantiated presentation of this conception resides in the Platonic epistemology, ethic and philosophy of education, hence its name (Aviram 2010).

The Gutenbergian element relates to the dominant learning medium in today's school, and to the cognitive structures and pedagogy that stem from it. These of course are the printed books and book-based literacy that are foundational to thinking, teaching and learning in the school. It is essential to emphasize that the book is a *defining technology*, i.e., a technology that defines its users' modes of thinking, communicating and learning. Book-based literacy is necessarily individual (one reads alone), abstract, linear and gradual, and as such requires the ability for long-term postponement of gratification. Western schools have propagated these characteristics—for the few before Gutenberg, for an increasing number of individuals after Gutenberg, and for the masses since the peak of the industrial revolution at the turn of the twentieth century, and even more so since the end of WWII (Dewar 1998; Crompton 2004).

The Rousseauian element has to do with the developmental conception of a long childhood (including a few years of adolescence). This conception of human development is a cultural construction that has taken root in Western culture because of the spread of the printed book and the rise of bourgeoisie. Rousseau's conception of children was its most prominent and popular manifestation in the eighteenth century. He thought of children as essentially different from, and developmentally inferior to, adults and as developing toward adulthood in a gradual process with clearly defined stages. As such, children were conceived as needing adults to closely control and shape their developing personality while taking into consideration the different stages they might be in (in his case, through sophisticated manipulative methods). This view is still essential to today's school (Brown 2002).

The Fordist element has to do with the organizational structure of the modern school as it has developed at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. It is clearly based on the control-oriented organizational structure of the assembly line factory and run according to the Fordist or Taylorian methods of management (Dreeben 1976).

> Are the defining characteristics of the current educational paradigm compatible with what emerge as essential aspects of the postmodern reality?

So what is wrong with the four elements of the school's DNA? The answer is quite simple: after more than 2,000 years (in the first case), or a few hundred years (in the latter three cases), these elements and the concepts and assumptions on which they rely have lost their synch with reality. None of them is compatible with the basic characteristics of the postmodern reality that is shaped by continuous tsunami waves of changes.

The Platonic element: Plato viewed the value of the "search for Truth", or learning the theories that represent it, as worthwhile for its own sake and as the ultimate value of the Good Life. This objectivistic view has lost its meaning and validity in our skeptic, relativist and instrumentalist era. Most young people (and adults) will not adhere to it today or even understand it. They will not understand how someone can refer to a learning process that does not lead to concrete and defined material or hedonistic gain as meaningful or important "in its own sake" (Aviram, 2010).

The Gutenbergian element: The domination of the printed book that had conquered Western culture after the development of Gutenberg's printing machine has certainly, and unexpectedly for many, ended in the last decade with the conquest of the West by digital media. With it, the thinking mode that characterized Western rationality, which has been linear, gradual, abstract and required postponement of gratification, and which stemmed from the impact of literacy and particularly the printed book, has been losing its hold on our culture. It is rapidly replaced by the hypersexual, jumpy, multi-sensual, concrete, ever-changing, immediately gratifying communication modes that stem from the digital media (Turkle 1995; Prensky 2001; Buckingham, 2000; Aviram et al. 2010; Aviram, 1992).

The Rousseauian element: The developmental conception of "long childhood" has fallen prey to the ongoing erosion of the clear distinction between all traditional or modern social roles (such as men–women, young–old, legitimate family–living in sin and children–adults). Adults today allow themselves, or are even expected, to have childish characteristics such as emotionality, doubts about one's identity, high level of narcissism and lack of responsibility towards others, lack of experience and orientation in the most dominant aspects of postmodernity (e.g. the internet, the wider digital reality or popular music). At the same time, most of the distinctive characteristics of children (such as dependence, naivety or ignorance of the "facts of life" and lack of planning ability[1]) are much less characteristic of young people today (Aviram 2010).

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[1] See the high-level planning ability that children present in complex digital games (Chuang and Chen 2007).

The Fordist element: Over the last 40 years, the rigid structure of the Fordist factory has gradually lost its exclusive domination. It was based on clearly delineated lines of control, on individuals (as opposed to large families or teams) as the only bearers of responsibility, of massive work force gathered in the same place and time and subject to constant visual control. This organizational model has been gradually replaced by various alternatives such as the flat organizations, virtual organizations, spread of small companies of one or a few individuals often working from home, team-based work, work from distance and flexible working time (Aviram, 2010).

As the four pillars of the ancient–medieval–modern schools have been crumbling in the last few postmodern decades, the school's language (in the largest sense of the term) has become incomprehensible to young people (and to many adults). Hence, their compelled incarceration in schools has turned meaningless and frustrating. As I claim in Aviram (2010), compelled learning, in the various shapes and forms it has had in history, has most probably been boring to most learners, but in the past, it was probably also meaningful to most of them. Learning made sense to learners as they internalized the answer to the question: *what are the contents they learned good for* (e.g. for liberating the spirit either in the religious or the rationalistic senses, and often also for obtaining public status) (Aviram 2010)? Similarly, all the other defining elements of the school were familiar and made sense to contemporaneous learners. Today, theoretical learning for its own sake can no longer make sense, the domination of the correlation between investment in theoretical studies and socio-economic advancement has eroded, and the other elements of school's DNA are also drifting from the reality of young people outside the school gates. *School activity has become senseless and takes place in a bizarre environment. Hence it has become boring and meaningless* (Aviram, 2010).

> To the extent that the defining characteristics of the current educational paradigm are incompatible with the world "out there", can the educational paradigm still be functional or effective?

As a result, schools have become inherently dysfunctional. It is very hard to see how an organization that has been quickly losing its synch with reality can function and contribute to society and the individual on the civil, economic or any other level. Indeed, research in the framework of the "institutional theory of schooling" recognized in the 1990s that because of their inability to supply society with "tangible results" that can be positively evaluated by most citizens, schools are operating, to a large extent, on the basis of (what institutional theorists call) "symbolic rationality" (as opposed to "technical rationality", which is geared to effectiveness) in their construction of organizational meaning, goals, etc. (e.g. Meyer 1977; Meyer and Rowan 1992). Because of functionalist sociology's aversion of social critique and its inbuilt social relativism, institutional theorists examining schools accept this fact as is. But since I am not committed to this aversion and relativism, I see it for what it is—a direct offspring of the strategy of the king in The Emperor's New Clothes. It

leads, among other things, to what I call "double-talk", which is so natural to many schools today as well as to the educational discourse more generally. It is a language in which speakers and listeners alike do not accord claims with their literal meaning and do not relate to declared goals as necessarily leading to real organizational plans or actions. Put in more general terms, over the last few decades, many schools have transformed to organizations in which the meaning of "functional" is merely *survival* in an impossible reality. Teachers, headmasters, inspectors and students who operate in such a system are all keenly aware of the fundamental gap between the declarative and operational levels. Very few of them still expect the declared goals to lead to *relevant* results or official descriptions of "the way things are" to represent the way things really are (Cuban 1999; Good 2007; Ravitch 2012; Ogawa et al. 1999). Beyond leading to the school's essential dysfunctionality, this fact probably jeopardizes the school's chances to achieve their main declared goal—to enhance their students' rationality. How can an institution, which survives thanks to symbolic rationality, double-talk, and dissemination of myths enhance the value of the search for truth, avoidance of contradictions, commitment to candid criticism, impartial honest judgment, openness to criticism and refutation, etc.? This situation leads to the obsession with accountability and hardnosed, universally accepted and evaluated standards, supposedly to improve this corrupted situation. But it only worsens it because due to the growing gap between schools and reality, they are still unable to supply societies with the tangible results expected of them. Thus, the good old mechanisms of symbolic rationality and double-talk are now used to tackle this standards-oriented discourse and requirements.

This critique is radical. Still, even if it has only a grain of truth, we (as parents, citizens and certainly as philosophers of education) should be alarmed. Furthermore, truth can be radical–so were the truths that our cosmos is not heliocentric, that earth is not flat, or that slavery and the subjection of women are based on empirically wrong assumptions and are morally evil, until they became banal truths.

The Secondary Illness: Diagnosis

Since there are very few stakeholders who believe that Western education systems are "OK" as they are, over the last few decades these systems have been flooded with every possible kind of change project. Some argue that the wealth of fragmented, chaotic and often contradicting educational change processes that are implemented in schools is bound to yield an alternate or highly improved system. According to this view, either the fittest among these changes will survive or a learning curve would emerge, leading to the creation of a viable alternative. I do not think that such claims can be supported. Rather, I believe that change processes are indications of the school's secondary illness—the addiction to change processes as an escape mechanism from the primary illness. As all escape mechanisms, this too contributes to the deterioration of the primary problem.

There are two groups of reasons to why the "sanctification of change" culture, which is basic to education and educational discourse today, is an expression of the secondary illness rather than a rational attempt to deal with the primary illness. I will refer to these groups as macro- and micro-level reasons. The former are tied to the chaotic interactions among the endless change processes at every given moment and the much larger number of change processes that had preceded them. These chaotic interactions do not allow for any learning curve or a rational discourse to emerge. The latter consist of the characteristics of each individual change process, which condemn almost all of them to failure and thus prevent the survival of the "fittest". I will discuss the first group in this subsection and the second in the subsection following this one.

The Secondary Illness: Macro-Level Diagnosis

People attempting to delineate a map of contemporary educational change "discourse", soon find themselves feeling as if they are floating in the middle of an endless ocean sans a compass and a map. They are flooded with thousands of publications in every possible format (scientific articles, professional articles, newspaper articles, books and various committees' reports) with but one aspect common to them all: "blind worship of educational change". They all accept without question the premise that "change is good" and that the need therefore and benefits thereof go without saying.

This idolization is expressed in the generic narrative repeated in all the proposals of change and in all the reports about implemented changes. It is a seemingly rational narrative, the context of which is presented thus:

- *Problem*—a specific defect in the function of the education system.
- *Solution*—the element or elements whose change will correct the problem.
- *Method for implementing the solution*—implementing a change process will make the problem disappear.

Often when the execution of a process of change is reported, the following parameters will appear:

- *Description of the implemented change*—a description of the solution's implementation in a classroom, several classrooms, a school, a group of schools, a district, a state, etc.
- *Evidence of process success*—an account of the evaluation process which indicates that the solution really does work.

This structure has all the characteristics of a rational move. However, in most cases, the rationality turns out to be fallacious if the situation is reviewed from a macro point of view. Each of the parameters, in light of which particular change can be described and analyzed (see immediately below), can have and does have practically endless operational meanings. These often have little, if anything, in common, and may also contradict each other. This chaos within "the discourse" prevents rational

and effective application of the lessons learnt from any specific change process in any specific system or from other change process within the current system, not to mention implementation outside the original specific system and creating a valid universal generalization. This state of affairs prevents a valid comparison between various change processes or the formation of a gradually developing learning curve of any kind concerning any aspect of change processes.

Let me now recount the parameters defining any change process:

a. *The symptom(s) addressed as indication(s) of the problem*—these are all the known symptoms which I pointed to in the previous section. Since they are not understood as symptoms of a single primary illness, each of them is referred to in most change projects as a standalone problem. Thus, we find many projects, designed to enhance scholarly performance (in various disciplines, on a variety of levels, for a variety of populations); others aim to reduce violence, address addiction or drunkenness, diminish teacher fatigue, enhance achievements of students from low social strata, and so on and so forth. However, very seldom do change agents realize that it is possible that all or most of the problems they are attempting to address, as well as a few other common syndromes, are all symptoms of the same basic illness.

b. *The theories or views reformers rely on to tackle the "problem(s)"*—each of the above and a few other categories of problems/symptoms can be and has been addressed by a large range of theories–scientific, pseudoscientific, commonsense–theories, held by reformers consciously or unconsciously. One can divide the reforms, on the basis of "scientific foundations", into two large groups: those based directly on specific disciplinary research, and those that do not have such clear and exclusive disciplinary genealogy.

Major examples of the relevant disciplines will be: *Sociology* that encompasses theories in many subfields, some of which belong to theoretical sociology, others to the various branches of the more practical organizational theory and still others to various branches of sociology of education, which in turn might rely on more generic subtheories, but sometimes developed independently. *Psychology* with the endless number of subdisciplines it comprises today: various personality theories, motivation theories, cognitive theories, social psychology and a host of branches of the many developmental theories. *Brain research*—various categories of brain research, which are very "hot" today and being considered as "hardnosed" science, lead reformers to a variety of conclusions on many aspects of human learning, and from there to suggestion of change processes based on these views. Sometimes, even *Philosophy*—philosophical perceptions which recommend desired values and curricula based on the philosophers and philosophies which are in fashion at any given moment.

As opposed to the previous categories of research, there are several large categories that might be influenced by one or several theories or by other sources but do not derive *directly* from an exclusive theory or view. Major examples which can be mentioned here are as follows:

Research based on learning theories, such as behaviourist, cognitive, cognitive behaviourist, constructivist, constructionist, Vigotzkean, distributed cognition theory, or activity theory, connectionism and so on and so forth.

Research focused on various "innovative learning methods", such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, active learning, experiential learning, learning for understanding, etc.

Research focused on the development of "required skills", such as thinking skills, critical skills, social skills, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, self-regulation skills, terror management skills, happiness skills, twenty-first century skills, and so forth and so on.

Research focused on ICT-enhanced learning—an extremely wide, widening by the day, "research empire", which is motivated by the ongoing attempts to "integrate ICT in the classroom" and is enhanced by ever renewing hi-tech gadgets and varies according to relevant approach to learning, motivation, etc.

Beyond these theoretic and research-oriented approaches, change processes are often guided by underlying assumptions made by decision-makers. These premises have very dominant influences, although they are not based on any particular research theory (and are sometimes disproved by the theories). An example of the arbitrary nature of the underlying premises that have been refuted by research can be found in the assumption that the mere introduction of technology and technology-based learning will bring about positive change. This assumption has very little foundation in fact (Balanskat et al.2006; Condie et al. 2007; Punie et al 2006). However, it has been the driving force behind decades of tremendously costly and extensive change processes.

This list is not exclusive—many change projects can be included in more than one category. It is certainly not exhaustive. I am sure, though, that even this "short-non-exhaustive version" is tedious. Still it is a "necessary tediousness". I do not think it is possible to otherwise bring home to the readers the extent to which this change culture and "discourse" is chaotic even when focusing on but one parameter. . . , not to mention the combination of them all.

In addition to the vast differences between the symptoms which change processes are geared to "heal" and between the theories, research traditions or assumptions upon which they are predicated, there are many differences relating to four other parameters which I will only name here. They are:

c. *The variety of research and evaluation methods of those processes.*
d. *The different ranges of change which projects aspire to bring about.*
e. *The variety of (often tacit) guiding ideologies that impact both scientific and nonscientific foundational assumptions of each and every change project.*
f. *The variety of interests of the change leaders and of the subjects thereof.*

Many of the categories or subcategories of the above "sources of educational change processes" affect each process simultaneously and produce a "big" dynamic infinity of change processes which are simultaneously "attacking" the education systems in Western developed world. In this state of affairs, it is impossible to hold a rational

ongoing dialogue wherein all, or at least a significant proportion, of those involved in educational change participate in order to learn and gradually improve the process.

The Secondary Illness: Micro-Level Diagnosis

In addition to the chaotic mixture of "discourses" and of process of change on the macro-level, almost each specific change process is afflicted, in itself, with at least a few fatal flaws. Each of these flaws is enough to hinder a productive and sustainable change process. When some or all exist simultaneously, change becomes virtually impossible to achieve and certainly to sustain beyond the immediate time span. I will hereto present the flaws briefly; I have elaborated on them elsewhere.

1. *Anecdotal and a historical approach*. As claimed, most of the change processes currently "at work" in Western education systems ignore the radical impact on schools' relevance to the reality of the postmodern revolutions of the last few decades, and its resulting ongoing dysfunctionality. Each of these change processes addresses the specific problem it is intended to correct as though it is an anecdotal affliction in an otherwise well-functioning system. This sort of attitude is typical of most, if not all, of the attempts to 'radically' change the system. And just as it is the case with our patient above, this state of affairs contributes to the further deterioration of the system. It also helps create three other flaws.
2. *The "panacea" approach to educational change*. The belief that there is a specific cure which can "fix" all that is wrong (as it is perceived from very particular perspectives, which make it is easy to view the wrong as "curable").
3. *A conception of modern schools as institutions which can gradually adjust to the postmodern reality*. This framework of thinking accepts as natural a mode of thinking wherein even if one acknowledges the need to adjust education to the global economy or the digital era and other such manifestations of the postmodern age, one may still view contemporary schools, which are predicated on the above-mentioned anachronistic mixture of Platonic–Gutenbergian–Roussian–Fordist paradigms as an acceptable framework for the search for gradual adaptations.
4. *Reformers are usually professionals whose identity and worldviews were formulated in the "old world"*. In the above-mentioned state of affairs, it is only natural that the majority of professionals, academics and experts involved in the change processes were socialized in, and to, the existing educational reality, their professional identify is a derivative of these systems.

Together, these four flaws prevent the creation of the large and radical perspective needed to reform today's education. In addition to these four, many other change processes are characterized by one or more of the following shortcomings:

1. *Ignorance of the normative decisions which are fundamental to any change processes*. Often reformers ignore the (unconscious) normative or ideological factors at the foundation of their change policy. The ignorance of the ideological roots of a project and its presentation as based only on "recent research" prevent truly

rational discussion of the adequacy of this change, since the same research results can be interpreted as supporting several completely opposed points of view simply by adherence to different ideologies**.**

2. *The misleading assumption that there can exist a normative consensus*. As opposed to the previous case, there are bottom-up change processes in which teachers are (allegedly) called to form their own common "credo" about school goals and practices. This happens in processes of change predicated for example on "teacher empowerment", "school autonomy", "school based management", etc. These attempts are based on the (never clearly expressed) assumption that one can identify in most, if not all, teachers of a certain school, the same normative or ideological worldview even if they were all recruited to the school by coincidence and not on the basis of informed normative or ideological criteria. This assumption is obviously wrong in our ethically confused and pluralistic world. It leads to pseudo-superficial consensus that crumbles the moment operational decisions need to be taken, or followed and prevent the development of coherent processes within the project.

3. *The duality of change*. Processes of educational change have been facing a destructive dilemma in the last few decades. When change is implemented in a "top–down" fashion, the project fails because of teachers' antagonism. When a "bottom–up" approach is employed, leaving it up to teachers to make choices concerning the direction and strategy of change, the result will usually be limited, and not very significant—even in terms of the prevailing changes discourse. It is unlikely that individuals, whose professional identity was defined within a given framework of thought and behaviour, will make significant cognitive leaps outside that framework, especially not as part of a group-thinking process where the group is made up of similar-minded professionals. Usually the response of reformers is—we need both. (Fullan 1994). But the chances that it will be possible to coordinate a process wherein there exists a consensus on the desired way throughout all the hierarchical levels of a system—from teachers through principle and inspectors—to higher level positions in the ministry are slim. Even if such coordination was possible, it is unlikely to lead to a paradigmatic change, as there are too many stakeholders, with different views and interests, which must agree for too long a time for such a change to be possible. I believe the problem will not be solved as long as the professionals who manage and operate contemporary schools do not really "own" their professional activity.

As a result of the macro-level chaos described in the previous subsection and the above micro-level flaws, we are witnessing the following worrying, connected yet different, phenomena in many education systems all over the world:

- The "Reinvention of the Wheel" phenomenon. Often, processes of change which were common decades, or sometimes a century, ago are back in fashion every once in a while, under different names which allow them to seem innovative (Aviram and Talmi 2004).

- The "Pendulum" phenomenon. In the absence of any possibility for systematic learning curve, the system sways from one fashion to the next and back over the decades (although, as claimed above, often under different names) (Eacott 2011).
- The "Loss of Words' meaning" phenomenon. As a result of the multitude of terms used to describe identical approaches and the usage of the same term to describe contradicting stances, words dominant in the discourse lose any "stable" meaning and reference and float in many different directions. (Feldman 1995; Jones and Brader-Araje 2002; for one characteristic example referring to one aspect of the academic discourse on change see Glick and Aviram 2011).
- "Double-talk" phenomenon or the legitimation of "not really meaning what you say" already discussed earlier.
- The "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" ("the more it changes, the more it remains the same") phenomenon. This French saying was used by Paul Goodman (1956), a leading educational reformer in the USA more than 30 years ago, referring to the lack of "real" sustainable change beyond the many reform waves. This situation is well documented in the literature on educational change. Many researchers have repeated the notion, including some of the most prominent educational reformers, once they sobered up, each in their own words. To mention but a few prominent representatives: "The myth of school self−renewal" (Gordon 1984), "The predictable failure of educational reforms"(Sarason, 1990), "Tinkering toward utopia" (Tyack and Cuban, 1995), "100 years of failed educational reforms" (Ravitch 2000) and "So much reform, so little change" (Payne 2010). The wording and explanations for failures may be different, but the reality they all describe is the same: grandstanding declarations, (often) good intentions, huge budgets, hectic activity and constant "change"—all bring about no desirable sustainable (in light of any definition of the term) effect.

I hope that the opening statement of this section is now clearer: while every suggestion for change, or publication describing change, may seem, at first glance, to be rational, when they are scrutinized more closely, a totally different picture is revealed. Given the above inherent "micro-level flaws", the chance that specific change processes will be successful and sustainable is very low. On the macro-level, the chaos created by the endless plurality of fragmented approaches, described in terms whose meaning are "floating"or in a language of "double-talk", cannot lead to real or sustainable change. It rather prevents any real rational discussion as well as the emergence of a gradually developing learning curve beyond ever recurring failures.

The Prognosis

The foundational prognosis to both layers of the illness afflicting Western educational systems is clearly derived from the above diagnoses. We must start to re-think the desired educational system in Western democracies *rationally*, *systematically*, and

completely. In other words I used elsewhere, we have to re-invent education for Western liberal democracies. Such thinking must

- Begin at the "rock layer", which consists of, as I already claimed above, the following:
  1. A definition of goals that derive from the humanistic values basic to the liberal democratic worldview.
  2. A Definition of constraints and guidelines for the system activity as stemming from this view.
- Translate the above goals and constraints into operational goals and constraints in light of the specific conditions of a specific society or culture.
- Analyze all aspects of the postmodern situation relevant to the development and well-being of individuals and to the sustainability of liberal democracy as well as formulate scenarios which can help us think about the directions in which the situation can develop in the foreseeable future, and then
- Define desired educational processes that reflect the optimal way for realizing the desired humanistic goals in the postmodern reality as analyzed before, in accordance with the constraints and guidelines stemming from humanism.

Obviously there are different understandings of the basic humanistic values, educational goals and constraints and guidelines and even more different readings of possible methods for their operationalization. The combinations of these many variations can lead to quite a large number of educational alternatives. I believe liberal democratic states should encourage the development of those alternatives, their realization and experimentation thereof as long as they

- Are clearly and systematically based on the above steps.
- Can always be subject to rational, empirical and ethical critic, and evaluation.
- Are based on a "learning organization" set of principles, allowing for the improvement of the models in light of evaluation, measured results and critic.

The models developed within such processes, their realization and further research and development will be devoid of the above micro-obstacles to change I detailed above. They will also facilitate a rational macro-analysis and discourse based on comparison between the various modes' basic values, assumptions and, with time, levels of effectiveness measured in light of their own goals.

Only when at least several educational models based on such systematic thinking are realized can "natural selection" or a "learning curve" do its work. In other words, only then can the various alternatives and models be allowed to compete, based on their appeal to parents, young people and other stakeholders or be evaluated on their merits.

What I "require" here is nothing more than the most basic conditions of strategic research and development that anyone executing economic, technological or public projects considers to be trivial. For some reason the demand for rationality, which is perquisite for manufacturing anything from socks to ballistic missiles, is totally ignored when the future prosperity of young people and of our societies are concerned. (Aviram 2004).

Finally, is there a place for optimism? Unfortunately, I cannot address this issue here. Still, as I look around, I do not have many reasons for optimism, since the stakeholders now involved in formulating educational policies (politicians and decision-makers, academicians, teachers' unions, industrialists, parents) are all working under cultural, political or organizational constraints which decrease their capacity to develop the desired way of thinking.

However, I can name one reason for optimism. In the last few decades, we are witnessing the emergence of several international grassroots, groups that have succeeded in developing a discourse based on interdisciplinary research which radically replaced the previously exclusively dominant discourse. The "green" or ecological revolution is probably the best example and the most relevant to the issue at hand. There is no a priori reason to dismiss the possibility that such an alternative approach will emerge in education.

Implications for Philosophy of Education

I believe the chronic, two-layered, illness afflicting education systems in postmodern democracies has (at least) two categories of implications for philosophy of education. Unfortunately, I can only very briefly point them out below.

The Re-appropriation of the Meta-Narrative

Given the prevailing state of affairs, I believe philosophers of education have to consider a re-appropriation of the meaning the term "philosophy" has had from Plato's time to Dewey's: systematic rational thinking, which begins with answering the most basic epistemic and ethical questions and then proceeds to systematically, critically and constructively create meta-narratives to guide human activities in education as in all other aspects of life. I do not claim this should be the only or even the main approach to practice philosophy of education. Such "restriction" is practically meaningless and undesired. I do, however, wish to argue that this option should be "taken out of the closet" into which it was pushed by almost 100 years of (to a meaningful extent, justified) attacks against grand rational thinking or philosophical meta-narrative. I also wish to argue that philosophers of education better start thinking methodologically about the many questions that stem from the desire to follow it. The reasons are quite simple: a rethinking of education, as many other rethinking tasks we face today, in our hectically changing global world, requires a complex multidisciplinary "grand thinking" which stands in sharp contradiction to the disciplinary structure of the academic world (Molz 2010). Here, the fact that this has been the job of philosophers for many centuries can help.

If we want to take a step further and ask how this old–new role can be fulfilled today, we have to address a large number of epistemic and methodological questions, such as

- What does it mean to develop an educational meta-narrative today, given:
  - The harsh criticism of the last century, stemming, also, from the dogmatic and often "megalomaniac" nature of past meta-narratives;
  - The ethical pluralism, not to mention relativism, many of us adhere to;
  - The enormous complexity of the issue at hand which requires meta-disciplinary thinking;

This last question in turn leads to several others:

- What should the role of philosophers be in a meta-disciplinary team?
- How can philosophers rely on empirical research done in various disciplines and subdisciplines and integrate it in order to create a coherent picture depicting (among others) one aspect of postmodernity or another (the rich discussion that has emerged recently about "experimental philosophy" is very relevant to this issue, see for example Edmonds 2009).

Elsewhere I have argued in more detail about the issue and pointed to possible approximations of such meta-narratives (Aviram, 2010, 2004; Aviram et al. 2010).

The Need for Ethical Caution

What I call "a need for ethical caution" stems from a new light the above critique, even if only partly accepted, sheds on discussions leading to various recommendations concerning education stemming from philosophical publications. These recommendations relate to issues such as the extent of justification for the compulsory nature of education today or the desired educational goals and practices. Usually these discussions seem to tacitly assume that the prevailing educational systems in postmodern democracies are at the very least "reasonable" educational systems wherein recommendations can be effectively implemented. They ignore the possibility that educational systems are abnormal and hence essentially irrational, non-effective and even counterproductive and that as such they are highly likely to distort any recommendation implemented within them.

I believe that writers who express views that can be interpreted as leading to practical recommendations have a responsibility to be "morally cautious". In other words, they must seriously consider if there is a chance that their recommendations can be effectively implemented in contemporary education systems and to share their substantiated answer to this question with the readers.

To conclude, I hope that I have convinced the readers, at least to some extent, that we have good reasons to believe that

- The "DNA" of prevailing educational systems is inherently anachronistic,
- This anachronism renders contemporary education systems ineffective and drives them to fight for their survival using methods that reduce them to an irrational, further ineffective, modus operandi.
- These facts have at least the two bearings on philosophy of education that I delineated above.

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Conscripts or Volunteers? The Status of Learners in Faith-Schools

Kevin Williams

It is easy to acknowledge that children are individuals rather than a homogeneous group but it is less easy to accept the practical consequences of such acknowledgment. In other words, it is one thing to espouse romantic, politically correct, child-centred views in theory, but it is quite another to accept that children can be actually allowed to make choices about what they wish to learn. For example, Andrew Stables, the author of *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education* (2008), expresses his surprise that modern compulsory schooling is 'not more openly and fully challenged at the level of compulsion rather than merely effectiveness' (p. 130). He also questions the provision of 'extensive schooling, at least beyond an elementary level' (p. 190). Yet he offers no detail on his position on the discretion that he would extend to children when they reach this age. He shies away from prescribing what children 'may legally be allowed to do at certain stages' in terms of general social rights on account of a lack of space and of 'legal expertise' (p. 184). He shows himself to be reluctant to engage in explicit prescription but does conclude the book by reference to policies that 'might seem appropriate' (p. 190) in respect of the school curriculum. He approves of 'an increased emphasis on both parent and student choice' (p. 191) and mentions the policy in the UK of removing the compulsion to study foreign languages at fourteen (Stables 2008), a policy that he seems to endorse. Yet he does not commit himself to provide any more practical details. It is when the specific recommendations are made that discussion regarding the status of children becomes most interesting. Reproving the system is different from constructing arguments about specifics.

The issue of compulsion in education arises very acutely in respect of the status of learners in faith-schools. It is common both for those in favour of, and those opposed to, faith-schools to invoke the rights of parents in support of their positions. The rights and wishes of children are rarely raised in the debate, but by concentrating on this particular aspect of the theme, as I propose to do here, most of the general issues regarding compulsion come into dramatic and clear focus. As parents are the primary agents of compulsion in respect of faith-schools, the status of learners in these schools is particularly sensitive. Young people may well understand that their

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parents are concerned about their welfare but reject the faith stances of their parents and their choice of school. Indeed children may simply reject the choice of school on the grounds simply that they do not wish to be separated from their peers, or from a conviction that faith-schools promote segregation.

Some Matters of Clarification What is meant by a faith-school? These are schools designed to promote a particular religious or other worldview. They seek, as a matter of policy, to foster or develop in young people a commitment to a particular religion and the religion in question is reinforced as part of the school's ethos. Such schools will often have symbols of the religion in question on the premises and provide liturgical services. The faith will also be promoted in dedicated lessons of religion formation and, where relevant, across the curriculum. The staff and pupils do not all have to be members of the religion but must not undermine it.

This chapter is primarily concerned with what happens in classes of religious education. The argument is not concerned with age-appropriate courses in religious studies or with sociology of religion. The focus is on confessionally-specific religious formation that involves initiating children into a specific religion (or their continued education in this religion) rather than on the study of religion as a phenomenon. Indeed it is hard to see how we teach religion in a strong sense without initiating young people into a particular tradition of faith. The endeavour to teach 'religion' in a general sense is like trying to teach sport without actually teaching children to play a specific game or activity, or to teach languages without teaching a particular language. Jim Mackenzie makes this point by drawing on the words of George Santayana: 'The attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular' (Mackenzie 1998, pp. 409–427, p. 421).[1] It is not realistic to expect that a programme of religious education that is not denomination-specific can initiate young people into the lived and living experience of a religious tradition. Given that there exists no view from nowhere, the basis for 'genuine open and mutually respectful dialogue with other faiths' is, as David Carr argues with some metaphorical force, most appropriately 'nurtured in the soil of proper intellectual engagement with the grammar of some particular faith' (Carr 1999, p. 454). The question raised in this chapter is whether this kind of activity is compatible with compulsory schooling. After all, at least in the Christian tradition, faith is supposed to entail a free response of the person to the relevant beliefs and practices. Compulsion seems *prima facie* to be inconsistent with this freedom.

The burden of the argument of this chapter is that certain conditions must be met in order that the presence of children in faith-schools can be considered morally and educationally acceptable. Parents, teachers and school authorities must be willing to accept the limits to compulsion and to allow young people to make choices for themselves, however much adults may wish to keep them involved in faith-based education. This chapter explains why compulsion is futile where young people do not want to engage in faith formation and it includes analysis of examples of responses to problematic situations that are both appropriate and inappropriate. To this end

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[1] The quotation from Santayana is taken from George Santayana (1954), p. 180.

the argument advanced draws both on literary texts as well as on educational and philosophical sources.

Parental Primacy

Traditionally parents have enjoyed the right to decide on the religious upbringing of their children. The Constitution of Ireland gives very explicit expression to this tradition: in its support of education, the State must show 'due regard. . . for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation' (Government of Ireland 1937–1990, Art. 42 (4)). The right to withhold children from religious education is the sole prerogative of their parents and reflects the historical provisions that applied to primary schools that are also to be repeated in respect of Vocational Schools/Community Colleges and Community Schools. In these schools parents have the right 'to request in writing that their children be withdrawn from classes in religious instruction' (Department of Education 1979). In Community Schools, religious instruction and religious worship are provided 'except for such pupils whose parents make a request in writing to the Principal that those pupils should be withdrawn from religious worship or religious instruction or both religious worship and religious instruction' (Association of Community Schools 1992, p. 23).

Commitment to paternalism is not to be found only among religious parents. Despite the opposition of supporters of *laïcité* to the traditionalism associated with the Catholic Church, its theorists can be if anything more uncompromisingly paternalistic towards young people than Catholic educators. This paternalism is given dramatic and emphatic contemporary expression by University of Lille philosopher, Catherine Kintzler (2003). Kintzler is a strong defender of *laïcité* and she subscribes to a very paternalistic view of education. She condemns the belief that school students should enjoy the freedom of adult citizens and goes as far as to refer to this view as a 'monstrosity' (2003, p. 217). This emphasis is ironic given the concern about paternalism and indoctrination commonly alleged against parents of religious convictions.

An irony about the ascription of authority to adults is that it introduces a sharper distinction between the worlds of children and adults than can be justified. Adulthood should not be envisaged as an emotional, intellectual or career terminus because, as Stables puts it in the concluding paragraph of the book, adults too 'are engaged in on-going identity projects, dependent on play, challenge, appropriate levels of protection and the management of risk' (p. 193). As the poet John Montague (2011) notes in his poem 'One Bright Sunday', 'grown-ups of some importance/may still frolic like infants'.

Developmental Inappropriateness

A further irony should be mentioned here. Within the tradition of Christian moral theology, children were judged to have reached the age of reason at seven. They were deemed responsible and to have attained a degree of *Mündigkeit*, the capacity

to speak on their own behalf. At this age they were said to be capable of exercising moral responsibility and thus of committing mortal sin. Though this view has been significantly qualified, the second half of the last century has seen research affirm the impressive reasoning abilities of young children.

This research is very powerfully communicated in the work of Margaret Donaldson, especially in *Children's Minds* (1978). In brief, Donaldson has found that if experiments are designed to connect with their experience and interests, children in the early years of primary school can reason formally at a much earlier stage than Piaget maintained. Children also have a capacity to decentre and to stand outside their egocentric worlds and to sympathise with others. On the other hand, adults can be egocentric and fail to decentre. She further explains how human beings, both children and adults, can have serious difficulty with the written word and with the level of abstraction that informs the work of schools. Donaldson views the worlds of children and adults as overlapping in significant ways.

Howard Gardner's book *How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach* (1991) advances the same argument. Offering a similarly persuasive view of the capacity for understanding on the part of young children, Gardner argues that children between the ages of two and seven undergo important human development and that by five most of their scripts (basic understandings) are developed. Many basic understandings do not change and new developments do not eradicate old patterns. Again, like Donaldson, he draws attention to the difficulty experienced by children with the agenda of the school where many of them struggle with the symbolic and notational practices of formal education. Yet the thrust of the work of both theorists is to reinforce awareness of the reasoning capacities of children. Acknowledgement of these capacities should inform any treatment of the relationship between childhood and education. If the reasoning competence of very young children is as these writers argue, then it behoves adults to be very circumspect in what they make compulsory for young people, especially in the early teenage years, on grounds of their inability to make these decisions for themselves.

This reflects a revealing experience I once had as a supervisor on teaching practice of a naïve young student teacher in a faith-school with a group of sixth class girls (ages 12/13). One girl answered a question about the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation with a lack of conviction regarding their existence. 'At this rate', said the hapless young man, 'you will be saying there is no God'. 'That's right' she replied with a gentle reluctant assertiveness, 'I don't believe that God exists'. Her immediate neighbour added: 'And I don't believe it either and nor do our parents'. The nonplussed student had the sense to thank them for their intervention and move on. My intuition was that the two girls were sincere and convinced in their dissent from religious belief.

Both religious believers and secularists do well never to underestimate the capacity of young people robustly to resist the proselytising designs of adults. It is both futile and educationally reprehensible to attempt to subvert young people's capacity for what John Hewitt calls 'the stubborn habit of unfettered thought' (1999, p. 300).[2] The

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[2] From the poem 'The Dilemma' (1999).

following section, which draws on imaginative fiction, autobiography and empirical research, demonstrates the futility of compulsion in the area of faith.

Futility of Compulsion

There is a memorable scene in Tessa de Loo's popular novel, *The Twins* (2001) that captures this futility very well. Lotte, one of the eponymous twins, is sent to a Calvinist school in Holland because she cannot be accommodated in the state school. Having had a non-religious upbringing at home, she is intrigued by what she is learning from her teacher of religion. By contrast, her peers have no interest whatsoever in the subject, having been 'brought up on religion like a daily dose of cod liver oil' (p. 74). Lotte gets the highest marks in the class in religious education but her knowledge does not encourage her to make the transition to religious commitment. What the school principal invites her to accept as 'profound truth', Lotte thinks of as being of the same status as the story of Snow White and belief in Santa Claus (pp. 75–76). The futility of the project is captured in the work of other writers.

In *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce (1991) gives powerful imaginative expression to the human capacity to resist the catechetical designs of adults. Like Joyce himself, Stephen Dedalus enjoyed an intellectual initiation into the faith as well as an initiation into a religious way of life, and had set down roots in religious practice as well as in the exercise of reason in discussing religious beliefs. Like Joyce himself, however, Stephen turned away from the Catholic faith that he found in so many respects appealing and which was urged so insistently upon him.

The educational history of Simone de Beauvoir (1984) is similar. As a child and young teenager, de Beauvoir was very pious and aspired to become a nun, though her father was sceptical of her aspiration and advised her against making too hasty a decision. The event that was to trigger her renunciation of faith occurred at confession where the school chaplain abandoned his role of confessor to reprove her for mischievous behaviour in the school. Although undermined, her religious convictions remained intact. She found a new confessor in the church of Saint Sulpice who encouraged her to read some mystical texts, any inspiration from which was subverted by a moment in the garden when she came to the conclusion that there is no God. Having previously considered that 'there was no greater disaster than to lose one's faith', it is with some reluctance that de Beauvoir decides that the 'facts of religion were convincing only to those who were already convinced' (p. 136). Her concern in school is to keep quiet about her genuine beliefs to avoid being 'pointed at with the finger of scorn' and 'expelled from the school' (p. 139). She resolves to take her lead from an older pupil who was 'rumoured' to be an 'unbeliever' but who worked hard and took great care never to express 'subversive notions' (De Beauvoir 1984). On returning some books to a priest, she confesses her state of unbelief. The priest is shocked at her apostasy and asks what mortal sin she has committed. In dismay, she leaves the church and allegiance to the Catholic faith behind her (De Beauvoir 1984, pp. 139–140). The experience of condemnation makes her break with Catholicism definitive.

De Beauvoir's account of her experience raises very important questions about the transmission of religious faith. How would her attitude to religion have been shaped if its influence on the families that she knew had prompted honesty, generosity and openness rather than deviousness, defensiveness and exclusiveness? Would the outcome have been different if the school chaplain had not behaved as he did? What would have happened if the priest in Saint Sulpice had treated de Beauvoir with common sense and sympathy? How would she have developed if the school authorities had been less punitive towards pupils who experienced religious doubts and offered them support rather than condemnation in their search for truth?

The struggle with religious education is not simply a Christian phenomenon; it can also apply within an Islamic context. Ayaan Hirsi Ali (2008) in her autobiography *Infidel: My Life* chronicles her rejection of the religious beliefs of her parents and teachers and peers. Despite at one phase of her life having an engaging and charismatic teacher, she comes to reject the beliefs of Islam. She found the Islamic attitude to women and to sex to be controlling and hypocritical (p. 110) and the emphasis on Hell tiresome (pp. 80–81). She kept detecting inconsistencies in the arguments, found that her questions got 'no real answers' (p. 117) and that the same affirmations were uttered with interpretation seeming 'to be for the sake of convenience rather than logic' (p. 117).

Empirical research confirms the futility of trying to force religion upon young people. The findings of French researcher, Jean-Paul Willaime, following a review of confessional schooling in Germany, offer evidence of a trend that will not surprise many close to the reality of school life. He found that confessionalism at the institutional level does not necessarily translate into strong confessionalism in practice during Religious Education lessons. Teachers have to take into account the mind-sets of children that can vary greatly due to a lack of homogeneity in terms of religious backgrounds even among those whose parents have the same religion (see Truong 2002, p. 78).[3] This leads Nicolas Truong to conclude that there is a growing convergence between the profile of religion in the secular schools of France and the confessional equivalents elsewhere. In the former, an attempt is being made to communicate the religious dimension of culture and in the latter an attempt to situate religion in a broader cultural context (Truong 2002). This reflects the findings of fieldwork conducted some years ago by Jackie Bourke (1998), a journalist from *The Irish Times*. Bourke found that increasingly faith-schools are reaching out to children of different faith backgrounds and of none. Here are the comments of the teacher of a sixth class in a Catholic school where pupils are making their Confirmation regarding the accommodation of children who are not. The latter 'join in class discussion' where pupils 'talk about different beliefs, and why some children are not making their confirmation' (p. 5). 'The important thing', remarks the teacher, 'is to respect each child's individuality' (Bourke (1998).

This leads to the final section of this chapter, which considers the relationship in the classroom between the teacher of religion and learners. To understand the

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[3] I have translated and paraphrased Willaime's comments from an article by Nicolas Truong (2002), p. 78.

demands made in the educational context, something more general be said about the nature of religious faith and of the demands made of those who hold religious convictions in relating to those of different beliefs and of none.

Faith and the Teaching Disposition

A religious faith offers a way of apprehending the world and of living that involves a disposition, mind-set, or state of mind composed of a matrix of beliefs, convictions, attitudes, feelings and emotions regarding humankind's place in the universe and ultimate fate. This disposition is commonly expressed in acts of worship or prayer and also in the form of moral commitments to act in ways that are consistent with realising this ultimate destiny. For those who hold it, a religious faith represents the most profound truth about human life. Where individuals are convinced that they possess the truth about life, it can indeed be hard to appreciate the views of those who do not share their convictions or, in other words, to decentre from their own world view into that of another. For example, Newman sensitively describes the attitude appropriate on the part of the unbeliever to religious faith: 'If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity' (1901, p. 210). Yet he fails to refer to the disposition required by believers towards unbelievers.

The tendency of discourse in the sphere of religion, especially between the believer and non-believer, to become adversarial finds classic expression in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (2010) in the exchanges between the hapless curate, *l'Abbé* Bournisien, and the pharmacist, Homais. At the wake for Emma Bovary towards the end of the novel, Homais returns once again to the themes with which he has frequently challenged the priest. In response to the priest's suggestion that all that could be done for the deceased was to pray for her soul, Homais replies that this is pointless because either the unfortunate woman 'died in a state of grace (as the Church has it), and then she has no need of our prayers; or else she departed impenitent (that is, I believe, the ecclesiastical expression), and then. . .' At this point the priest interrupts sharply to assert 'that it was none the less necessary to pray'. The pharmacist objects that 'since God knows all our needs, what can be the good of prayer?' The priest is dismayed at such impiety and exclaims 'Why, aren't you a Christian?'. Homais replies pompously,

> I admire Christianity. To begin with, it enfranchised the slaves, introduced into the world a morality.
> That isn't the question. All the texts...
> Oh!, oh! As to the texts, look at history; it is known that all the texts have been falsified by the Jesuits. (p. 535)

In general discussion of religious or any controversial issues, it is vital to avoid the conversations becoming adversarial. Where the combative defence of one's own view joined with an antagonistic reading of opposing views takes place, then it is unlikely that people will actually achieve the slightest appreciation of opposing points of view.

Combative antagonistic exchanges normally amount to no more than the affirmation of points of view than clearly formulated ideas.

Yet it is possible to recognise that others may hold opposing views that reflect a reading of the human condition described by Denis Donoghue (2002) as 'sane and honorable' (p. 177) and that offer, in a metaphor from Wallace Stevens used by Donoghue (1968, p. 288), a 'viable' perception of the world. This disposition is wonderfully embodied in the life and thought of Sister Emmanuelle, who was born in Brussels in 1908 and who died just before her one hundredth birthday. She spent her life working tirelessly on behalf of the dispossessed of this earth and her work led her to give voice to the voiceless in many countries.

She shows how it is possible to engage in conversations about the most sensitive issues of religious belief and to reconcile respect for the beliefs of others with a firm and developed conception of 'viable' truth. In 1944, in Istanbul Mr. Auerbach, her teacher of philosophy, and Mr. Feyzi who taught her philology, were Jewish and Muslim respectively. These two teachers were as committed to the truth claims of their religions as she was to those of Christianity. It dawned on Sr Emmanuelle that she might not be the holder of all truth: from her teachers she had learned that it was vital to consider the human being first rather than focusing on the person's religious, political and cultural affiliations and also to avoid becoming so immersed in one's own identity that one is unable to join the other person in hers or his. This lesson was reinforced by her other influential teacher, a French Franciscan, philosopher and theologian, Father Gauthier. He helped her to understand contemporary agnosticism and atheism and to realise that atheism was not a 'sin of impiety' (Emmanuelle, 2008, p. 100)[4] but rather in most cases the responses of an individual following an upright conscience and unable to believe in an invisible God in a world where tragedy is common. She came to believe that people accept or reject God on account of their education and upbringing, their reading and life events. These criteria of judgment can be difficult and even impossible to change. Each individual reaches a decision according to her or his lights and both believers and non-believers can be subject to doubts (Emmanuelle, 2008, p. 272). Yet she eschewed relativism and scepticism. She did not consider that all religions and beliefs were equally true: 'Truth is an absolute and cannot be contradictory. Either Jesus is the son of God or he is not' (Emmanuelle, 2008, p. 263)—there cannot be two views of this defining belief. Yet she also found that atheists, Jews and Muslims all 'nourished her Christian faith' (Emmanuelle, 2008, p. 263). They extended her understanding of God and enlarged 'her vision of God, goodness and beauty' (Emmanuelle, 2008, p. 263) and helped her to see value in human beings irrespective of their allegiances. She had an open orientation to the beliefs of others and a sense that people of goodwill can differ in respect of spheres where agreement is not universal.

In her work in helping to create homes for street children, she emphasised the importance of teaching the young people to care for each other and for all to respect religious difference. In these homes, there was to be not the slightest trace of proselytising intent. As she reminds readers, the essence of religion (*re-ligio*) is to bind human beings to God and to each other. Even young Catholics have to confirm their

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[4] Translations are my own.

wish to attend Sunday Mass to ensure that they are going willingly and of their own free will. She shared the French passion to respect and preserve the sacredness of individual beliefs. Sr Emmanuelle therefore responded positively to her realisation that the truth claims of religion are highly contested. Regrettably her perception of the contested status of these claims may not be shared by those who manage, teach in, or send their children to, faith-schools. However, the contested epistemological status of religious truth-claims has implications regarding how they should be treated within the classroom in a manner that respects liberal democratic principles and the compulsory context of schooling. Very particular demands are made of teachers when addressing matters of faith.

The Integrity of Teaching As a Practice   Given their contested nature, the truth claims of faith-schools cannot be presented as absolutely and incontrovertibly universally true without violating the fundamental principle of being honest with young people. Furthermore, space must be left for the possibility of disagreement and dissent on the part of learners. In the teaching context, what is necessary is the human and moral sensitivity that is a feature of all good teaching. Pádraig Hogan (2003) describes this attitude as respecting the 'integrity of teaching as a practice' (pp. 63–74). This means showing the utmost respect for the young people who do not share the views of the faith-school or of their own parents. David Alvey (1991) gives an example of an 8-year-old boy responding to a question from a teacher (not his regular teacher) by saying that he did not believe in God. The teacher grabbed the child's ruler, broke it in two, placed the two parts together in the shape of a cross and asked him what it was (p. 15). This is obviously unacceptable. The parent quoted by Alvey gives an example of another teacher who, although himself very religious, was sympathetic to a child who expressed atheistic views. This teacher reproved the other boys for attempting to stigmatise the child for his atheism and told them that they were lucky to have a classmate who had different beliefs (p. 16). This response reflects the approach advocated by Hogan (1995) in his suggestive metaphor of a 'cultural courtship' (p. 170) to refer to the relationship between teacher and taught in the school context that was mentioned in an earlier chapter. The teacher is the conduit of the 'authentic voice of the subject' which she must enact in an 'engaging yet faithful idiom; an idiom which addresses the sensibilities of the pupils in an inviting and challenging manner' (Hogan, 1995, p. 170).

Hogan gives the fictitious example of a teacher of religion in a class of hostile, resistant and difficult young people between age of 15 and 16 years, the more articulate of whom call into question his assumption that they are believing Catholics or Christians. This assumption, they argue, is offensive to them and they consider religion to be nonsense. One day he becomes so frustrated that he casts aside his lesson plan in order to confront the pupils about their behaviour. Hogan envisages the teacher responding non-defensively and acknowledging that many have held such a view of Christianity in every generation. The teacher goes on to argue that the genuine voice of Christianity 'promises to fulfil the deepest yearnings of the human heart, however outrageous that promise might sound' (p. 173). Furthermore many of the promises of Christianity are to be found in other great religions. This voice,

though, is a voice of 'invitation, not compulsion' (Hogan, 1995, p. 173) and that this invitational quality will be a feature of future classes in religion. In the classroom it will be made clear that pupils can accept, decline or reserve their positions on the claims of religion. Such will be welcome to remain in the class and contribute to proceedings as long as they do not try to disrupt the lessons.

The approach advocated here does not oblige the teacher to be neutral, and here we need to note a distinction between two attitudes. The first is that we cannot provide answers on certain questions, for example, whether God exists or whether there is an afterlife. According to this argument, it is impossible in principle to reach any conclusion regarding such issues. This is not really neutrality; it is agnosticism. According to the second version of neutrality, these issues are highly contested and will always give rise to disagreement between people. Consequently, as is the policy in France and the United States, consideration of these issues should be excluded from the school because of its status as a neutral public or civic space. The problem with the form of neutrality that excludes study of religion and other worldviews from schools is that it may be understood to imply that one worldview is as good as another. Choice of worldview may become represented as a matter of opinion. Young people can therefore get the impression that there is no ultimate criterion of truth or even of relative compellability that can be invoked in choosing between different worldviews. This suggests to them that the beliefs of eccentric cults have the same status as the beliefs of the great world religions or of atheism. This is not neutrality; it is an extreme form of relativism.

The teacher's role is to enable pupils to reach considered views on controversial issues. Where religion is taught, teachers cannot be neutral because it is part of every teacher's remit to enable learners to respect the force of better arguments. Beliefs must be subject to evaluation and assessment, and this process assumes the existence of criteria of truth and plausibility with regard to the claims of different religions. To be sure, conclusive proof cannot be provided in respect of the claims of faith but there exist nonetheless degrees of reasonableness in the area. No teacher can be neutral about the force of better arguments in respect of claims to reasonableness. Yet this does not allow a teacher to be partisan in presenting arguments; teachers have to be sensitive and exercise pedagogic tact in doing so. What is proposed is that teachers be non-defensive, honest and prepared to entertain questions about their beliefs.

In this way the teacher will allow the conscripts to become volunteers. Only by showing this respect for the 'integrity of teaching as a practice' can compulsion and the activity of faith-schools be reconciled. As has been argued in this chapter, in order to be consistent with the liberal democratic principles, faith-schools must respect the autonomy of learners to make decisions for themselves. These principles are as binding on faith-schools as on any other form of school. The imperative of respect for 'integrity of teaching as a practice' is required of educators in every educational environment.

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Is The Idea of Compulsory Schooling Ridiculous?

Helen E. Lees

Introduction: Perspectival Shifts, Educationally Speaking

One thing is clear from an "alternative world" of educational theory and practice: education is seen very differently from a hegemonic, common and everyday conception. In this chapter, I will address this fact. I will show that living in and with a situation that is located outside of involvement in the mainstream of educational reality causes a different world view of what education is and can be for people. With this other perspective come questions and queries which cause the *idea* of compulsory schooling to be seen as ridiculous. Not only does it seem often an idea that is wrong, whether compulsory schooling is a relevant issue can also eventually become a non-question.

I will outline some of the factors that contribute to forming this other world view, showing how together they fundamentally alter what education is and even to the point of challenging the mainstream position from their outsider status position. Seeing compulsory education as ridiculous and genuinely believing it to be so is a powerful idea.

Most of all, in this chapter I will outline factors to do with the idea of sending children via compulsion to school settings as dangerous: personally, interpersonally, psychically, psychologically, politically and even perhaps for the social future of our world.

Compulsory Schooling: What About the People?

Within circles of opinion about education where people identify themselves as critical of current conceptions of educational promise, there are many voices roundly condemning what is currently offered as "compulsory schooling". The grounds on

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which these criticisms occur are often shocking but alas perhaps not surprising. The condemnation of the idea of compulsory schooling occurs because young people usually deemed as required by various forces to attend schools—be it legal, economic or because of social expectations—are being hurt. Schooling can cause physical, psychical and emotional pain. The problems range along a spectrum from fundamental abuses of human rights such as rape-for-exam-passes perpetrated on school grounds, to a psychic wounding of the self because of school systems and their organisational mechanisms. The result is often that people hurt by schooling vote with their feet and leave the "compulsory" project, thereby rendering any faith and trust in the idea of compulsory schooling a bit thin.

So what kinds of hurt happen? Abuses of a sexual nature, mostly by male teachers perpetrated on female students threatened with a low grade, have been documented as occurring in African schools (Harber 2004). Girls wishing to maintain personal hygiene during their menstrual period in Africa—and elsewhere, such as rural China—find no or inadequate facilities to allow them to attend without social embarrassment (Maimaiti 2010; WHO 2010, p. 7). These are two examples of gender related problems in schools. There are many more of a similar nature which could be mentioned. What I wish to highlight here is that the *idea* (generalisable to other examples not linked to gender concerns) of compulsorily entering into a system of schooling where such problems can occur would be neither attractive nor appropriate, either to the girls or their parents if proper conscientization of the experiences and effects were appreciated. Sexual abuse and social humiliation are not part of the normal understanding of educational provision. Thus, if the nature of schooling is to be compulsory, human rights abuses and basic needs need to be addressed for attendees. It must surely be necessary for the idea of "compulsory" to not be like leading a lamb to the slaughter. Schooling should not be toxic. Yet it is, on many counts (Harber 2009b). In this sense, compulsion to attend schooling is ridiculous because it is harmful to people targeted by its coercive nature. Protection of self from harm cannot be guaranteed and within the idea (and premise promise) of educational provision being beneficial this makes compulsion to attend a ridiculous idea.

Less obvious perhaps, but still harmful, is the promise and claim of schooling to educate for individual and social welfare yet the failure of positive outcomes to materialise in key regards. Failing to teach children about local social problems such as HIV and AIDS can be fatal for them, yet silences occur in schools which hide dangers, thereby exposing children through ignorance and a false sense of safety which could be avoided if the educated people of schooling systems "spoke up" (Action Aid 2003). Due to political and social factors, wrong information is offered in schools—for instance when textbooks mislead or are simply plain inaccurate with their facts (Tobin and Ybarra 2008). Gender and race issues (American Association of University Women 2004; Horvat and Antonio 1999; Osler 2006), including discrimination perpetrated amongst and by fellow students upon each other (e.g. Leander 2002) develop invidious effects which perpetuate harm for specific vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Bullying of various kinds—instead of educating—is a common school-based problem and affects especially those who are homosexual, disabled, poor or just different, such as from a gypsy culture (Bloom 2009;

Campbell 2005; Maddern 2009; Walton 2005). Compulsorily setting in place school attendance is here again a force to expose children to difficulties, without safety or benefit outweighing harms guaranteed.

There are also the more tacit abuses of an individual sense of self to consider. Given the systematic nature of schools to educate towards and for certain kinds of outcomes and people, denigrating, failing and excluding some so that others flourish is inevitable (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Marsh et al. 1978; McCulloch 1998; Willis 1981). Indeed, a sense of self can be wounded by schooling protocols and cultures such that for some children (and their parents) getting out and never returning is the only sane response (Olson 2009; Sheffer 1995).

For truants, school refusers and those—such as in Japan where school refusal can be extreme—who prefer hiding in their room all day, every day for months, rather than attend school to be ridiculed, hurt, ignored, belittled and denigrated, the idea of compulsory schooling is a ridiculous demand. They simply have other, and to them often better, less damaging ways forward for themselves (Carlen et al. 1992; Fortune-Wood 2007; Yoneyama 2000). The compulsion to attend school is sidelined through various means, with recourse to anti-social and socially self-damaging behaviour not out of the question. Escape is sought and found, often at high cost. The problem is invariably primarily and significantly not with the persons leading their life without schooling, but with the school (Harber 2008; Pilkington and Piersel 1991). Most of the above cited authors are clear on this point: schools have a lot to answer for. To make schooling compulsory according to the views of authors referenced above (and the children they have studied) is then to make integration with and punitive exposure to a failing schooling experience compulsory. Compulsory schooling is a sentence, not a boon.

Schooling encompassing *all* young people as a compulsory idea—as a fair situation—has never been true. To be forced or obliged to take part in a system that deliberately disadvantages one and which is inherently undemocratically in-clined is ridiculous in the light of notions of equality, fairness and justice (Flint and Peim 2012). However, it is these very ideas of democracy building, equality, fairness and justice *not* fulfilled by schooling, which are often used to signal why schooling is important for all and ought to be compulsory (Harber and Mncube 2012). Such reasoning can be seen as perverted once it is accepted that schooling is not wholly good or trustworthy. It is especially true in and for countries where school attendance is haphazard due to socio-economic factors, that compulsion to attend is advocated to "make things better" and yet in these countries particularly, problems of school systems such as paid teachers not even turning up to teach are all too common (Tooley 2009). Selecting oneself away from the supposedly fair-for-all option of the western democratic school project is often a survival mechanism that borders on a necessity. This turns what is compulsory in educational terms on its head. Tooley highlights that high numbers of parents who earn the poorest wages in the world would rather send their children to a small private fee-paying school than get involved in a state run "compulsory" option (Tooley 2009).

Various factors around the world determine that the concept of compulsion towards schooling is undermined. Technology is perhaps the latest player to step into such an

arena, where now it is possible and widespread for learners to learn new skills such as English, through lessons delivered via a mobile phone (Bunz 2010) or for children in rural areas to gain competence in advanced skills through a "hole in the wall" internet linked computer portal (Mitra et al. 2005). Even the old fashioned art of conversation is proving educationally viable as an alternative to schooling—as seen in research into autonomous style home education (Thomas and Pattison 2007). Compulsion for schooling is looking, in such examples, as extraneous to requirements; as an imposition on what works well without the school.

Nevertheless voices which bemoan the impact of what could be described as "exit from schooling" (see Lees 2011) worry for the democratic deficits that not taking part in the commonality of the school might develop (e.g. Apple 2000). Certainly numbers around the developed world taking up the option of home education are surprisingly high and seem to be on the rise towards presenting an actual challenge to the common social assumption that children attend schooling (Kunzman and Gaither 2013). Whatever the factors and opinions, there is no escaping that people are doing it for themselves and don't *need* compulsory schooling as an idea or as a reality.

Compulsory Schooling: What About the Law?

In this section, I challenge the idea of compulsory schooling through recourse to legal fact. The discussion is restricted to Europe only, for reasons of space. Compulsorily having to send one's children to a school or having to attend a school is not the case, if you live in a country where it is either legal to home educate or you can move around Europe.[1] This fact usurps the idea of compulsory schooling as a modern given. Naturally an inability for some reason to move from a compulsory attendance is schooling country restricts the option of escaping it as an idea, where it is protected *as an idea* by the law or is hard to refute (e.g. most Eastern European countries, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Netherlands). Although the legal freedom to not attend schooling can be difficult or impossible to pursue as an idea in some countries, in many influential countries in Europe ignoring, avoiding and refuting compulsory schooling is both possible and practised—albeit with mostly some monitoring and registration procedures (e.g. UK, Ireland, France, Portugal, Finland, Austria, Denmark, Italy, Russia, Switzerland).[2]

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[1] If you live in a country that speaks English as its first language your chance to escape school attendance altogether is almost guaranteed, although the strings that come with this vary in degree of involvement with either the state or a school. See link in footnote 2 for an overview.

[2] Home education information is a fluid dataset. Given the wide use of the internet by the home education community and their tendency to effectively network and share information through the web, the following Wikipedia resource on global home education legality is about as good as it gets in terms of a reliable, up to date overview. The information on this web page appears (at the time of access 21/10/12) to be of good quality: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics

A second point is the arbitrary nature of compulsory schooling. What I wish to stress with repetition above of the term "as an idea" is the simple fact that compulsion to attend a school is determined by idiosyncratic nationally determined legal history and not any fundamental educational ideas connected to what is necessarily good for children. Attending a school *might* be good for children but as the section "Compulsory Schooling: What About the Law?" of this chapter shows that is not always the case. There might be better ways for certain children to be educated than a school-based environment. To highlight this disjunction between what is thought to be true (compulsory schooling is educationally necessary) and what is actually true (compulsory schooling is one possible part or option of a necessary education), it is useful to focus on an alternative increasingly being shown to bring about good educational results of various kinds without school attendance.

The key area where we can see that compulsory schooling as education is *just* an idea is the field of home education (see e.g. Thomas 1998; Thomas and Pattison 2007). This is a territory open to many kinds of freedoms: how and when to learn, what to learn, who to learn it with, what depth to learn in, what pace to go at, when to take breaks and so on. Home education practice is largely characterised by reports of joy, wonder and high levels of satisfaction both educationally and personally, as a study of parental reports of their discovery of home education as possible indicates (Lees 2011). Children themselves often report it as satisfying and enjoyable as an educational route, although they are also quick to be open about any down-sides; especially given they are free in this mode of education to assess and voice their opinion without institutional censure (Llewellyn 1993). Home educators can suffer from negative experiences amongst which are said to be "burnout" (Moore and Moore 1988; Morton 2010) and the practice certainly comes with difficulties that are about living amongst a social norm of school attendance. But what the high levels of satisfaction connected to self-reports from home education indicate— including reportedly satisfying educational outcomes (see Kunzman and Gaither 2013, for an overview of research)—is that not attending a school is feasible on many counts: educationally and personally. In light of this the idea of compulsion to attend schooling *imposes itself* on individual and family choice to act otherwise according to preference and reason. The field of home education practice is familiar with issues around parental human rights to determine home education as a choice (Pattison 2013).

Yet, when it comes to understanding that compulsory schooling is an arbitrary idea associated with legal precedents and educational statute in order to sustain it, we face also another "reality." This is that knowing this and having the concept as something for active decision making usage are separate things. In a small scale study I undertook in 2009–2010 in England, data showed that many parents in a country where home education has been entirely legal and therefore (theoretically) possible since 1944 did not know that refuting the idea of compulsory schooling was an option (Lees 2011). Parents approached on the street and asked if they knew that sending their children to school was not necessary often argued—even aggressively— with me as the researcher. They refuted my claim that schooling is not compulsory in the UK. Some told me what they thought were the "facts": school attendance

is compulsory. It is not for nothing that the main strap-line on the UK's largest home education organisation logo is "education is compulsory, school is optional" (Education Otherwise 2012). Yet, once the law was explained to these parents and they were asked if they thought that the government to whom they paid taxes ought to better inform them of their choices as parents, the majority replied along the following lines: "yes—we ought to be told that school is not compulsory." Even if some parents asked did know that school is not compulsory and home education was a legal option, they mostly knew very little about what was involved or how to go about doing it within a legal framework of possibility (Lees 2011).

This common situation of a lack of concept around otherwise options can draw a number of conclusions, amongst which are: (1) parents tend towards not knowing much about educational choice other than the false idea that it entails compulsory schooling and within that remit a choice of a school of some kind; hopefully of their choosing; (2) legal fact is different from educational reality in terms of what educational ideas create, sustain and perpetuate that reality, as played out in the lives of children and their parents; (3) the idea of compulsory schooling is hegemonic and even draconian in the hold it has over the minds and lives of families in the upbringing of their youngsters; (4) that schooling is not necessarily compulsory is shocking and strange for many; (5) the *idea* of education *as* schooling is false, misleading, possibly damaging for certain children and families and not refuted by information provision even in a country such as England, where pursuing this option is liberally allowed.

The above indicates that despite legality, ideas matter fundamentally as to whether the idea of schooling as compulsory is ridiculous or not. A concept of compulsory schooling has such a hold over the general imagination as a myth of necessity for education to occur that I would suggest "schooling" has become the (tyrannical) *sign* of education. This is seen manifesting clearly in the widespread practice by professional educationists fully aware of the legality of home education as troubling and refuting the idea of compulsory schooling as education, who persist in referring to schooling as education and education as schooling (Lees 2012). The effect this has is to conflate compulsory education (a globally dominant situation) with compulsory schooling at the highest levels of educational scholarship. It is literally often forgotten or ignored that it is not true that schooling is compulsory.

As a consequence, the world of education becomes filled with work and ideas that are about schools and discourse about education becomes tainted with an inevitability that education is most likely and pervasively connected to schooling; a form of obsessive "compulsory" disorder, ordering the educational universe such that schooling ends as the dominant educational force by virtue of syntactic error. It takes those kind of critical educationists such as the ones cited in the section "Compulsory Schooling: What About the Law?" of this chapter to remind a world dominated and even tyrannised by the idea of compulsory schooling that there are other options, other worlds of educational reality and that perhaps even, when it comes to compulsory education, we might just be reaching saturation factors of an "enframing" technology of the self because of the role of the school (Flint and Peim 2012).

Such critical voices are marginal compared to the massive machinery of dedicated professionals invested in the idea of schooling through compulsion. The size and

power of this machinery creates a silencing effect as it operates at maximum speed and noise to render what we have in the school, as an ever improved version. Such a situation alone is even enough to further develop compulsory schooling as indeed increasingly compulsive.

Interestingly, children's voices about schooling create a break in this machinery and its intense forward drive. The school children would like for themselves is often at odds with the adult agendas of schooling seen in the "traditions" of excellence from schooling history. Asking children in democratic fashion what they think of what is commonly seen as the compulsory education project can invest in foreclosures new openings to other worlds of educational possibility (Burke and Grosvenor 2003; Fielding 2013; Rudd et al. 2006).

Compulsory Diversity of Educational Options?

As indicated above, there is an issue over state provision of information for parents to do with educational options. Nevertheless, there are also issues to do with providing accurate and full information about *not* having to compulsorily attend schools because of the sheer "exit" levels this might cause. Debates around home education relating to the matter of encouraging diversity of options centre on maintaining school attendance as supporting the nature of the school as an institution for democratic society. When schools are being denied resources of what are mostly—in home education circles—children from well nurtured and educated home backgrounds they apparently lose out. If these children were circulating within the state school system, they (and their parents' involvement in the school's life) could help to bring standards up through their attendance (sharing, with fellow students from more disadvantaged backgrounds, role model educational attitudes learnt at home, etc.) which would strengthen the idea of "compulsory" state educational provision, rather than weaken it through staying at home and not being a part of social schooling (Apple 2000).

Therefore, perhaps withholding a full set of educational options information from parents and children strengthens the idea of compulsory schooling and this is a good idea? Perhaps compulsory schooling has a point beyond being a "tyrannical sign"? Perhaps it helps societies to live well together? There is much of value in this idea but unfortunately it also rests on the need for schooling to be beneficial. As we have seen above, this is not always successful as an outcome or experience and there is often good reason to forsake special contributions of an educationally democratic sharing kind if the alternative is personal pain, social failure and perpetuation of elitist exclusions that work against one's own interests whilst supporting a wealthy minority.

Opting out of the compulsory project is a contested practice. Judgements that home education can create "parallel societies" detrimental to democratic functioning—as occurred in a recent appeal judgement of the European Court concerned with a German home education case (European Court of Human Rights 2006)—are of interest, but the veracity of their effect at parallel society creation is disputed (Donnelly 2007).

Much fear seems to be associated with the idea of educational segregation such as occurs when conservative Christian fundamentalists in America remove their children en masse from the state schooling system (see Kunzman 2009). At the other end of removal from state schooling, there are also real and intricate concerns about exit from socially marginal practices such as the Amish way of life and the role of education in this (McAvoy 2012). Legal judgements that create a weakening of compulsion towards a common schooling are important for the concept of education for social and personal well-being, whatever the position one takes in this regard.

The ability for educational options to be truly diverse is an issue in the face of a connection, made by many (e.g. Gutmann 2008) from democratic society (seen as desirable), to schooling. Compulsory schooling is suggested, in the light of the challenge that home education possibility offers, as a good because it facilitates democratic outcomes: everyone works together. The trouble with this of course is the lack of coherence in such a statement. It is not the case that schooling makes everyone work together, as discussed earlier, above. Meta-analysis and abstracted wishes for schooling to cause or to be the cause of democracy are not realistic. It does not happen and various programmes are drafted in to fix this incoherence (e.g. Crick 1998). This is perhaps especially true as schooling being itself democratic in nature is not part of democratic society: it largely functions as authoritarian and hierarchical. This gives lie to the idea that compulsory schooling helps democratic function (Harber 2008, 2009a; Harber and Serf 2006). Indeed, it could be said that much schooling develops people in the opposite political direction, by systematic example.

The question then of whether there should be—instead of compulsory schooling as an idea and/or reality—compulsory diversity of educational options, is an intriguing one. Even simply as a question, it offers something which seems to be attractive to parents, as I found in the 2009–2010 study mentioned above on adults discovering that alternative educational options (from mainstream schooling) are available (Lees 2011). Some of the parents interviewed about their discovery wept in front of me when they remembered the relief they experienced at finding out schooling compulsion was a myth. This would indicate that the way we think about compulsory education requires deep levels of diversification with recourse to alternative paradigms on grounds of care: multiple worlds of what education might mean are required as thinking materials to discuss compulsory schooling and its affects on the self and society. This thinking needs to occur then without a narrow minded vision that debates only "compulsory or not" but instead can debate "compulsory" as a broad matter of interest within a multi-verse of educational possibilities. This diversity can only occur once "compulsory" schooling—with its enframing foreclosures (Peim and Flint 2009)—is not the case and the concept of education has been cracked open to reveal its possibilities in social, legal and personal terms. Thus, the issue is a complex and somewhat "chicken-and-egg" situation, difficult to render malleable to happy solutions suiting all perspectives, political persuasions and personal circumstances. The complexity alone of the matter might mean it stays at the level of theory; that the idea of compulsory *diversity* of educational options lies fallow. Perhaps on-the-ground scenarios will never find themselves significantly impacted by alternative visions.

If educational foreclosing because of mono-educational information provision stops and diversity is facilitated through government information about options away from mainstream schooling (either full time or part time: e.g. home education, flexi-schooling, online learning, city as a school, forest schooling, etc), a gap in educational thinking appears. This occurs where the hegemony of compulsion with regards to schooling fades and its dominance leaves ground for new and different conceptual plants to grow. This gap is an unknown territory from the point of view of those stuck in that narrow vision of schooling as "compulsory," even if the law states that schooling is compulsory or not. Discovering that education is necessarily far more than compulsory schooling comes as a shock to narrow thinkers on education. However, it is not a shock to people who have already begun to think outside the box. I suggest, along with others who have also noticed or suggested this effect, that educational practice, and lifestyles to suit practice, operate towards change through fundamental "gestalt switch moments" (Biesta 1994; Lees 2011, 2013; Miller 2008; Mintz and Ricci 2010). These moments are seen as part of the *idea* of schooling as compulsion but serve to break it apart, such is their power of persuasion at the personal level.

This indicates that the idea of compulsory schooling *demands* a strong swing away from its meaningfulness towards another set of values, beliefs and ideas; a strong enough force to cause literal change of mind. That those parents I spoke to on the street about their educational parental options were often strongly *indoctrinated* into a particular mindset of compulsory schooling as education "itself," explains the need for and manifestation of a wholesale and whole lifestyle shift seen amongst those people who do change their mind (Neuman and Avriam 2003). Everything changes, not just their view of what schooling is. They become personally transformed (Lees 2012). In other words, compulsory schooling is not just a legal, social or educational situation. It is a mental artefact.

This puts our idea of compulsion into a whole new light. What then comes into play is the notion of changing the educational landscape through tactics and techniques to quite literally *change* people's minds. De-indoctrination, perhaps? Neuroscientific manipulations? Proper information? Without appreciating the need for the idea of compulsion as *not* ridiculous for many, we cannot see it in a new way: as ridiculous. In fact, without a fundamental shift of perspective, the very title of this chapter is itself ridiculous. However, once such a shift occurs, the literature cited above interested in shifts towards new visions of education suggests there is no going back. To see possibilities beyond one compulsory option for education is to want, demand, expect and enjoy diversity.

Concluding Remarks

Home education is the key challenge to the idea of compulsory schooling. In Germany, education at home rather than at school was finally secured as illegal throughout the country by a law (Reichsschulpflichtgesetz) signed into statute by

Adolf Hitler in 1938. What is described by many as a worrying rise in the power of rightwing politics in Sweden (BBC News 2010; Castle 2006) can also be seen as a growing content with democratic process:

> ...from the mid 1990's to 2002, the proportion of voters who claimed to be 'very or fairly pleased with democracy in Sweden,' increased to 74 % making the Swedish voters among the most contented in Europe, at least as regards the democratic process... (Rydgren 2006)

As Sweden has, after Germany, one of the most draconian policies against home education in Europe, it is theoretically possible to attempt links both from far right politics (as a factor in a compulsory schooling scenario) *and* voter content with democracy, to home education. On the one hand, difference such as that represented by the marginal and unusual educational activity of home educators is shunned in favour of conformity to an "acceptable" norm, while on the other hand a vision of a society with "everyone working together" for democratic ends also acts against home education as a possibility. Therefore, in what political space does home education flourish as a challenge to the idea of compulsory school attendance? The answer is not obvious and I would suggest it lies somewhere in the space where people can protest for their rights to do things their own way. This need for lobbying, protest and networking to secure "otherwise" rights would explain why home education advocates are so organised and active (Stevens 2003). It also highlights how democracy can become something which is a norm imposed upon others for the sake of an ideology of democracy alone. Home education and compulsory schooling are a key and important testing ground for much that politics affects and much that affects even politics.

At the start of this chapter, I spoke briefly about how after entering into a world where other possibilities for education are possible, people can see the idea of compulsory schooling, as an idea supplied by default through state provision, as ridiculous. It is no longer reality or necessary. The compulsion is absent. I have expanded on this in what followed. I now make a couple of final remarks about the danger of a rise in a schooling mentality that is enforced through lack of information, changes in the law away from diversity of educational "modality" possibilities and prejudice and intolerance of home education and other diverse options that are different.

In researching home education, it has been a significant finding for me personally to discover the extremely high general levels of satisfaction reported back from this practice. Obviously, not everyone who discovers or starts to home educate gets on well with their choice (if they have it) and it can often be a difficult choice for a variety of reasons, one of which would be perhaps the loss of income associated with a parent staying at home for the sake of the educational provision. However, those who do opt to home educate seem to be mostly offering stories of sticking with it contentedly and successfully. Such stories are far more numerous than tales of woe and school-return out of home education failure. That one is free to escape schooling seems to facilitate and result in a great deal of joy (Safran 2008; Thomas and Pattison 2007, 2010). Indeed, in a world troubled by high levels of mental distress (WHO International Consortium in Psychiatric Epidemiology 2000), schooling stress (Pope 2001) and

with far too many unhappy children (especially in the UK where we almost always feature at the top of surveys of who, under the age of 16 years, is most miserable in the world), there is much about options away from compulsory schooling which deserves deep, long term and rigorous research. The joy of not attending school and having a mind-set which sees compulsory school attendance as ridiculous deserves investigation.

It might be that abolishing compulsory schooling in favour of a broad spectrum of educational worlds towards diverse ways for the development of successful citizenship of young people, makes sense on counts distant from politically sedimented, unproblematised forms of thinking. These counts would be more in tune with what I suggest are new thought patterns—new because they are newly empowered. I can identify (although not solely) this newness with the idea of equality and respect for alternative epistemological visions which come from female thought (Belenky et al. 1997; Noddings 1984; Roland Martin 2011). It is no coincidence perhaps that in a patriarchally organised world, women are the main educators in home education and out-of-home education comes some of the most exciting thinking and educational possibilities that educationists have perhaps ever had at their disposal. There are deep-seated issues here to do with the nature of compulsion and thinking; who does the thinking that allows and leads to compulsory schooling?

My last comment is for those people who went through compulsory schooling and had problems. As educationists (and we are all one of those in a common world), perhaps there is a responsibility to question the idea of compulsory schooling and see it as possibly ridiculous but ridiculous in the sense that hurting each other is ridiculous behaviour. To see grown men and women previously unknown to me become emotional when I've explained to them that compulsory schooling is a myth in the UK and that instead, education alone that is compulsory, is affecting. I defy any educationist faced with such a sight to not question the idea of compulsory schooling. The pain of people in relation to "compulsory" schooling is an untold scandal. In European countries like the UK, these people had, in theory, an exit route. Let us worry about those people in other countries where schooling has no quotation marks around the word compulsory, whose stories of pain and eventual escape will and can never be told. Compulsory schooling is not a joke.

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Homework on Trial

Andrew Davis

Introduction

Homework has long been a contested component of compulsory education. There are parents who complain that children are being set too much homework or given it far too young. Others feel that there should be more. Many teachers believe it to be vital, and do much to enforce it, even against parental wishes. Those disputing its value may still insist on it, but only because it is part of their whole school policy. Gill and Schlossman (1996) note that in the early twentieth century, homework provoked vigorous battles in a number of American states. Progressives campaigned against homework, favouring 'play' and seeing the two as mutually exclusive.

Governments are perfectly capable of insisting that even primary schools have a compulsory homework policy. In the UK, the School Inspection Handbook includes, in the teaching to be assessed, the 'setting of appropriate homework' (Ofsted 2013). The recently established online 'Parent View' allows parents to comment on whether 'the level of homework is appropriate' in the school attended by their offspring. Ofsted does not clarify how such views might inform their inspections of the schools in question.

Attitudes to homework may well stem from fundamental assumptions about the purposes of education, and even more profoundly, from approaches to what counts as flourishing over a whole human life. The latter in turn has implications for what balance ought to be struck between, on the one hand, school demands on children's time outside school, and on the other, a whole range of personal and family imperatives. Arguably, opinions have also been influenced by shifting views about what learning should be valued. Nineteenth century pedagogy was dominated by drill, recitation and memorization (Gill and Schlossman 1996). It is easy to see how homework can support this. Time at home devoted to rote learning seems very likely to enhance it. However, when the school curriculum evolves from rote learning towards understanding and other 'richer' educational objectives, the role of homework becomes more problematic, as we will see later.

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This chapter explores some of the assumptions underlying the variety of perspectives on homework. It argues that certain approaches to setting homework are inappropriate. It proceeds to investigate whether parents and children have rights of some kind to spend significant time together free from homework requirements.

Defending Homework: The Instrumental View of Education

Consider the familiar vision of education that often seems to underlie strong support for homework: Education should prepare children to become successful citizens in a modern industrial economy. Society is competitive, and children's academic achievements should enable them to compete for the highest status (and possibly the best paid) jobs. Hence, according to this instrumental view, homework ought to play a crucial role, both in boosting academic achievement and by instilling qualities such as self-discipline and habits of hard work.

Koski and Reich (2006) argue that education to some extent is a positional good—that is to say that its value for any one individual depends to some extent on how their educational provision compares with others in their community. Above some basic threshold, they contend, "the good of education becomes increasingly positional. Here we can observe a kind of arms race in educational credentialism" (p. 613).

Their position explicitly assumes that education serves the employment market. Education as a positional good does not obviously concern, for example, learning for its own sake, learning engaged in for intrinsic satisfaction or learning with the purpose of developing the mind. On Koski and Reich's view, education ought largely to be regarded as a positional good, and as such is a matter of being prepared for a competitive society.

A key assumption in this approach, then, is the existence of a causal link between homework and academic achievement. Yet the relevant empirical investigations face a number of significant challenges. Research to date does not provide clear verdicts. Complexities abound, such as the range of reasons for homework. These include work to enable slower learners to 'catch up', while more able students are sometimes given homework to achieve the highest examination scores (Elliott and Tymms 2013). Evidently, much will depend on exactly what tasks are set and why. Some will wonder, for instance, what the widespread practice in England of requiring even secondary age pupils to perform 'colouring in' exercises for homework does to the data. An American commentator remarks that some teachers' point of departure might be expressed as follows: 'We've decided ahead of time that children will have to do something every night (or several times a week). Later on we'll figure out what to make them do' (Kohn 2006, p. 13). Moreover, Tymms and Elliot note the persisting belief that homework set from a young age produces helpful habits of working, despite the limited research evidence for this.

Much of the research purporting to demonstrate a link between homework and achievement measures the latter by means of tests. I have argued in detail elsewhere (Davis 1998, 2008) that where tests are used to 'measure' school and teacher quality

in a high stakes accountability regime, they are often unlikely to capture the kind of rich knowledge and understanding needed by employees.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, we put on one side these decidedly ambiguous empirical verdicts, and imagine that it can be definitively shown that homework raises academic achievement. Assume also that an instrumental aim for education could be defended. None of this would settle the issue of compulsory homework. For we would need, in addition, a justification for promoting a particular balance between the values behind instrumental visions of education, and other life values and pursuits that might make claims on children's time at home. I discuss examples of the latter later in this chapter.

Liberal Education: Implications for Compulsory Homework?

Consider the standard account of liberal education, according to which schools should develop knowledge and personal traits enabling students to make informed choices about values, beliefs and pursuits as adults, and to participate effectively in a liberal democracy. At first sight, such an account is unlikely to help those either opposed to homework or at least concerned to limit it, as liberal educators themselves have sometimes joined those with more instrumental views, in arguing for compulsory curriculum content. Levinson 1999 claims that 'the liberal ideal of autonomy not merely permits but requires the intrusion of the state into the child's life, specifically in the form of compulsory liberal schooling' (p. 58). Why, then, from a liberal perspective, should such 'intrusion' be limited by the school gates? The liberal educator might well support a substantial role for homework in the lives of all pupils.

A useful point to make against any liberal arguments that seem to reach over-ambitious conclusions about school ownership of private time is this: no society has ever claimed that *all* of a pupil's time outside school should be absorbed by homework (though some cultures in the Far East seem to approach such a view). This evidently applies to *any* argument favouring homework; however cogent the considerations, it is always felt that they must be weighed against others, and sometimes will fail to win the day.

Moreover, given the continuing right in, for instance the USA and UK to home school pupils, a draconian insistence on the rights of schools as against parents to require pupils to complete homework tasks would seem to be open to challenge. The state devolves to its schools the right to set homework; schools are permitted, in their wisdom, to compel pupils to do homework so that they may at least attempt to realise the state's educational aims. Yet, at the same time, the state permits parents to educate their children at home. In neither the USA nor the UK does the state require homeschoolers to cover specific content. What, then, would justify state support for schools which use compulsory homework as part of their policy to cover specific curriculum content?

Equality Arguments Against Homework

I turn now to examine the strengths and weaknesses of arguments against homework based on equality considerations. I show that equality is a poor basis from which to mount attacks on homework, but that related notions of 'sufficiency' can justify limiting it. The objection to homework that it is socially divisive has been very popular. Even as I write this, French President Francois Hollande has said that he wants to *abolish* homework on grounds of this kind.

Certainly, home backgrounds are far from 'equal'. Only some pupils will have quiet, clean, safe places to work at home. Not all parents have significant social and cultural capital. Only some parents will be both helpful and effective. They may even have learning difficulties themselves, or other children with physical or cognitive disabilities. In some families, several school-age children 'need' homework support at one and the same time, and there may be only one parent. Where there *are* two parents, they may both work and their children may be 'minded' by carers who may or may not be willing or able to provide support.

Some pupils travel much further from home to school than others, and hence their time in the evenings is limited. Pupils cope with homework tasks in a variety of ways. Some will take much longer than others. Reasons for this include the task proving particularly challenging, and high levels of anxiety or conscientiousness on the student's part.

Yet, is it the *inequality* of background that gives rise to the problems with homework? Some authorities place an intrinsic value on equality. Others hold that equality should be defended by reference to independent concerns. Frankfurt (1987) argues that economic equality has no moral importance per se. Arguments for equality are often really about the supposed consequences of inequality. For instance, with scarce resources, an inequitable division may result in some having 'insufficient'. When sharing a limited quantity of food, the fact that some have more might mean that others starve. Even where resources are not scarce, huge disparities in wealth may threaten the health of a democracy, either because the rich will have much more power than the poor or because the respect deserved by every individual may be undermined.

The task of making a conception of 'economic sufficiency' clear would be challenging, and we are doubtless dealing with a shifting target. Despite this, I believe that it indirectly offers a helpful perspective as we focus on homework. I contend that notions of 'sufficiency' rather than 'equality' are often what matters when we consider the legitimacy of homework. 'Equality' concerns in relation to homework would seem to be linked to the idea touched on above, of education as a positional good and the vision of education as involved in a 'fair' race for the best jobs. So, to the extent that exclusively instrumental approaches to education are contestable, so are arguments against homework based on equality considerations.

In contrast, 'sufficiency' issues are not tied to one particular perspective on educational aims. Since parental and home resources are not sufficient in *every* household for *certain kinds* of homework to be completed successfully, this constitutes a strong

argument for limiting or even excluding homework tasks of the types I shortly indicate. 'Sufficiency' can be construed in various ways. If a child is too cold or too hungry, most reasonable people would acknowledge that conditions were insufficient. This would affect any kind of homework.

Matters are potentially serious where a lesson or lessons that immediately follow the homework are designed to build on its successful completion. For instance, the homework might be set with the idea that pupils complete the acquisition of relevant knowledge, understanding or skills that will be built on in the teaching that immediately follows.

For the familiar reasons already rehearsed, even in developed countries, some home situations are sometimes not good enough for the homework to be completed. Moreover, completing some homework tasks actually is conditional on parental support. Indeed, the necessity for parental involvement may even be felt by the teacher to be an advantage, contributing, it may be thought, to home school links. Equally, parents may value this also, since it keeps them in touch, or so they may think, with their child's progress in school. Research into links between parental involvement in homework and academic achievement may be held to justify drawing parents into their children's schooling, though the verdicts from such research are not particularly clear (see e.g. Patall et al. 2008).

Be that as it may, homework tasks whose successful completion depend on adequate home conditions, parental support of certain kinds, or both, *and* that are immediately needed to support progress at school, are surely inappropriate. Otherwise, schools actually build in to their provision the problem that some pupils are unable to participate adequately in part of the curriculum being offered.

There may well be particularly urgent 'sufficiency' concerns where the success of tomorrow's teaching depends on relevant homework being completed tonight. Compare this with the effects of homework set with completion due in several days' time. The longer the pupil is given to complete homework, the greater the chance that she can circumvent difficult home conditions that might present her with insurmountable obstacles if she has to do it that very evening. Yet, presumably, the greater the notice given for homework completion, the less likely it is that it can feature as an essential pre-requisite of short term progress at school.

Schools have been known to continue setting homework, but, in high-minded fashion, to exclude tasks whose non-completion would 'disadvantage' their pupils. The discussion of this section has, in effect, considered one possible construal of 'disadvantage', namely that a pupil may not be able to complete a homework task that is actually essential for him/her if he/she is to have any chance of realising the intended learning outcomes of the follow-up teaching back in school.

Now, if schools come to understand this position and take the enlightened view that homework tasks disadvantaging pupils in this sense should not be set, we may well want to ask them *why* they continue to insist on homework of other kinds that do not 'disadvantage' any pupils. We need to keep this question in mind when we move on to examine whether there are arguments for maintaining time at home free from school demands.

Deferred Gratification and the Work/Play Distinction

Rousseau and some of his child-centred followers might oppose many of the usual arguments in favour of homework, on the grounds that they invariably focus on the child's *future.* Where, they might ask, are the concerns about the child's happiness and well-being *now*? Surely, those concerned with the overweening pretensions of homework should be defending the child's present happiness against paternalistic encroachments, whether they relate to a child's future in a competitive society or in other ways to their chances of flourishing as adults. However, schools who took this argument seriously could seek to undermine it by striving assiduously to set homework tasks that children would enjoy. So, as it stands, this conventional child-centred argument does not seem to have much going for it.

It is sometimes argued that homework is 'good' for children on the grounds that they need to learn that life is not all 'play' and that they should learn to put 'work' first. The discipline of delaying their own pleasures until homework is completed will, it may be thought, stand them in good stead later. The flavour of this argument is quite often both moralistic and puritanical, implying that children need to be taught that 'work' *ought* to be their priority. Without such an attitude they are almost to be regarded as morally deficient. The spirit of Weber's Protestantism, if not its letter, is alive and well. Zinzendorf, quoted in Weber (1958), comments: 'One does not only work in order to live, but one lives for the sake of one's work'. Firmly within this tradition, Corno and Xu (2004) argue that homework should be seen as a job rather than play. They maintain that it develops good work habits and self-control, that children learn to cope with activities that they may well not want to engage in, and that all this helps to 'develop a work ethic and important job management skills that are highly valued in the workplace' (p. 233).

Now the distinction between 'work' and 'play' is contestable. In any case, why should we not support a life vision in which we work in order to play, rather than where play is justified in so far as it prepares us for the next bout of work? For a proper discussion of these questions and related issues, we need to examine the elusive notion of play in some depth.

Objections to the supposed divide between work and play go back at least to Plato, who makes Socrates affirm (in Book 7 of the Republic) that play could be 'serious' and useful when contributing to education. Speaking of the role of play in adult life, however, Aristotle set up play and work in some ways as complementary, where play was seen as providing the essential relaxation required for adults to 'work' most effectively. He argued that 'we occupy ourselves in order that we may have leisure', (Aristotle 1955, p. 304) but he distinguished sharply between play and leisure.

Play, Activity 'For Its Own Sake' and Human Flourishing

I turn now to a direct consideration of play, and consider whether the results of such reflections can be used to justify limiting homework. Some neo-Aristotelian thinkers have sought to interpret a worthwhile human life in terms of basic human

goods. The latter are 'universally choiceworthy' and 'easily identified by practical reason' (Celano 1991, p. 138). One of these goods, it is suggested, consists of 'play' (Celano 1991).

Celano is well aware that we cannot readily pin down the character of play by simple-mindedly contrasting it with 'work'. Some people enjoy their work, and some 'play' is pursued at a serious professional standard. Note in passing that the latter claim has been disputed. Wright (1985) does not allow activities requiring significant levels of skill to count as 'play'. This is one of a number of stipulative definitions of play. I return to these shortly.

First, consider this anthropologist's account:

> . . . play is activity, motor or imaginative, in which the center of interest is process rather than goal. There are goals in play, but these are of less importance in themselves than as embodiments of the processes involved in attaining them. (Miller 1973, p. 97)

Miller is describing something here that will ultimately prove important for my treatment in this chapter—the key phrase being 'process rather than goal'. However, there is much work to be done first.

The concept of play only too evidently possesses family resemblance features (an option explored and supported to some extent by Dearden 1967). It could be that our real interest is in a significant feature of a *subset* of activities appropriately called 'play'. After some more skirmishing with 'play' in its broadest applications, I proceed to explore a candidate for such a feature, namely an action carried out for its own sake.

Although play activities are typically distinguished by being chosen by the player, I would argue that play can occur to order, so to speak. A teacher or a parent can tell a child to go and play outside, to play with her sister or to play with her toys. 'Real' play may well take place as a consequence of an instruction, even if sometimes an attempt to coerce a child to play means that they only go through the motions to satisfy whoever is seeking to control them.

Unsurprisingly, some disagree with my assertions here, including Roger Caillois in his classic study.

> . . . play must be defined as a free and voluntary activity, a source of joy and amusement. A game which one would be forced to play would at once cease being play. It would become constraint, drudgery from which one would strive to be freed. As an obligation or simply an order, it would lose one of its basic characteristics: the fact that the player devotes himself spontaneously to the game, of his free will and for his pleasure, each time completely free to choose retreat, silence, meditation, idle solitude, or creative activity. (Caillois 1961, p. 6)

One of the relatively few attempts by philosophers to reflect on play agrees at some crucial points with Caillois. Burke (1971) says: 'I would define "play," therefore, as activity which is free, complete in itself, and artificial or unrealistic' (p. 38).

I am sympathetic to those seeking to link play and free choice, but sympathy cannot justify stipulative definitions. The word 'must' suggests that Burke seeks to enforce a conceptual connection between play and the activities concerned being voluntary. Nevertheless, we might want to concede that Caillois has identified a

particularly valuable *kind* of play and urge that this should be seen as one of the things at the heart of human flourishing.

At the same time, we should appreciate that to categorise an activity as 'playing' is not necessarily to credit it with a positive value. Dearden (1967) notes that play can be spiteful and destructive. Anthropology offers a disturbing example:

> [Hopi children] sometimes catch birds and make "pets" of them. They may be tied to a string, to be taken out and "played" with. This play is rough, and birds seldom survive long. [According to one informant:] "Sometimes they get tired and die. Nobody objects to this." (Brandt 1954, p. 213)

According to Brandt, the Hopi informants did not believe that animals lack the capacity to feel pain, for example, nor did they have cosmological beliefs that would explain away the apparent cruelty of the practice, such as beliefs to the effect that animals are rewarded for martyrdom in the afterlife. There is no obvious reason why we should refuse to allow that Hopi children were playing. At the same time, most find their activities morally abhorrent. Huizinga (1955) argues strongly that much play in a range of cultures and throughout history is intimately bound up with competition. To the extent that he is correct, play is open to the moral critique to which competition is also subject. Hence, acquiring the status of play is not in itself sufficient to earn a role in human flourishing.

Attempts to defend play as crucial for human well being would also have to confront the claim that a necessary condition for 'play' is that it is not 'serious'. Darling (1983) points out that both Peters and Dearden thought of play as not being serious, and also observed that categorising pursuits as 'serious' involves an 'ethical' evaluation, about which there might be substantive disagreement. Other commentators, notably Huizinga (1955, p. 45) himself, have tried to persuade us of the *importance* of play in human culture, claiming that judging activities to be serious seeks to rule them out as play, yet 'play can very well include seriousness'.

As with the concept of play itself, we are severely challenged by the slippery character of the notion of the 'serious'. Taking something seriously is treating it as 'important', for instance, yet not all important things are 'serious' in every sense of that word. Many would say that it is important to have a sense of humour, to have some leisure time and not to take yourself too seriously. Moreover, many 'serious' aspects of life are not, in plenty of significant senses, particularly 'important'. The wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton belongs in this category, as does the fact that the TV series 'Friends' is no longer being made.

Dewey thought of play as an activity pursued for its own sake, rather than for the sake of some independent end. 'For its own sake' would usually be construed as implying an activity pursued for a purpose that is not independent of the activity itself. Romantic conceptions of art might afford examples of this—the poet dying of TB still scribbling away on his deathbed, the composer trying to complete that last symphony, and so on. The question whether an action is performed 'for its own sake' is independent of whether the agent anticipates enjoying it. I might learn French for the sake of learning French, but believe that I will find the process tedious and frustrating.

Huizinga (1955) tells us that dancing 'is a particular and particularly perfect form of playing' (p. 165). Moreover, there are venerable traditions according to which life, and even creation itself, can be appropriately thought of as akin to dance. In Hinduism, Shiva dances both creation and destruction. Dance features in many religious rituals over the centuries. More recently, some Christian writers have made use of the dance motif as a symbol of creation. For instance, we have C.S. Lewis (1943) on what seems to be a vision of continuous divine creation:

> In the plan of the Great Dance plans without number interlock, and each movement becomes
> in its season the breaking into flower of the whole design to which all else had been directed.
> (p. 218)

Dance seems to exemplify in a perfect manner the very possibility of pure activity whose sole purpose is itself. This is despite the existence of well-known anthropological research on certain types of dance that are carried out for reasons outside the activity itself. Familiar items subject to such investigations include rain dance (whether conceived of as an activity actually performed with the intention of causing rain, or, for instance, aimed at some kind of tribal solidarity). We should also note the existence of other examples, such as dance to enhance spiritual experiences and to bring about healing.

All this raises at least two questions. First, can an action really be performed *both* for its own sake *and* for an independent end? Some commentators simply assume that we are dealing with mutually exclusive alternatives here. Second, suppose that we are *not* dealing with mutually exclusive alternatives. Then, is it the case that, in principle, certain activities chosen by children for their own sake that are *not* set them by their schools could contribute in a distinctive way to their ultimate flourishing as adults?

At first sight, how the *first* question is answered seems to reflect how the activity is described. Thus, if Peter is asked by his mother what he is doing, and, instead of replying 'homework', says that he is avoiding a detention from his English teacher, we seem to have built into the activity, the impossibility of it being pursued for its own sake. Similarly, if he retorted (precociously) that he was doing a little towards ensuring that his English skills were satisfactory for the range of employments he might contemplate as an adult, we seem to have excluded, by a kind of descriptive fiat, that he is doing something for its own sake. So let us now pursue the question in a way that seeks to disentangle it from mere verbal characterisations.

To examine whether an action performed 'for its own sake' can also be performed for an external reason, is to ask, for instance, whether Wayne can both intend to write his story as an end in itself and also to intend to tackle it in order to avoid school punishment. It might be thought that the position that activities performed for their own sake *exclude* them also being performed for an external end, could be defended as follows: we should say in this example that Wayne could intend to write his story 'for its own sake' and merely *foresee* that he avoids school punishment thereby. I would argue that such a move proves unsuccessful. For if the task is actually compulsory, and Wayne *knows* that it is, then surely this may well be one

of his reasons for performing it. Yet this does not prevent him from engaging in the writing for its own sake *as well*.

The upshot of these reflections is that a pupil *can* perform activities both for their own sake and, at the same time, be motivated by school compulsion. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that home activities carried out for their own sake, in which the school has no immediate and direct stake, could play a distinctive role in the ultimate pattern of adult motivations throughout life; such motivations relate to a vision of adult flourishing in which their lives feature dance-like characteristics. That is to say, they live to *do* and to *experience* many things as ends in themselves.

Suissa (2010) argues that the home can be a place where, 'through the emotional intimacy and conflicts characteristic of family life . . . one is prompted—whether as a parent or a child. . . ' (p. 596) to pose questions such as 'Who am I' and 'What goods compel my allegiance?' In so far as we can make sense of these questions, the suggestion that the home affords a distinctive 'space' for the exploration of such issues is persuasive. The process of working out 'what goods compel my allegiance' surely involves, among other things, engaging in a range of activities for their own sake. The compulsory school regime, together with its extensions in the home in the form of homework, however benign and well designed, does *not* comprise a site for personal journeys of this kind. Children at home will be exposed to all kinds of emotional pressures from parents, yet they *could* be (relatively) insulated from peer pressure and teacher influence. Of course, activity for its own sake may be wicked, trivial or both. My interest here is in making space at home for the possibility that *certain* kinds of activities may be performed for their own sake. Actions 'for their own sake' are not guaranteed per se to relate to adult human flourishing. Needless to say, neither is much of the homework currently expected of children.

Parents Acting on Behalf of Schools Versus Parents as Parents

A corollary of parental support for homework may well be that they decide to become extensions of school authority. Their children, already submitting to compulsory school education for 6 or 7 h a day, continue to be indirectly subject to school authority at home, though this is now routed through their parents. One of the many challenges associated with this fact is that parental integrity while interacting with children may be threatened. Suissa (2009) describes an example in which the pupil is set a task in Religious Education. He has been asked to produce a pamphlet where he explains why it is important to control his anger. The parent wants to discuss whether it is actually appropriate to control anger, but the child is impatient, asserting that such a question is not involved in the homework. Moreover, a familiar everyday example of threats to parent–child relationships here is where parents and children are in conflict over whether and when the homework should be done. Time and emotional energy may well be expended over this when, or so it might be argued, it would be much better devoted to rich possibilities in shared activities, about which a little more will be said in the final section.

Suissa criticises the widespread tendency in contemporary approaches to parenting to instrumentalise the role. Parents are deemed to have a job, where they 'manage' their offspring, rather than living with them and developing a shared social life. Smith (2010), drawing on Suissa's ideas, contrasts a notion of parenting as a way of *being* with their children with the modern idea of parenting as a set of techniques.

It is one of the many mysterious facts about modern life in the developed world that so many parents actually spend little time with their own children. The question arises, however, whether those who *do* decide to devote time to being 'parents' with their children have any rights to make choices about this that justify limiting homework. It may be objected that this way of expressing the question already makes the contestable assumption that acceding to school wishes about homework is *incompatible* with 'being a parent'. Surely the parent could wholeheartedly support the choices being made by the school in their setting of homework tasks. Moreover, is it not also true that the parent's right to *support* choices made by schools for their children's private time should be defended?

I would answer in the affirmative to both these questions, but still campaign for *some* protected home time, free of school demands. I would also urge that we need to probe parental motivation more deeply here. Suppose the parent supports school choices purely on the grounds that these will maximise the child's academic achievement, this in turn held to contribute to the child's ultimate success as a participant in a competitive society. Then the parent has decided for his/her child that one particular type of educational aim is paramount, and further, that the implications for what ought to happen in the child's private time, weigh heavily against other claims on that time.

To justify limiting such parental interventions requires a defensible account of human flourishing that would underlie an account of human rights, this in turn establishing the need for private time in childhood free from homework demands. Earlier discussion of the significance of play in human flourishing and of the importance of time for activities chosen purely for their own sake is at least suggestive of how this story might go.

Parental Rights Over Time with Children and Children's Rights Over Time with Parents?

Parental rights over the upbringing of their children have a long debating history in philosophy of education. Broad rights can be defended thus: suppose, for the sake of argument, that it could be established that the state or another agency could do a better job of bringing up children than the parents, or that they could ensure that the children would achieve better academically if they were removed from their parents. It is self-evident that this does not establish the legitimacy of taking the children away from their parents (Strike 1990). However, this conclusion is too unspecific as it stands to aid our reflections on homework. At best, it amounts to the point that something about being a parent grounds rights *of some kind* to spend time with their own children and to influence their development in various ways.

Whatever it is about being a parent that matters here, it cannot be biology. Strike's point works as well with adoptive as with biological parents. So the parental rights must somehow be based on the actual or potential relationship between child and parent(s). The reference to 'potential' is all important here. We noted earlier, in the discussion of equality and 'sufficiency' in relation to parental support for homework, significant variations in family circumstances. Some parents, either through choice or necessity, will be developing little or no relationships with their young children. So the parental rights for which arguments are being sought must be rights in principle to make choices about time with their children, rather than rights exclusively based on their *existing* relationships with offspring.

If pursuing certain kinds of activities for their own sake is at the heart of human flourishing, it might then be argued that parents ought to have the right to share relevant experiences with their children. It might *also* be contended that children ought to be credited with the right to share at least some of those experiences with their parents. We need not be talking here about anything profound, cultural or intellectual, though of course, such domains are included. Families may want to share anything from friends and relations, sporting activities, cooking and meals through to stories, music and other arts.

We may have here the rudiments of a justification for restricting the encroachments of homework, but only if it is granted that the sharing just sketched takes on a particular value when free from school direction. So we are certainly nowhere near a neat, knock-down argument. It does not make clear *how much* time is needed. It concedes the possibility that relevant sharing may also occur as a result of activities initiated by schools.

Conclusion

Throughout this whole discussion of homework, watertight arguments have been mostly conspicuous by their absence. Nevertheless, I suggest that enough has been said to indicate the potential importance of time at home that is free from school demands. Early in this chapter we ruled out the kind of homework that directly feeds into on-going teaching. We noted the lack of clear evidential support for homework fuelled 'work habits'. So the question '*Why* set homework?' remains one without obvious and compelling answers, especially in the light of alternative important possibilities for that precious time.

It may appear that a defence of homework limitations is at one and the same time a resistance of the encroachments of 'education' on real life. However, the whole discourse here may be radically reconfigured if we think about 'Life as Education' (as in, for instance Kunzman 2012). On this perspective, education is inextricably bound up with 'life', a vision especially congenial to homeschoolers. So, if we believe in 'Life as Education' when parents seek to limit homework, they are, in a significant sense, striving for the right to share in certain ways in the education of their children.

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Understanding Transformation

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The term transformation is used frequently in educational practice and theory indicating that practices or aims of education should be changed substantially in order to facilitate renewal or improvement. For example, leaving aside the transformative quality of learning to individuation and the physical and cognitive maturation from childhood to adulthood, education as transformation stands at the center of critical pedagogy aspiring to create a socially more just and equitable society. Alternatively, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports about changing job skills' demands for the young across nations, and similarly, the promotion of outcome-oriented higher education in Europe, call for a fundamental reform of curriculum and instruction to optimally assist with economic development and growth. The role of the teacher in these examples shifts from the single bearer of knowledge and instructor to that of a facilitator who sets the stage for knowledge, skills, and understanding to be established through a dialogue among all participants. At this instance of transformative practices, the ideals of critical and liberal pedagogy meet, albeit both with insufficient consideration about how asymmetries of power and status should be dealt with in the new facilitator–participant relationships.

Given these similarities constituted by different goals of the transformation through education, two questions merit attention: (1) What does the notion of transformation hope to achieve? and, (2) how does transformation through education work? Stated differently, if all the above examples aim to be transformative, it is likely that opposing measures and objectives are brought to bear to the same end. At the backdrop, transformation universally stands for the continuous search and demand for improvement in education as the teleological panacea to cure or prevent societal ills or, stated in the obverse, increase in well-being and success through education. Considering such power, an analysis of the objectives and aims of transformation in or through education is pertinent in order to gain an understanding of how the notion operates and why it becomes invested with such different hopes.

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This chapter offers such an analysis by examining the employment of transformation in the social and human sciences as well as the relationship of transformation with that which exists at a given time and location and, lastly, with utopian thought and ideas of development to educational theory and practice. My aim is not only to gain a more refined understanding of how transformation works but also to query whether such knowledge can assist with a better understanding of how shifts and continuities in the ever-changing cultural and societal environments that envelop and interact with education might be dealt with.

To narrow the field, this chapter does not intend to examine all cases of transformation. By taking a closer look at the notion itself as it relates to art, literature, and education, I endeavor to come closer to the objective as well as the borders of transformation. To sort through the breadth, I distinguish between processes, bodies of knowledge, institutions, and individuals. For example, to study how art or science might be transformed is quite different from exploring how the transformation of a company occurred, or how a crisis transformed a person or group. In the following section, I begin with discussions about transformation in the fine arts, literature, and sociopolitical theory to establish the relationship between form and content, the distinction between metamorphosis and transformation, and the role of transformation to the inevitably changing landscape of nation states and political spheres of influence.

Transformation: Meaning, Use, and Boundaries

Where does transformation start, where does it end? How does it distinguish itself from change or alteration? And, how does it relate to metamorphosis? What happens at the end of a transformation? How do the "general" and the "normal" relate to the transformed?

Transformation is a widely used term in education to indicate the desire for change, and more than just change, to fundamental rearrangement of practices, theoretical relations, and organizational functioning. To transform means to alter a piece of an existing whole or the entirety to establish a new order of relations, of arrangements, of practices. As already mentioned, common with the desire to transform is that it surpasses many topics, political camps, different processes, and so on. Alternative usages, such as change, renewal, alteration, and others, are used with less frequency than transformation. These terms appear to provide less adherence to the tension between that which should change and that which should remain.

Transformation in the Fine Arts

For visual artists, the idea of transformation can hold multiple meanings. Yet centrally, fine art lives and breathes transformation, it is in a sense the essence of art. How form

and content interact, to simultaneously play on the past, and express contemporary perspectives, creates newness and desirable tensions. For example, in recognizing the known, within an artist's interpretation and refabrication of a subject, the onlooker can be puzzled about whether he/she sees and likes a particular interpretation and believes it to address a sentiment that is meaningful.

As transformation is an integral part of art, in which knowledge and content of that which precedes are contained, the play with and tension between copying, rewriting, and originality become relevant. An artist cannot simply copy an earlier work, unless he is honing his skills or is in the business of reproduction. Newness and originality appear as the relationship between established form and content is systematically redesigned, renegotiated, or changed to create an altered expression. The distinguishing characteristic for transformation on the level of process, then, becomes the interplay between persistence and change, by defining and redefining the relationship between form and content.

Plaum (Eiglsperger et al. 2012) points out that discussions about the relationship between form and content in art are longstanding, going back to the eighteenth century conversations in aesthetics. The central tension lies within the question of how strongly the form of a work of art can change without altering its substance. More recently, conversations explore whether art can be considered transformed when context is seen as form and alterations to the surrounding environment change the content. Plaum suggests that this should be viewed as reversed transformation.

> Wenn man unter Form eines Werks auch seinen Kontext versteht, dann macht diese Sichtweise Transformationen deutlich, bei denen durch eine Formveränderung der Inhalt des Werks völlig verkehrt werden kann. Treffender scheint es jedoch zu sein, solche Phänomene in der Kunst als umgekehrte Transformation zu verstehen, nämlich als Veränderung des Inhaltes bei gleichbleibender Form durch Veränderung des Kontexts. [If one interprets the form of a work of art also as context, then this perspective presents transformations, in which through a change in form the content can be entirely turned around. Yet, it seems more precise to understand such phenomena in art as reversed transformation, that is change of content through altering the context while the form remains the same.] (p. 45)

Lastly, Plaum observes that works of modern minimal art centrally challenge the idea of art as transformation in their attempts to eliminate the necessary, continuous interchange between form and content by subsuming both into one. This last thought raises an interesting vantage point from which to consider contemporary endeavors of transformation in education. For example, can it be said, in extension, that some transformative ideas in education are refuted because they are considered to eliminate the interchange between form and content (i.e., known practices and established processes of schooling), and by doing so, present a too encapsulated, in the extreme, perhaps even totalitarian, practice of education?

Transformation in Literature

Turning to literary studies, the idea of transformation is an important trope of character development, i.e., societal and cultural challenges or limitations are depicted

through physical or mental changes in a particular character in order to illustrate how a person yields to or endures a crisis or pressures. If the pressure is very high, the transformation can turn to metamorphosis, that is, the portrayed change from human into animal, plant, or mythical shape which is frequently unidirectional and permanent: characters transform—imaginatively or realistically—but rarely are redeemed to change back. In his study on the use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a central reference point to the German nineteenth and twentieth century literature, Gallagher (2009) writes:

> Metamorphosis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* goes beyond Kafka's strange and grotesque existentialist narrative in *Die Verwandlung* and emphasises the 'boundaries between divine and human, animal and inanimate, raising fundamental questions about definition and hierarchy in the universe' (Price and Kearns 2003). Gods transform themselves into different animals primarily to seduce young maidens, and mortals are transformed by the gods variously into animals, streams, trees and flowers, usually as a punishment for their behaviour or to facilitate a reunion with a loved one. Sometimes the process is reversible ... sometimes the process is irreversible. (p. 24)

Metamorphosis, then, considered at the extreme end of transformation, seeks to draw attention to the spectacular, to that which ensues if a person acts outside of the scope of his/her rightful place or to enable the impossible, magical alteration of a given order of things. A powerful device to surprise or to warn, metamorphosis cannot function without a context. As already mentioned, the change of context as form to alter "content" (in this case personhood and self) remains present also in metamorphosis. Interesting to consider for transformation as metamorphosis is the response to crisis: If a crisis is present, survival is sought through transformation, in dramatic instances, by fundamentally changing everything without recourse to that which was. The aim hereby is to safeguard the essential, although it might not be retrievable. Considered from another perspective, metamorphosis obliterates the form and, as such, cannot be seen as transformation. By contrast, metamorphosis as shape shifting is more permeable to indicate possibilities of action for a community or person.

In the last part of this overview, I turn to how the notion of transformation is used to deal with the inevitability of change in a society on an organizational and political level.

Transformation as a Sociopolitical Challenge

As inevitable movements of growth and change in the development of societies set the stage to consider how that which is and that which is to come or become can interface with one another as smoothly as possible, i.e., that interruptions to existing practices and policies are minimized, strategies to guide societal transformation are called upon. The goal is survival and stability through innovative and sustainable renewal in midst of rapid change in technological development, societal crises, and demographic shifts. As such, literature in economics, sociology, or organizational

management speaks about transformation management as a fundamental necessity for and challenge to societies, governments, and industry.

For example, Mohr et al. (2010) describe transformation as a definite restructuring of what exists into a different form, entailing that there can no longer be recourse to the previous way of doing things. New procedures must be established that lead to new, hoped-for outcomes. The authors note that as organizations and individuals resist giving up known practices of operating—as change is connected to risk of failure—forceful stimuli are required to facilitate a transformation. If these do not work, stakeholders must be informed that a crisis looms close by if the change does not take place. Hence, the stimuli, meant as incentives, indicate that societal transformations are context-bound, and that this context is essential to whether and how the process of a transformation takes place.

Mohr et al. identify three contexts that currently drive transformative change—computer technology, liberalization of world trade, and multinational corporations—in which the following stimuli are embedded: competition for a high quality workforce on a global level; new money and consumer markets as well as financial pathways and crisis; and global competition for resources, research, and development. Moreover, the authors analyze that transformations take place when the two dimensions of intensity and timing create the conditions or pressures for change: Intensity refers to the level of change; timing impacts its success and sustainability. Having established these premises, Mohr et al., in borrowing from Nadler and Tushman (1991), distinguish between four types of transformation: tuning, adaptation, reorientation, and re-creation.

Looking at education and compulsory schooling, the above types are recognizable as drivers to facilitate change in curriculum and instruction. Such changes are often legitimated by stating that the young must be prepared for the future, even though it cannot be established entirely what these challenges consist of and, by extension, whether the curricular and instructional transformation can promise to work as intended. However, if a society aims to maintain progress, stability, and continuity, citizen and politicians must make measured guesses as to what public means are poured into what type of knowledge and skills to assure societal well-being across generations.

What can we learn from these three sketches of transformation as it regards education and specifically, compulsory education? Certainly, the context-boundedness and drivers that assist with opening the doors for transformation rather than "just change" can be recognized as the familiar starting points of educational reform and renewal. Also reminiscent is the question about the relationship between form and content, in the extreme, presented as a reduction or fundamental obliteration of known forms and contents. Here, the array of public school types in the USA can serve as an example. Contrary to many continental European forms of public schooling, the public school offerings in the USA can range from regular elementary, middle, and high schools to community schools (extensive parent participation), international schools (bilingual course offerings), alternative school programs, newcomer schools, small schools, and others. Moreover, most states recognize home-based instruction as a legitimate form of public schooling. Although charter schools are not supported throughout the

nation through state funding, in some locations, these are state-funded options of public schooling. This diversity of public school organization can be considered a deterrent to the general idea of public schooling as it is practiced in other nations, as the form is altered too strongly and as such considered to deviate too fundamentally from what is expected to represent public education, the fragmentation, for example, threatening the cohesion of a society. In some instances, the latter can be read as a warning that an impending crisis or a challenge is not properly dealt with or that one has stepped outside of known bounds. At the same time, increasing the menu of public school types can be considered as satisficing the increasing desire for recognizing diversity and difference without impeding on a society's cohesiveness but rather enhancing it through the choices afforded.

Next, I focus on how transformation can be considered in educational theory. As mentioned earlier, the notion is used frequently in varying contexts of educational practices and theories. In the following section, I draw on the work of Friedrichs (2002) who examines transformation within the context of general education.

Transformation in Education

For Friedrichs (2002), the notion of transformation belongs to the current era of fundamental societal and cultural transitions and, as such, warrants a closer terminological examination. Specifically, by relating transformation to other expressions of paradigmatic shifts, such as "das Ende der Moderne und dem Anfang der Postmoderne [the end of modernity and the beginning of postmodernity]" (p. 17), he points to the difficulty of a society to observe and talk about the beginning and the end without the possibility to witness either or one of both:

> Eine Kultur oder Gesellschaft, die Selbstbeobachtungen kommuniziert, müsste schon vor ihrem Anfang da sein, um über ihren Anfang reden zu können, und nach ihrem Ende, um von ihrem Ende reden zu können. [A culture or society, that communicates observations about itself, would already need to be present from the beginning, to talk about its beginning, and after its end, to talk about its end.] (p. 17)

By employing the notion of transformation, however, transitions become demonstrable, in particular, by pointing to the remainder of that which is retained throughout a period of transition.

According to Friedrichs, the persistence of the remainder not only shows that things have not ended and a transformation has taken place, but also that it is necessary to distinguish between form and medium of a transformation in order to move away from the terminal connotations of beginning and end:

> Zwar wird die Form in der Transformation wesentlich verändert, aber über das Medium schreibt sich die Transformation der Form in ein Kontinuum ein. ... Mit der Unterscheidung von Form und Medium ist die Möglichkeit gegeben, von Transformation zu reden und nicht einfach von Anfang und Ende. [Although the form is changed significantly within

transformation, through the medium the transformation of the form is inscribed in a con-
tinuum. . . . With the distinction between form and medium the possibility is given, to talk
about transformation rather than simply of beginning and end.] (p. 18)

In other words, for Friedrichs the focus on medium or process is essential when
assessing the operative and qualitative modalities of how a transformation takes
place and what its impact is, respectively should be. His focus away from form
toward medium permits him to place the notion of transformation in context to the
notion of the "general," especially the assumption that that which is to be transformed
refers to specific, changeable situations, whereas the "general" will be considered to
be immutable it is substance. When juxtaposing the two notions of transformation and
generality, thus, the imagery can ensue of distinctive, mutable conditions produced
by transformation contrasted by the immutable and common conditions established
by the "general." In such a relationship, it would be possible to measure the impact
of a transformation: "Je weniger Allgemeines, desto mehr Transformation. [With
less of the general, all the more transformation]" (p. 18). Friedrichs notes, however,
that this juxtaposition must be treated with caution as it depends on the definition
of the "general." For example, if the "general" is not considered as a structuring
modality to establish order but rather seen as a medium, then the relationship between
transformation and the "general" becomes less antagonistic.

For Friedrichs, the distinction between generality and transformation are essen-
tial as he continues on to explore the continuity of general education in relation
to plurality and difference in pedagogical theories and concepts. Ultimately, he ar-
gues for the necessity to reshape the architecture of difference in order to achieve a
recontextualized relationship between difference and identity:

Die Aufgabe der notwendigen Verwiesenheit von Identität und Differenz legt Schreibweisen
der Differenz frei, die jenseits des Wechselspiels von Identität und Differenz liegen. [By
giving up the necessary contextualization of identity and difference new possibility for
describing difference come to the fore that lie outside of the play of identity and difference.]
(p. 24)

With Friedrichs (2002), the complicated relationship between transformation and
that which exists at its backdrop, the everyday or the present, drives the direction
as well as the content of transformation. As such, he illustrates that the relationship
of these contexts—that which is sought to be transformed and that which should
remain—is complex, begging the question of how we understand transformation
substantively. Importantly, Friedrichs points to a central issue that transformation
is a way of dealing with difference. More specifically, he suggests examining the
juxtapositioning of oneness and plurality that undergirds the distinction between
identity and difference in light of its meaning and legitimization within a process of
transformation.

As, for example, this book explores facets of and demands on compulsory ed-
ucation, one might consider what transformation entails against the backdrop of
compulsoriness. Should we seek to transform compulsory education fundamentally,
for example, call for its abolishment or expansion, then the locus of the desired trans-
formation rests additionally within the realm of what is considered to be a public

good in a particular political era and form of governance. Transformation as a way of dealing with difference, thus, entails a coming to terms with managing status quo and renewal in the context of existing and changing parameters as well as guiding visions in education. The next part of this essay explores the relationship between change and utopian thought.

Transformation and Utopian Thought

According to Papastephanou (2009), change and transformation lie at the center of a tension between the existing and the envisioned: "The meeting point of thought and reality, of utopia and dystopia, is the yearning for change . . . the kind of change that involves hope and imagination of a truly good life and a just world" (p. xi). Translated into questions and workings of education, it lies at the core of education to interact between what is and what is to become as "education involves, by definition, issues of utopia and of what counts as a good life" (p. xi).

In spite of this recognized relationship, Papastephanou notes that more recent philosophical tendencies have turned away from conceptions of utopia and dystopia. They are considered implausible in terms of the portrayal of what is or the perfect imagination of what should be. The strong current of anti-utopianism, according to Papastephanou, is damaging to education as it loses its function as a countermeasure to market-driven practices. "[T]he proximity to the needs of everyday life and its sensitivity to context have brought educational practice closer to purposes of the market that are extrinsic to the educational ideal of human perfectability" (p. xii). Needed is utopian thought that endorses conceptions of the good life and of ethical ideals while daring to be critical without succumbing to recreating the present state of everyday life: "[T]he very moment it takes the shape of a standardized critical thinking in its dominant, anti-utopian conception, critique loses its internal connection to theoretical endeavor and becomes a means for developing skills and performing specific tasks" (p. xii).

What is at stake, then, with a departure from undergirding conceptions of change and transformation in utopian and dystopian visions? At risk lies the atomization of aims and goals for educational practice and theory to serve individual purposes over an economically and materially driven backdrop without recourse to opportunities to engage in imaginative, nonperformativity-driven thought and reflection about the future. For Papastephanou, one solution lies in the engagement with literature in order to support a "more reflective and transformative education" (p. xv) as "literary utopias have another connection to education: both assume the pliability of humanity and operate in virtue of the feasibility of change for the better" (p. xvi).

Wimmer (2002) supports Papastephanou's reconsideration of utopian and dystopian visions for education in so far that processes of transformation require critical reflection on the meaning of changing relationships between knowledge as well as new conditions for learning and teaching *as well as* the implications of this reconfigured relationship to the constitution of subjects. He asks:

> Wie ist es ... möglich, eine Zukunftsvorstellung zu erlangen, die den Kriterien einer
> kritischen erziehungswissenschaftlichen Reflexion genügt und gleichermassen für die päd-
> agogische Praxis bedeutsam werden kann, ohne in normative Denkformen zurückzufallen
> oder den Anspruch aufzugeben, sich die zukünftigen Aufgaben nicht von aussen vorschreiben
> zu lassen, sondern sie nach eigenen Kriterien zu bestimmen? [How is it possible to acquire
> a vision of the future that can suffice the criteria of critical educational reflection while si-
> multaneously become meaningful to pedagogical practice without succumbing to normative
> patterns of thought or giving up on the claim that future tasks are not dictated extraneously
> but determined by its own criteria?] (p. 31)

Contrary to Papastephanou, Wimmer is more ambivalent about turning to utopian ideals as he sees them cast in the shadow of wishful and illusionary constructions with totalitarian character that are removed from reality. As such, they cannot serve as a legitimate guide for educational theory and practice during processes of change and renewal.

However, without a utopian vision, the task of setting educational aims must be placed within the temporal necessity "die Gegenwart nicht der Zukunft zu opfern, aber auch diese nicht auf jene zu reduzieren [not to sacrifice the present for the future, while also not to reduce the former to the latter]" (p. 34), an undertaking that Wimmer critiques as illusionary. In order to effectively realize educational aims, he argues, they must be tied to visions and perspectives of a future that are informed by past experiences. Yet, given historical experiences with utopias, especially as they are connected to political agendas and collectively enforced as educational practices, Wimmer warns against readily turning to utopian visions as a guide through processes of renewal and transformation. Instead, he suggests querying experiences with time itself in order to find out what constitutes rather than manifests futurity. For Wimmer, the answer lies within intersubjective relationships in the social realm as providing the relevant experiences with time that should guide educational endeavors.

> Es sind Erfahrungen, in denen das Subjekt auf eine paradoxe Weise gerade in einem von
> ihm nicht beherrschbaren Bezug zum Anderen eine Freiheit gewinnt, die ihm in seiner bloss
> illusorischen Autonomie versagt bleiben muss. An diesen Erfahrungen, die für ... eine
> kritische Erziehungs- und Bildungstheorie unverzichtbar sind, weil sie mit der Frage der
> Gerechtigkeit zusammenhängen, gilt es festzuhalten. [It is experiences, through which the
> subject paradoxically gains freedom as he stands in an uncontrollable relation to the other that
> must remain denied in his just illusionary autonomy. We must hold on to these experiences
> that are indispensable for critical educational theory as they are connected to the question of
> justice.] (p. 41)

Similar to Wimmer but originating from a different perspective, Friedrichs (2002) argues for envisioning educational thought and practices as constituted by an array of passages, in particular, as he sees a monolithic notion of education as being replaced by a multiplicity of visions:

> Es geht ... nicht mehr um die eine Form eines systematischen Bildungsgedankens, im
> Gegensatz zu seinen Gehalten, seinen Medien. Bildung stellt nicht Zusammenhalt im Wider-
> spiel von Form und Medium dar, sondern Bildung stellt sich ... im Übergang von Form
> und Medium her. [It is ... no longer about one form of systematic thought in education, in
> contrast to its content, its media. Education does not represent cohesion as antagonistic to
> form and medium, rather education constitutes itself ... in the passages between form and
> medium.] (p. 26)

Education as a continuous transition between content and medium includes the intersubjective, relational experiences that Wimmer considers to be central to guiding educational thought and practice. At the same time, it also engages with Papastephanou's call to turn to literary utopias for guidance on questions of how human life can and should be lived. Roberts (2013) offers a pertinent example of the guidance that Papastephanou suggests as he explores what place despair holds in educational contexts in an era in which the goals of education are primarily to promote happiness and well-being. By turning to the novelists Dostoyevsky and Unamuno as well as to writings by Kierkegaard, Roberts illustrates that understanding despair holds an important place in the education of ourselves and humanity. As such, an engagement with despair in the juxtapositioning with happiness, both as states of being within the human condition, must be part of form and medium of education:

> Education . . . does not make us happier but it can enable us to more deeply understand the suffering we and others experience. Happiness in its commodified form, as a kind of drug to be marketed and administered in regular doses, takes us not closer to our humanity but further away from it. Education has a critical role to play in allowing us to go on—accepting the risk of unhappiness, of uncertainty, and of continuous change. (p. 10)

Conclusion

Transformation is a necessary part of growth, societally and personally, of individuals, groups, and institutions and, as such, holds an important place in education. Yet, the notion is used neither disclosing what story or vision of society and human well-being stand behind, at the beginning or end of a transformation nor how transformation as a process actually works. Once it is understood how the complexity of how form and content in education stand in relationship with wider conceptions of what constitutes wellbeing and the public good or a desired vision of collective life, the quality of a transformation can be assessed. Helpful to this understanding is knowing where the limits are reached between absolving form and content into one, or how a metamorphosis fundamentally alters the essence of the existing.

Tröhler (2011) illustrates such a framing with his examination of the relevance of protestant thought to contemporary educational systems. He maintains that certain languages of education, i.e., how thoughts about education are expressed verbally or in writing, remain stable and dominant across centuries, albeit the markers of these languages are frequently well concealed:

> [T]here are not endless modes or modalities of how we think, talk, and write about education. Rather, it is assumed that there are only a very few languages of education, probably not even a handful. . . . [and they] are in a concealed way indebted to religious and political ideals. . . . The very fact that religion affects the way we think, talk, and write about education does not make it less effective but even more so. (pp. 2–3)

Describing the constitution of a language of education, Tröhler draws on de Saussure's distinctions between *langue*—"a system of linguistic habits implemented in the self-understanding of people" (p. 4)—and *parole*—"the individual realization of

the *langue* by the individual speaker . . . [and] the place where dialogue can generate new meaning, where langue can be changed" (p. 5). By establishing this distinction, Tröhler can differentiate between the construction of theories into paradigms, and their absolving through paradigm shifts, and the prevailing of dominant languages of education through continuous modifications in application but without departure from its essential fabrication. He notes that a dominant *langue* only changes when faced with a profound crisis. In such an event, a new dominant *langue* is chosen, however, without obliterating the former.

What do Tröhler's elaborations add to understanding the notion of transformation as it relates to education? The pointing to the stability of certain discourses over others across time provides greater clarity to the crucial framing of considering transformation as the modification of an undergirding theme or practice rather than a fundamental alteration of an existing influential dialogue. Against this backdrop, transformation becomes confirmed as the changing of form to adapt, fine-tune, or renew, but not to alter fundamentally or radically an entire course of direction of a given time. Should the latter occur, the discontinuity of the existing or present is brought to the fore, by doing so, removing the basis on which a transformation takes place.

From another perspective, however, it is those with less or no power and their advocates who are actively working on conceptions of education that are deeply transformative of an underlying discourse in order to change practices of inclusion and exclusion and with it the distribution of privilege and marginalization. For these groups, the fact of a crisis has long been established, but is not of interest to dominant stakeholders, and, thus, is not taken up as the necessity to change into a new *langue*. Until discourses of domination get forcefully derailed, systematically challenged over a long period of time with broadening the spheres of participation and influence or the nondominant group alters the validation of their stakes to a different measure, practices of transformation can be seen to hold quiet the unrestful in order to maintain the existing distribution of privilege and power.

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Happiness and Education: Recognising a Fundamental Attunement

Paul Gibbs

Introduction

> It is hard to deny that happiness is extremely important and we have very good reason to try to advance people's happiness, including our own. (Sen 2010, p. 273)

In this coda, profound happiness is proposed as a fundamental and existential process of becoming what one wills one's being to be. This approach differs from a wellbeing judgement made on retrospective and accumulative lifelong desire satisfaction (an accumulative, hedonistic, wellbeing approach to happiness) and from the explicit and normative directives of what is prudently good for one. In this sense, profound happiness is not strictly Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, which prioritises wellbeing based on moral, wealth or health imperatives, although it does retain notions of agentic directed growth, meaning and purpose. It also differs from desire and pleasure satisfaction, hedonism, as the sustainable notion of happiness—although it certainly finds a place for the presence of joy and momentary outbreaks of expression of delight and pleasure. Profound happiness, then, is a blend of both these traditional forms of happiness theory, realised through one's temporal being and requiring a willed life plan that becomes attuned to one's being within the consequences of one's agentic capability. Exploration of our being in this way provides the potential for us to understand our life project and to seek it. This happiness has intense irruptions of joy and prolonged periods of cheeriness, yet it is no easy task to will one's being and to take a stance on one's being that is existentially sustainable. To achieve this attunement within one's world requires education, vision, courage and tenacity to find how one's being best fits into the world alongside others, whilst avoiding compromising one's being for the sake of simply fitting-in for the temporary benefit of others' comfort. Compulsory education is only a part, in recognition of what one might be and how one might best uncover the stability that fundamental happiness offers when taking a stance on what, how, and with what values one's being can be realised.

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This coda is a preliminary investigation of fundamental happiness, not one of the various phenomena called happiness such as a consumerist or sensual desire satisfaction but, following Heidegger, one that is essential to our being: the fundamental attunement that forms our being. This shapes how we are within our world yet is often hidden or unawakened in the way we are predisposed to encounter or initially grasp our world. Importantly, for Heidegger, the affectiveness of our being 'has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something' (1962, p. 176). Moreover, 'we take attunements in terms of their extreme manifestations, they seem to be one set of events among others, and we overlook this peculiar being attuned, the primordial, pervasive attunement of our whole Dasein as such' (1995, p. 68).

The essential component of our being, attunement, provides the structure of this essay. It is developed in three parts. The first substantive part investigates how the phenomenon of personal happiness, in a search for the realisation of one's potential capabilities for being, underlies much of the discussion of happiness. After a historical contextualisation, the analysis borrows Heidegger's phenomenological form of analysis of boredom found in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1995) and, together with more interdisciplinary contributions, reveals an ontology of happiness. The second part considers how such happiness can be facilitated by formal education by de-conflating the idea from satisfaction, as in Heidegger's 'extreme manifestations', and allowing us to decide how, in King's (2009) words, to 'fit in'. The third part considers the pedagogical implications.

Heideggerian Notions

King has argued that from a Heideggerian perspective, happiness corresponds to a sense of fitting-in: 'we can ascribe fittingness to our lives (or elements of our lives, such as our careers, our family arrangements, or our desires and aspiration) when our lives are somehow appropriate to us' (2009, p. 10). This is a multifaceted issue. What is at stake is how we embrace our potential to be, for instance, the relationship between abilities that nurture these specific potentialities into capabilities, and the way in which they can be functionalised. The wilfulness of this process requires an understanding of our embodied self in ways often neglected in formal education. These capacities provide a potential that can be realised when they fit our potential to be a teacher, nurse, mother or father. When there is no 'fitting', there is no dwelling in the comfort of our being. However, there is a danger that in desiring to fit in, we adopt that which is accepted by others, and fail to be what we might. Heidegger expresses this as the 'dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already been decisive even for the possibilities of having a mood—that is, for the basic way in which *Dasein* lets the world matter to it' (1962, p. 213). In doing so, we no longer will to work out and understand the possibilities of our potentiality and forgo our self-willed determination for a being that is condoned by others. To use Heidegger's term, we dwell in 'tranquillised familiarity' (Heidegger 1962, p 234) or a general shallowness; not willing, but being directed by the norms and expectations

of others. We trade the anxiety of our future potential for the illusionary security of blending in.

This losing of authenticity for the sake of comfort is deplored by Heidegger and is manifest in 'feelings of not-being-oneself' (King 2009, p. 13). Ratcliffe captures this well when he says, 'self-understanding, involving the recognition that we are not simply entities within the world whose behaviour is dictated by the public norms into which we are enculturated' (in press). This has resonance with the recurring feeling of uncertainty we sense when playing the role of a doctor, an academic or a wife, when one's agentic will loses its self-determination in favour of an indeterminate state intended to repetitively 'please' others rather than oneself. The resultant self-resentment is muffled by a dominant and fundamental attunement to the anxiety of counter-assuredness, to being 'caught-out' that gradually loses all concern for what might be and leaves one in limbo, disengaged with one's potential to be and accepting being fitted-in by others. This may also happen when one is faced by others' unrealistic expectations. These unobtainable and impossible determinants of one's own life plan lead to happiness being thwarted by the manipulations and controls by other people or institutions (see Coffield and Edward 2009; Bibby 2011, for a discussion on teaching practice). To use Heidegger's analogy, in such circumstances we tend to lodge amongst others rather than dwell with them at home and openly (see Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, 1973 and, for a more literal example, Noddings 2003). To find our potential to be and to will requires disruption to this tranquillity and heightened awareness and a realisation of Nussbaum's core structural capabilities of critical thinking, confidence and citizenship that underpin ten central capabilities (2011, p. 33–35). Securing these is unsettling, distressing and creates unhappiness yet is to be expected for; as Aristotle (1100a, p. 2–4) tells us, until we reach maturity we are unable to know what will might be and so cannot be happy about it. This potential for being may be glimpsed in moments of vision (Gibbs 2010) that allow sight of our own possibilities to be and the capabilities required.

The notion of fitting-in has been identified by King (2009) in Heidegger's work as a deep or fundamental happiness. It is not a seeking of certain activities, benefits, processions or pleasure, all of which may release manifestations of happiness from their slumber within us and be directed at something such as a present, exam results or lust, but these are but irruptions of a deeper attunement to our being. This is fundamental in that it exists ontologically as the essence of our being but, like all fundamental attunements, needs to be awoken in our way of being. As one of a range of fundamental attunements, for example boredom, fear or anxiety, it is within us and its exteriority is but an emotional irruption that mainly shows itself when directed towards events and entities in the existential world in which we live. Happiness is not on this account a Benthamite accumulation of pleasurable over unpleasant temporary engagements, somehow summed to achieve a retrospective notion of wellbeing. Rather, it is a complex temporal alignment of intensions and attunements combining rationality and emotion within an overriding, revealing and declarative mood of our being.

A happy life is not merely a matter of context and prescribed content worthy of satisfying one's wellbeing, because we often do not pursue that which would, in these terms, foster our long-term wellbeing (in the extreme ascetic). We make

the wrong decisions about what is best to achieve wellbeing too often indeed, to the extent that Haybron argues that we might be best described as pursuing our own unhappiness! Our willingness to condense (buoyed by societal pressures) our temporal horizons and detachment from our primordial temporality allows us to put to sleep our fundamental attunement to happiness in favour of a fetish of having and consuming, although evidence is presented later that this does not produce happiness. This assertion would find favour with Simmel, whose writing on the culture of consumption suggests that the means actually become perceived as the end, and that 'in the practical life of our mature cultures, our pursuits take on the characteristics of chains, the coils of which cannot be grasped in a single vision' (1991, p. 3).

The attunement to personal profound happiness is a multifaceted notion revealed not in moments of pleasure or joy, but in the trajectory and feeling of accomplishment of becoming the being one wills through our temporal awareness (Gibbs 2010). Like boredom, the phenomenon of happiness can be identified in three distinctive forms. The first is emotional irruptions of joy, pleasure, gratification, bliss, lust or ecstasy, where there is a specific focus for an explicit show of happiness, an episodic happiness: a happiness directed towards something. The second manifestation of an underlying profound happiness is a feeling that may be akin to a shallow cheeriness without substance; a cheeriness or musing that is empty but, unlike the first that is evoked by a specific external event, this cheeriness is from a state of limbo, a temporal standing now (Heidegger 1995, p. 122). This might be called the 'whatever' happiness. It is a satisfying state that is a reproduction of exciting norms of society and specific to each epoch; consumerism, in the current one—'whatever happiness'. The third is ontological and an attunement to our own being's happiness, the fundamental happiness of willing and then enacting one's being. Fundamental happiness, however, is revealed in one's engagement with one's being by taking a stance on fitting into that being, so that 'I am happy'. This attunement is fundamental in that, once a stance is taken, its engagement and action is essential to one's being. In willing such a being, successful accomplishment is neither constant nor stable yet does endure for, if any attunements fix one's world view in a semi-permanent and dominant way, one's ability to deal with the world is inhibited and leaves one dysfunctional. Normally when one is frustrated or fearful, these transitory moods (attunements) are appropriate to changes in one's environment and disrupt our contentment towards willed becoming. Attunement can also create an engagement with others and, in this sense, attunement is a 'kinesthetic and emotional sensing of others knowing their rhythm, affect and experience' (Erskine 1998). Its effect is to change the mood of others or be changed by their mood. Important as this is for our being with others, its source—personal attunement to one's being—is the focus here, because it is this that enables one to resist in the uncertainty of opportunity the totalising of one's own attunement or the influence of others.

Each of the three realisations has a dominant notion of temporality that accompanies it (see Table 1). This proposition makes a distinction between happiness and being because, as Raibley (2012) suggests, it is a necessary—but not sufficient—condition for especially high levels of wellbeing. This harps back to Seneca's stoic position that wealth and health, so often the main contributors to wellbeing, do not account for happiness.

Table 1 Contrasting forms of happiness

	Directed happiness	'Whatever' happiness	Fundamental happiness
General distinction	Conspicuous expression of a happy emotional state of joy, bliss, ecstasy, a loss in the moment, anticipated present and then gone	Inconspicuous occurrence of passing time, hidden from oneself and taken as a disposition—one is a cheery soul. Directed at the publicness of others	An attunement to one's existential being. A feeling of fitting with oneself regardless of others around one—informed contentment
Notion of time	Datable time, that is events located in relation to others. It is the shaping of separated notions of past, present and future	Time is linear and progressive. It is the shaping of separated notions of past, present and future	Originary or primordial time, the time in which we make sense of ourselves, temporality temporalised in the present
The range of resonance	Being forced between particularly happy events	Dissipation of happiness as a cheeriness throughout the whole situation	Contentment with agentic being
Happiness in relation to a situation	Bound in a situation, limited by extrinsic circumstances	Not bound to a particular situation but a way of acting for others in their world	All embracing

Evidence to support the temporal and emotional structures of happiness is somewhat provided by more recent works (e.g., Diener 1984; Shmotkin 2005), from a newly established agenda of positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000) and from a narrative psychological perspective. There are differences and these mainly surround the temporal modes of as distinct past, present and future, and do not reflect Heidegger's notion of being's fundamental attunement realised in a state of 'originary' or primordial temporality. These fit with the notion of happiness within the previously discussed model (see Table 1). Notwithstanding, Zimbardo and Boyd (1999), Drake et al. (2008) and Şimşek (2009) in particular have proposed a construct of subjective wellbeing as 'one's evaluation of life in both past and future time perspectives in addition to the present' (2009, p. 505), a life project created and maintained in a temporal perspective (2012). Moreover, by evoking Heidegger and his own notion of ontological category he argues that time, 'when considered as a basic ontological category, transforms the concept of 'life as a personal project' into one more abstract: 'life as a project of becoming', which is the chief good as the indicator of a happy life' (ibid: 511). Indeed, as Ratcliffe rightly argues in a series of publications (e.g., 2005, 2007), there is sufficient neuroscientific and psychopathological evidence to support such a position.

Moreover, as suggested by Deci and Ryan (2008), hedonic happiness may be the natural result of a eudaimonic wellbeing (an irruption) and they therefore share a common genesis. Citing the works of Hale (1993) and Boniwell and Zimbardo (2004), amongst others, to support his case that an ontological construct of happiness has value, Şimşek's research suggests that its temporal–emotion form can be

conceptualised as nothingness, hope, regret and activation yet of a wellbeing (albeit a composite) interchangeable with happiness. Indeed, Raibley (2012), who might be sympathetic to Şimşek's blending of the intentional and emotional, draws a distinction between episodic happiness—intense as joy, disinterested as cheeriness—as subjective wellbeing and a more pervasive happiness although retaining a eudaimonic approach.

To feel this happiness, which is not a consequence of positive outcomes but the cause of them (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005), requires taking a stance on one's being, seeking and then making a choice as to the possibilities that one can achieve and, in doing so, breaking from the view that human nature, 'embodied most plainly in mainstream economic thought has helped to create a set of very strong and persuasive presumptions about the value of certain freedoms for human welfare, and, in turn, about the kinds of policies and social forms that tend to promote wellbeing' (Haybron 2009, p. 250). Happiness is the freedom of self-determination within the context of a chosen world view. Fundamental happiness, distinct from irruption of trivial pleasure or scrutinised notions of what is good for one, is not restricted to what others think but try to determine by what is one's own stance. It is not the satisfaction of exciting preferences but the securing of one's action into a life plan of one's being. This position allows for happiness to be cross-cultural and embraces faith as well as pragmatism, all in a non-economic stoic form of willed intention. It is about one's fit within one's being so as to flourish in the world of, but not resolved by, others.

These ideas have resonance with existential phenomenological ontology literature, especially with the work by Kierkegaard, Heidegger[1] and Sartre. Sufficient for now, however, is that there is psychological evidence to support an ontological notion of happiness as fulfilment that has both philosophical and psychological support (Şimşek and Kocayörük 2012). But how do we go about being in this world? Raibley offers a way into this problem through his notion of the flourishing agent, able to bring capabilities and values to bear successfully on the stance taken on their being. Given that this is plausible, one may ask how to enable the agent to flourish. One source of such enabling is education. To take such a stance presumes that we have abilities and capabilities empowered by opportunities for them to function in our willed way of being. These capabilities (discussed in the next section and owing much to Nussbaum and Sen) are decisions of potentiality that can be revealed and investigated through compulsory education.

The Development of Capabilities

This argument concerns the quality of the rounded person who understands their cultural and moral responsibilities prior to undertaking the skill of employment, leading to more conscientious and wise use. Rather than a skill acquisition agenda,

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[1] Heidegger's lack of reference to regret, both in his work and in his personal life, is an exception here.

I would suggest that the mission of compulsory education is a search to develop the capabilities to optimise students' potential to make responsible choices as to what they will be, willed as a fusion of the intellectual and emotional. The use of capability here refers to 'being able'. In Sen's (1985) work, this is typically being able to improve one's situation or compete for resources by participating in a market, and in Nussbaum's (2000), by being able to live a truly human life. 'Being able' requires both freedom from external restraints and personal skills. For both, capability is obviously required to make a viable life plan that evokes profound happiness when lived, though not all capabilities are equally functional.

Capabilities spring from what Aristotle[2] called *dunamis*; he draws two meanings of *dunamis*. The distinction is between causal powers and potentiality as a way of being. According to Witt, causal power 'is a dispositional property of a substance to change (or be changed by) another substance. In contrast, potentiality is a way of being and be given a dispositional analysis' (2003, p. 7). The distinction is important, for potentiality determines the extent to which dispositional capabilities can be activated; what it is able to do and thus what it is possible to do. For instance, you will either grow tall or not, male or female. If you are male and tall then you have the potential of playing rugby for the British Lion rugby team as a second row forward, provided you have the dispositional capabilities like strength, skills and a desire for physical violence! The development of dispositional causal powers is a job for training and education, as Dewey[3] might have argued, offering us insights into our own personal way of being and warning against seeing it as efficiency. Education ought to provide an arena for the development of our potential and a place to be unsettled—unhappy, if you will—and to discuss what are the potential choices one is able to make. These choices to be plausible need to be adapted to personal circumstances, not to predetermine or to truncate options but to allow the development of feasible ways to plan to be. This is reasonable, given that we may not possess the intellectual, emotional, gender or ethnic requirements to become a president of the USA or a female bishop in the Church of England.

How then can compulsory education provide the capabilities so students can feel, will and grasp their potential and thus become happy? Of course, whilst educational institutions could support the desirability of education for economic, ideological and spiritual reasons, the questioning of the institutional structure—let alone the desirability of what they packaged—assume a certain worth. As Dearden pointed out, 'education may be broadly defined as the process of learning through which we come to an understanding and appreciation of what is valuable or worth pursuing in life, and happiness is no more than one among several final ends worthy of pursuit' (1968, p. 27).

The notion that education is desirable for happiness has become lost in institutionalised education within the consumerist epoch, although reignited by Noddings' (2003) claim that happiness ought to be an aim of compulsory education.

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[2] Aristotle discusses *Dunamis* and ways of being in Chap. IX of his *Metaphysics.*

[3] *Democracy and Education* (1915/1966), Chap. 8: Aims of Education, especially p. 256.

Of course, this raises issues of fairness and social justice that would need to be addressed from an institutional perspective but, assuming that these have been plausibly resolved so that, in the main, resources are equitable allocated, what does a capability agenda mean for a pedagogy of happiness? It begins with a notion of freedom that allocates resources in ways that enable functionality and not solely on the basis of outcomes. Indeed, as Noddings has argued, education has a role in enhancing happiness in a number of domains of one's life that are bridged by the institution of the school. More importantly, however, it raises the issue of what can be taken as the aim of education, the flourishing of children in a way that reflects the social conventions of their society or a more transcendental notion of being where their education seeks to enable them to recognise the knowledge of the powerful and usurp it by the power of knowledge. In doing so, the journey to happiness is edifying; it is reliant neither on sensual pleasures nor the fetishism of accreditation and awards. It is about contextualised development of capabilities that are offered in order that the child discerns the political and the essential and chooses a life in which they are happy to dwell.

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