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Old and new generations in the 21st century: Shifting landscapes of education

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Introduction to Conference – Can Education Change the Global Contemporary Society through a Universal Philosophy of Education?

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The Philosophers of Education participating in the XIV World Conference of INPE (International Network of Philosophers of Education) which takes place for the first time in Italy at the University of Calabria in Cosenza, on the theme: Old and New Generations in the XXI Century: Shifting Landscapes of Education, intend to propose and pursue an aim that goes beyond the title of the Conference itself: can education, especially in the relationship between old and new generations, change the contemporary global society and build a better future for humanity? In other words, education in the family, in the school and in society, in the broadest sense of the term and, in particular, in relation to social changes caused by technology, can improve the global contemporary world so complex, with its social-economic contradictions between rich and poor countries, within the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 1996) and in the relation with the individual, the technology and ethical and religious values? Education-as already been stated (Delors, 1996) represents a possible and necessary utopia. It is difficult that education in its various forms of application can solve the problems of humanity in the global society, but it is certainly a hope and, at the same time, a utopia in order to determine the future policies of the countries and the ethical behaviour of individuals in the different realities. I believe it is difficult to imagine a society without education, which is to be considered a natural phenomenon, a 'necessity of life', as John Dewey affirmed, (Dewey, 1916) and a 'family of processes' (R.S.Peters, 1967) linked to the nature of human life. In fact, education can have negative and ideological effects, tied to individuals' indoctrination and to the conditioning of the public opinion, especially in our global society of media and new media communication (David Lyon, 2001). At the same time education can give positive effects in order to develop economic freedom, citizens' social and civic democracy, to prevent the violence and to achieve justice in the contemporary global society (Amartya Sen, 2010). The real problem is that education is a subject that is difficult to study and proof of this theory is that, in the context of the Western cultural tradition, it has not been established, in the late modernity, a philosophy and a science of education, that can better understand, monitor and improve the processes of childhood, adolescence, adults, elders in the family, in the school and in society. There is no doubt, then, that education must be considered a complex object of study that leads to a philosophy or a scientific method that should be compared with the "great division" facts/values, and must be applied to the practice in order to solve educational problems in different specific situations. The issues that concern the educational problems were always implicitly present in the history of humanity. The Sacred Texts of various religions, such as the Bible, the Quran till the Torah and the Upanishads, have always considered the relationship between God and individuals an educational and ethical issue. The fact is that, when it was raised the issue of a philosophy and of a science of education, many theoretical problems have appeared. From Durkheim to the new idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile, very little known in the international debate because tied to the Italian
fascism, from Maria Montessori to John Dewey and Jean Piaget, from Ludwig Wittgenstein to Richard Stanley Peters, all these thinkers have dealt with educational issues in different ways, but all have noted the difficulty of establishing a philosophy or a science of education. In my opinion, the most interesting attempts to find in the last century a science and philosophy of education were the following: the concept of 'sciences of education' (Dewey, 1929; Debesse and Mialaret 1969-1978), and the 'logical analysis of education' (Hirst, Peters 1970). And, even when one attempted to apply the educational models to the school, the most influential thinkers have been the psychologists (Bruner, 1966, Gardner 1985). As several researches have showed (Cambi, 1986, 2006; Smeyers, 2009; Spadafora, 1992, 2010), very often education has been expropriated by philosophy, science, especially from psychology and sociology, ethics, politics, religion. Moreover, the education is transformed in practice. This is 'wider than science,' as Dewey affirmed (Dewey 1929). Because of this cultural tradition, a philosophy of education must study and guide the development of each individual from birth to death and must organize the educational sciences to discover and develop the 'embedded powers' of each individual. In this sense there can be no philosophy of education separated from the contribution that sciences of education can provide to the education of each individual. A philosophy of education cannot represent only the analysis of philosophical language, or a reflection on the development of values of human activity, but must represent a theory supported by the educational sciences, to orient the educational possibilities of the individuals. Philosophy is a 'generalized theory of education', as already stated by John Dewey in Democracy and Education, because the philosophy must understand the individual's concrete problems and try to solve them. The philosophy of education, with the contribution of educational sciences, must analyze the educational issues with the 'wisdom' of philosophy, as general knowledge, and, through the development of science and technology, should be able to help everyone for a better life. This complexity to establish a philosophy of education is linked to the central purposes of education: how to educate a certain individual to the values in a culture or in a specific society? The question of the individual as a subject that develops itself in time, in space and in the historical and social situations is the basic foundation of the contemporary culture and is closely related to the tradition of a philosophy of education. Different philosophies of the past century, from phenomenology to existentialism and hermeneutics, from classical pragmatism to new-pragmatism, from analytical philosophy up to the post-modern philosophical questions of the subject, and several developments of science, from physics (Einstein, 2011) to logic (Gödel, Lolli, 2007), from computer science (Turing, Hodges, 2012) to genetics (Watson, 2004) and neurosciences (Damasio, 2012), helped to establish a concept of individual, unique, unrepeatable different from other individuals, and defined in its specific, social, historical and existential situation. The individual is a growing entity, unique and unrepeatable, imperfect, shifting between the intention and the event, that lives in historical situations of our universe with very different characteristics. A child who attends the school in the United States, in Europe, or in Japan has more chances of life and education in relation to a child who lives this same experience of life in very poor countries of the world without getting a chance to go to school, because his/her life is at risk. In this sense can the individual reach a balance between the values of the local cultures and societies, in which he/she lives, with the dominant technology and media and communication culture of the Web, in order to achieve a possible universal citizenship?
In this cultural perspective the philosophy of education in Western culture in the 20th century was based on the autonomous development of individuality and freedom. The concept of child centered education is meaningful, because it placed the child at the center of the educational relationship, in school-laboratory of John Dewey, but also, among many other examples, in the educational experiences of Lev Tolstoy in Jasnaja Polnijana. But being at the center of the educational relationship does not mean being free to be able to develop the choices without the guidance of a teacher as well as the environment. Even in Rousseau's *Emile* it does not exist a spontaneous development of child without a guide, and the most innovative authors who have studied the problem in the XX century, Maria Montessori and John Dewey have always considered the learning environment as aware educational construction of the teacher. But in our global society, characterized by the ease of communications respect to the past, by the rule of the technology related to the economy and to finance and by large social contradictions, is it possible to educate to the development of a universal model of democracy and citizenship, to reconcile different cultural models: the model of the Western tradition, the model of Islamic culture, the new model of technological and competitive Asian rationality, the various religions and social models in the world? I believe that never before in our time, only an education spread from a possible universal philosophy of education may try to offer a cultural project of balance in the family, in school, in different economic and social situations, including cultural particularisms, religious, ethical, political and technology and the search for universal values: peace, solidarity, social justice, a friendly technology which can develop democracy and citizenship and defend us from the risk of wars and environmental disasters. A universal philosophy of education might be the common platform for the INPE in the next few years. Our society of philosophers of education must take place today, more than ever, for the first time in Italy, the land of the Renaissance and of experimental scientific method, source of culture, art and technique for modern humanity, and in Calabria, the region today with great economic and social contradictions, but land of great scientific, philosophical and religious culture, represented, as known to all, from important cultural roots of thinkers like: Pythagoras, Gioacchino da Fiore, Bernardino Telesio, Tommaso Campanella.

Thank you for being here today, dear colleagues. I am sure that not only the beauty will save the world, but especially education and a possible universal philosophy of education could show to mankind the path towards a global, ethic and cultural solidarity, the best way in order to have a future.

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Keynote papers
Problems of philosophy of education in today’s society. Technique, the posthuman and science

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1. Identity and role of "philosophy of education"

Philosophical reflection accompanies pedagogy since the time of Plato. And it has been its only and decisive guide for a long time. Nowadays, instead, philosophy redefined its role in pedagogy and started to play the part of critical synthesis of educational knowledge and to orientate the educational processes in terms of rules. John Dewey explained this double role. In The sources of a science of education, published in 1929, the two mentioned aspects are clear: as a knowledge in itself pedagogy is a synthesis of various and different sciences that constantly develop and that have to be fixed as "sources", namely bearing data which are more and more complex, essential and new; as a knowledge-to-act then pedagogy regulates itself on the base of education (or, today is better to say, on the base of educating/forming) and considers and reconsider it critically. Therefore pedagogy provides analyses of acting structures and guidance ideals or models, developing a double reflective process: both ontological (about the object-education) and historical-regulative (with actual models). Pedagogical philosophy has increasingly developed its epochal nature and its critical and planning role on this two levels (epistemological-axiological and ontological-regulative). In this way pedagogical philosophy accompanies the all educational thinking/acting both as a shadow and a horizon-limit and there it forms itself as strong point which is never obsolete, but always legitimated and reintroduced. This process occurs all around the world: in Europe, USA, in the East, in the South of the world. The paths and the styles are different, but they are associated by this clear and common goal: to fix the form of knowledge and protect it, to elaborate purposes, projects and models for the acting itself of this articulate and complex knowledge. Just as the same Dewey taught us.

Surely, while defining themselves, philosophies of education (just as all the types of knowledge) also follow linguistic and cultural traditions, being bound to the respective countries of membership and the related pedagogical style. All that enriches the debate, makes the confrontation stronger, develops the perspective of philosophy of education itself. But, at the same time, it confirms philosophy of education as a transverse inner frontier, qualified and permanent, and takes it as a regulator of all that polymorphic universe that constitutes pedagogy/education nowadays. Or otherwise: it takes it as a device of "critical pedagogy". And today that enunciation or concept is significantly planetary. Then it is necessary to stare at this critical meaning of pedagogy as philosophy of education.

2. Between systematic and radical... open

The criticism of philosophy of education has two faces, as already said above: the first is epistemological, the second is ontological-planning. By now these two fronts present a great tradition, which was active with force and decision since the 19th century. Just to do some famous names: Herbart, Comte, the Italian Gentile, then Dewey, Brezinka, Illich, Rorthy, in the recent past Gramsci and today Morin.

Epistemological reflection has gradually tinged and complicated the image of pedagogical knowledge: it has structured it on experimentation, analysis of language, typologies of theorization, fixing it as a complex "device", tensional and problematic. With regards to ontology/planning, the "entity" to which pedagogy is bound has become more and more clear: the man-person, that becomes such in a lifelong process, but just during development age fixes his inner structures or "milestones". And also the task-of-planning has become more and more clear, here and now but also tomorrow, in relation to the subject, to culture,
to society, also able to deal with the present and to aspire to a better (from an anthropological point of view) future. This planning activity had to identify the fundamental role of care (always developed towards the maximum target of self-care), that became the flywheel of pedagogical action, today.

The debate over this points-of-common-synthesis is always open. And always in a radical form, and more and more radical with new perspectives of critical analysis. Epistemology and ontology/planning are always open borders. And this ambiats have to be developed with openness, in a period in which knowledge and reflection about it (about the society that expresses that knowledge and receives it etc.) are becoming more and more restless, flexible, integrated.

Therefore, nowadays, openness itself should characterize philosophy of education. That discipline should become a dynamic and innovative "toolbox", just because it had to be there, as central reflection able to manage its own reflexivity. Not only: philosophy of education should also apply this reflection to the new arrivals, to the problems that the process itself of historical development constantly presents us. Always. But today more than yesterday. And presenting us just more and more radical problems. Or rather also not-easy and disturbing problems.

3. Three actual frontiers

Three of this radical problems are in front of us today. And pedagogy is aware of them and disquieted by them, because of their radical and open condition. These problems are "open" because they are resources, but also risks and limits. Ergo they need to be thought and thought critically. As it always has been and always has to be in the future. 1. Technology. 2. Posthuman. 3. Neurosciences. Now let's see them closer from the point of view of actual philosophy of education: reflexive and meta-reflexive.

1) Today Technology, as Heidegger already said, is the heir of metaphysics: it is the Foundation of Reality. Of the entire Reality. It surrounds us, it dominates us in each form of our living. In this way, it's also a Bond. We can't escape it. Accordingly, it has to be known and not only used. It has to be thought beyond itself. It has to be entrapped in a constant reflection, able to reveals its limits, its shadows and the imperium that marks it. All this is valid for culture in general. But it is particularly valid for pedagogy and for the man that pedagogy should protect. Homo technologicus? Yes, also. But even more Homo sapiens sapiens and his critical mind, that interprets, that reflects about..., that is able to dominate exactly what tries to dominate the mind itself. Technology indeed. Each subject has to be educated to a critical thinking, activating a “multi-dimensional” (Bruner) and "meta-cognitive" (Morin) mind and a ethos able to reaffirm more properly human purposes, beyond those that are connected to the typical tools of technological culture. How? Keeping alive culture in its various articulations. Activating a creative thinking. Creating cultural spaces, stolen from technology, such as poetry, art in general, eros, etc. Pedagogy should guard the activity of thinking-technology and of going-beyond-technology at the same time. A vocation which is on the way, but has to be strongly supported. Today and again tomorrow. Is that reflection present in pedagogy? Philosophy has worked on this aim: let’s think about Gehlen, about Jonas, about Severino here in Italy. Pedagogy oscillates between being “handmaid” of technology and becoming its “mistress”. A natural oscillation for a knowledge that reflects about “here and now” and at the same time looks beyond and also against the present. Such oscillation is little studied as a structure of pedagogy and theses developed about technology are too divergent. Now the time has come to think about technology from pedagogical point of view, in the light of these restless dialectic and problematic structure, however maintaining the aspect of going-beyond-technology as the most proper vector of pedagogy. Even if is always necessary a critical and dialectic approach, fed by the technology itself.
2) Nowadays even the *Posthuman* as extreme effect of Technology (because it manipulates the same man that produces and governs technology) is both a resource (against diseases, against deficits, against aging and perhaps the same death of man) and a risk, and a very restless risk. Where is the “human man” going in the *Posthuman*? Is he amputated? Is he polluted? Is he lost? May be: all of this can happen. Therefore: what can we do? First: thinking about *Posthuman* and, this way, controlling it, imposing limits, integrating it with *humanitas*, that needs to be cultivated and raised as a rule, also against *Posthuman*. Creating a cultural dialectic, fine and complex and clearly epochal. This dangerous metamorphosis is happening today, so today we should understand it, evaluate it, integrate it and also fight it. And perhaps pedagogy is the most exposed field and the most central in terms of strategy, to activate and to develop this union/conflict and to think about it critically. This is because pedagogy is the discipline that protects man’s humanization, every man’s humanization. This pedagogical awareness is international and should be established in its critical function and in its dialectic identity. Today and much more in the future. In a future that will be more and more organized by Technology, also and exactly with its interventions on humans. Also in Italy we are working on the front of pedagogical reflexivity. And for a long time. And with critical outcomes: let’s think about Pinto Minerva, just to mention one example. A process is on the way: with a fine and critical approach to the coming of a *Posthuman* that operates in many ways. As a pharmacopeia. As a set of nanotechnologies. As an intervention on brain circuits. In order to reflect on these outcomes. To delimit them. To reintroduce the above mentioned human-man (this is an Heidegger’s diction).

3) Of course, to this purpose, pedagogy, in turn, should protect itself as a critical knowledge about man: exactly as a knowledge possessed by the *anthropos* and understood in its richness and complexity. Therefore pedagogy should more and more measure itself against dominant paradigms of/in human knowledge (or human-social knowledge) and re-interpret them itself. Nowadays in particular this should happen with the paradigm of Neuroscience that stands out as “ground zero” and nucleus *a quo* of every human knowledge, because it enlightens the basic circuits and effects of nervous system, starting from brain, and it establishes those data as generative and structural of all the human behaviour. Its results are enlightening, but they run the risk of reductionism: of explaining what is complex by using what is simple; of explaining what is more advanced by using neurological basic data. Yes, it’s true that the reductionism is part of scientific work, but, in man, it should be integrated with the most complex “levels of reality” that mark it (the language, the symbolic, consciousness itself) and that are beyond those primary data. Pedagogy should *use* and *integrate* neurosciences at the same time. It can and should unmask also their imperialism and trespassing. It should, furthermore, protect the complexity of human-man and it can and should do it dialectically. With strong critical engagement and fine anthropological sensibility. Surely it also means to welcome discoveries of neurosciences, to assimilate them and to activate them in its thinking/acting. But, exactly, while integrating them with the different levels of that *anthropos* of which pedagogy becomes (and should become) the guardian. Let’s think about the discovery of “mirror neurons” and their role of empathic imitation and socialization. It’s an illuminating and valuable discovery, but a discovery that then should be contextualized in those more complex processes that the “man cub” realises in his biological and social development. Let’s think about the discovery, published on *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, about the different structure of man’s and woman’s brain and its different characterizations and potentialities. These aspects are valuable for education, and not only for gender education, because it becomes possible to assume an educational point of view to consider the *anthropos*, that nowadays has to be reinterpreted in a dual way (as Irigaray already invited to do some years ago). New discoveries. New contributions. Yes, but they need to be integrated – again and forever – with the complexities of the humankind, so that pedagogy can study and protect his complexity and his human education.

4. Urgent and... planetary tasks.
On a planetary level actual pedagogy, understood as philosophy of education, is call to fix with energy and scrupulousness some fundamental tasks.

I. It should protect itself as complex, critical and dialectic knowledge, with a strong scientific and philosophical origin, establishing its interpretative and regulative tutor in philosophical reflexivity. This means to cultivate philosophy of education as “critical pedagogy” and critique of pedagogy, like a theoretical seal of all its articulate knowledge-of-knowledge.

II. It should deal with the more urgent, restless and difficult problems of Our Times (those mentioned above), using that approach of critical pedagogy.

III. Il should fix the anthropos that it protects because of its status and that it should consider steadily, regrouping his identikit, but also preserving his specificity of humankind, safeguarding his autonomy, establishing his inherent complexity: it should never lose sight of these elements, that need to be defended against every violation and/or “shrinking”.

Nowadays pedagogy, just being placed between Anthrpos and Techne, occupies an increasingly central and crucial space in culture of Our Time, for which it’s called to understand itself and to equip itself, reactivating its critical sense. In fact, it has to play its complex and irreplaceable role. And, in the end, more and more actual role.

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The authority of Bildung. Educational practices in early childhood education

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“The educator recounts that the boy had finished a picture, in her view, a very beautiful one. The other children also had finished drawing, the time of the pedagogical exercise was quite advanced. When getting started with cleaning up -- the supervisor already had started to take pictures -- the boy suddenly began to paint over his drawing with blue color. The educator recounts that she shortly felt the impulse to stop the boy, but then noticed that the boy had something else in mind. At the end, the houses were gone and only blue paint left. The educator approached the boy and soon it was clear that the boy had drawn the high water [last year the entire region around was set under water, C.T.]. The educator concludes that she would have hindered the boy in former times to paint over the houses [...].”

This short sequence stems from field notes in an early education setting, more precisely the closing event of a supervision and training. The educator in the scene tells the story of a boy who paints over a beautiful picture with houses using plain blue color. The theme of the educator’s reflection, here, is her urge to keep the boy from doing this and she recounts that in earlier times she would have definitely kept the boy from destroying the former drawing. However, the educational framework of early education has changed. The educator moves into a position of observation and later engages with the boy in order to find out about the blue color. The boy had “processed” his experience with the flood, as the educator describes this.

In this short sequence, the educator is picking up on a fundamental change that has been going on for the past ten to fifteen years in the field of early education in Germany. There has been a fundamental reformation and expansion of the field with initiatives in the context of professionalization and organizational development. However, the changes are also related to the understanding of education: It is the idea of “Bildung” that has made its way into early education. “Bildung”, this term with its very specific German social and political history, is used to describe and emphasize the children’s individual engagement with world in the early education setting. Accordingly, the educator in the above-quoted field notes assumes that the child’s activity to paint over the houses is in and of itself meaningful even though it implies the destruction of the already finished picture. This “meaning bearing activity”, however, requires the educator to reflect on her own comportment toward the child.

This very short scene from the field notes might suffice to allude to the fundamental changes that have come about recently, changes that might be characterized as movement from upbringing and care towards enabling processes of individual Bildung. This paper is precisely concerned with the question how “Bildung” takes part in the formation of “educational reality”

1 These field notes stem from the research project „Authorizations of the Educational Subject“ that I carry out together with Dr. Kerstin Jergus, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The field notes were written by Sandra Koch. Over the course of the paper I draw continuously on this research. The members of this research group are: Kerstin Jergus, Sandra Koch, Sabrina Schröder, Pauline Starke, and myself. In my view, it is this community that fosters research, makes it productive. I am indebted to this community in terms of the path of thinking developed here.

2 G. Bollenbeck, Bildung und Kultur: Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters, Insel, Frankfurt/M., 1994
within early education. Its point of departure is that education and Bildung are constituted in social practices — and that these social practices are relevant for understanding “who we are” as educators: for getting to know our aims, attachments and desires.

In the first part of the paper I will take a closer look at the constitution of educational reality in and through practices – by referring to the works of Judith Butler and Theodore Schatzki. Here my aim is to set up a conceptual framework that allows me to analyze social practices in early education. In the second part of the paper I will turn toward a videographic study that has been undertaken in an early education institution. This study shows newly instituted practices of “observation” by the educators. I will take a closer look at these practices and describe how they “configure” the educational realm, including educational relations, in a particular way. In the third part of the paper I will compare this analysis to recent works on the transformation of education. Primarily I will take up Jan Masschelein’s and Norbert Ricken’s criticism of Bildung. In the fourth and final part of the paper I will suggest an alternative route to think about education and Bildung.

1) The constitution of education in and through practices
The notion of “social practices” has strongly shaped the ways of approaching and understanding the ways we look at the “educational world”. The bundle of theories under the headline “practice theories” have in common that they view social reality not as the effect of the subject’s rationally calculated intentions. Rather these theories, uniting very different figures such as Dewey, Heidegger, the later Wittgenstein, focus on the situated corporeal and pre-reflective activities in which we take part. Correspondingly, the “educational world” is captured in and through this “participation”. It is, according to Theodore R. Schatzki, the “sets of sayings and doings” that disclose the making of the educational world – and not the subject’s conceptual or philosophical orientation.

In his works of practice theory, Theodore R. Schatzki has described the constitution of social order as arrangement of people and artifacts in practices. The idea, here, is that meaning and identity result from the relational situatedness of all participants within the practices. This is to say that people and artifacts gain their identity and meaning within the arrangement in and of practices. For Schatzki, this identity constitution includes the realm of the normative: Norms and values are not springing from convictions and beliefs; rather they are formed within practices. There are “teleaffectice structures” (as Schatzki notes combining Heideggerian and Aristotelian intuitions) that are to be considered as one aspect of the activities and arrangement in social practices:

“Implicit in my discussion in the previous section is the fact that when people participate in a particular practice their actions express understandings, rules, teleologies, and affectivities that number among those organizing the practice. This means that what makes sense to them to do is determined – at least in part – by these phenomena. […] In any event, when people carry on a practice, the organization of the practice is partly responsible for what they do and, thus, for the orders they effect”.

Practice theories describe the educational realm as enactment in and through practices. Included in this enactment are norms and attachments, values and objectives. Something

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like “educational responsibility” is then associated with the practices and their teleaffective embeddedness, e.g. in relation to the modes of interaction, such as “care” in early education. Certainly, this does not negate the existence of convictions, values and the like. However, practice theories criticize “worldless subjectivity” and the idea of the subject as foundation of knowledge as proposed by Descartes.

In our research group we have followed Judith Butler and her theory of subjection in order to disclose the normative dimension of the educational world as it is continuously re-instituted in practices. According to Butler we become subjects by being called into a situation and activity. By way of this “interpellation”, Butler argues following Althusser and Foucault in “The psychic life of power”, the subject and power relations are generated, disclosing possibilities of becoming and action. In the midst of this effect of subject and power, norms of recognition are constituted or (re-)instituted. Butler describes these norms in terms of categories and names that are not of the subject’s own making. In other words, the subject is bound to striving to its existence via these other norms.

Butler’s theory of subjection or subject formation brings into view or clarifies the teleaffective structures of educational practices. First of all, it provides a conceptual framework for describing the field of possibilities and impossibilities within educational sayings and doings. For the norms of recognition posed by Butler comprise “educational intelligibility”, i.e. what makes sense in educational terms to say or do or not to say or do. Secondly, Butler’s theory of subject formation also provides an analytic framework for investigating concrete educational practices: What are the normative horizons claimed as valid in this or that practice? Which norms of recognition are posed or represented?

The constitution of education in and through practices, as suggested here, is precisely following this double line: The range of “Bildung” in early education has to be disclosed via the practices in the field of study rather than by conceptual ideas or theoretical coherence. Furthermore, the analysis gains its richness and quality by studying concrete practices of the field. The practices of “observation” represent an interesting and substantial focus in this regard. This is so because “observation” is conceived as one of the most important activities for educators in early education today as can be seen by the numerous training programs that are currently offered on this theme. “Observation” has also been described a crucial activity in the so-called “Bildungspläne”, the programs of Bildung, that have been instituted obligingly in all the German states within the past fifteen years. These programs emphasize the importance of observation as well as documentation in regard to an ever-active child who engages independently with its surrounding.

Our research in this area has implied that practices of observation include an all encompassing technology to shape, organize, and authorize educational subjectivity. A

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8 Ibid., pg. 20.
10 There have been attempts to clarify „Bildung“ in (early) childhood conceptually, e.g. by Gerd E. Schäfer, *Bildungsprozesse im Kindesalter*, Juventa, Weinheim, 2011.
11 There is a number of early childhood centers that require their personnel to having participated in such a training, to being able to execute a high quality „observation“. At this stage several observation programs and conceptions are available.
12 I use the term „program“ rather than „curriculum“ because these programs are not so much about what is to be the object of learning or Bildung but rather about how to see children in their learning activities.
closer look at “observation manuals” for educators\textsuperscript{13} shows that observation is not adequately described with a set of rules to provide an objective account of what the child is doing. Rather, these manuals on observation include normative and affective dimensions of education, more precisely educational aims and purposes, ideals of educational relations and the like. Thus, it makes sense to draw the attention to “observation” in order to clarify the constitution of the “educational world” in this field.

There is yet another reason to place “observation” in the center of interest because it forms a contrast to the currently dominant competence orientation. At present many educational settings or fields undergo forms of standardization or canonisation. It is remarkable that aside from the rigorous diagnostic gaze of competence there are strong claims for observation to be found as essentially open procedure. This is to say that children may not be observed using pre-given measures or standards: Observation, here, requires open and unprejudiced encounter. It is not clear beforehand what there is to see or what should be seen. In view of this indeterminacy it is quite interesting to take a look at what educators eventually see and: how this differs to competence oriented procedures. For now let me pose some guiding questions for the following analysis:

- How does the practice of observation form the educational subject?
- What is reasonable, meaningful, significant when observing the child’s activity?
- What are the limits of this activity?
- How is education or Bildung conceived in this context?

In order to present an appropriate analysis of “observational practices” I have chosen an ethnographic research study, a videography, directed by Sabine Hebenstreit-Müller and Bina Elisabeth Mohn from 2007. This study fits the purpose very well because it is itself indebted to capture the educational norms of recognition within observation. The videography is entitled “Kindern auf der Spur”, which literally means “Following the path of children”. The videography also provides good material because it makes “observation” very accessible in its sayings and doings. Following Geertz’ question “What the hell is going on here?!\textsuperscript{14} the videography captures the situatedness of educational practices. The camera participates on the scene, it provides viewpoints on the border of the field, an “attending gaze”. The videographic research, in other words, presents subjects in their relatedness to other subjects, in their involvement with others, including the camera.\textsuperscript{15}

2) “Bildung” – in and under observation
So far I have argued that it is necessary to investigate the social practices if one wants to clarify the education and its boundaries in a particular field (here early education). From the viewpoint of social practices the formation of educational subjectivity is related to the norms of recognition within these practices. For the field of early education practices of observation form a substantial and thought provoking object of study because it seems that the technology of observation entails an educational initiation – the constitution of an educational


\textsuperscript{14} C. Geertz, Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1983

\textsuperscript{15} This notion of research certainly contradicts the claims of standardization that precisely attempts to cut the subject’s relation to the „object of research“. Sabine Reh has shown how the reactions to the camera in the field are productive for the research (S. Reh, Die Kamera und der Dritte. Videographie als Methode kulturwissenschaftlich orientierter Bildungsforschung, in C. Thompson, K. Jergus, G. Breidenstein (eds.), Interferenzen. Perspektiven kulturwissenschaftlicher Bildungsforschung. Velbrück, Weilerswist, 2014, 30-50.
subject. The videography “Following the path of children” is used to recapitulate this constitution process. The following film sequence has the title “The educator as observer”.

[film sequence, see: https://www.dropbox.com/s/97hebqlo24585em/C%2013117_beobachtung.mp4 ]

The film shows several scenes from an early education center, mainly outside scenes with children “being active”. The camera focuses on the children and their activities. However, it also focuses on the educators on the scene who are busy with observing and documenting the children’s activities. I will present a few stills in order to highlight the correlative logic of children’s activity and educators’ observational practice.

(#1, 1’40”, observation scene)

#1: This film still is somewhat paradigmatic for the entire film sequence: There are two children present in the scene being involved with some activity, here: the swings. One child is sitting on the swing, but not swinging, rather exploring the chain while sitting on the swing and talking to the other child. The second swing is approached by the other child. The educator is present in the scene but not taking part in the activity itself. Rather, he remains literally at the border of the swinging area, observing the children and taking notes. The observing camera is providing a frame of this scene with the children at the center and the educator being placed at the side of the scene. Put differently, the camera as second order observer emphasizes the activity of observation and confirms that there is something to see. What is there to see here?

(#2, 0’, 24”, What is there to see here?)

#2: The second film still (at the beginning of the sequence) precisely starts with this question: “What is there to see here”? As one can see (again), there are several children present on the scene – being involved in their own activities: two children in the left foreground are engaged with a mono-swing. There are two children at the right end of the picture directed away from the camera. In the background at the left side there is a fifth child: Something is going on but the viewer cannot tell from the distance. Then there is a group with at least 16 adults standing in the (right) background, behind a tree and thus somewhat separated from the scene (unlike the camera). Some of the adults look into the playing area. From the sequence it becomes clear that they are visitors who want to observe the children. They come to see what there is to see in the early education center.
#3 and 4: One of the observers is interviewed. He describes what it means to observe the children and he draws a strong distinction between observation and interpretation. While giving this explication, the camera shows the scene that is described by the observer. So the viewer of the film is made into an observer by 1) receiving instructions on observation and 2) by witnessing the children’s activities. The camera suggests the standpoint of observation to the adults. The interviewed educator makes this standpoint explicit — he proposes observation.

So, what there is to see here — is something that can be seen when taking the standpoint of observation. The standpoint of observation, however, requires the adult to consider themselves as separate from the scene. In a way, the adults from the film sequence are in a very general way “visitors”. They enter into a scene that is already going on: the children’s activity (that is just to be described, not interpreted). The children appear as engaged in their own activity — this is where the idea of self-directed Bildung comes into play.

#5: This is a picture that has become very common in early education institutions: There are folders with collections of documented observations. As you can see here the folders carry the names and the pictures of the single children. As Sandra Koch and Gesine Nebe have shown with respect to the so-called learning stories\(^\text{16}\), these folders can be regarded as inscriptions (Latour) of Bildung\(^\text{17}\); for in these practices of documentation the written material becomes the sign of the individual’s Bildung. The documentation is about the production of educationally relevant and individual knowledge, a knowledge that transgresses the situation of its origin (Koch and Nebe refer to Latour’s concept of “cascades” in order to describe the

\(^{16}\) The learning stories are narratives by educators in the form of a story on children. The story is essentially addressed to the child as well as the parents. Most recently the conception of learning stories, originally deriving from New Zealand, has been extended to an all encompassing pedagogical approach.

re-formations and re-arrangements of this knowledge). In conclusion, observation and documentation constitute practices in which the educators become mediators of the children’s processes of Bildung. This means that the educators’ attention remains centered around the children’s activity (being a “visitor” on the scene).

#6: The next still shows a group of educators who read their documentations within the group. The educators are amazed about these documentations on the children, e.g. on Linus (3y). The educators communicate about their observations – and in this particular example they also exchange their views on the child in focus (Linus). In this practice of communication or even communitisation the educators confirm or even authenticate their position and responsibility as observers. Bringing into view the atmosphere of this circle it seems that educational attention for the child’s activity and personal commitment come together to fully realize the aim of this educational institution: the children’s Bildung.

Over the course of the stills it becomes more and more clear that the children’s ongoing activity forms the center of the practices. The educators are “visitors” on the scene – literally but also figuratively. This resonates very much with how Bildung is presented in the states programs. In Thuringia, e.g., children are presented as building “their own hypotheses and theories of the world”. Their activity has its own dignity which is also expressed in the vocabulary: “Hypotheses” and “theories” are terms that are usually reserved for a systematic or scientific attitude.

In the film sequence, the educators appear as “set back” from the scene. The children’s activity lies uncompromised at the center. It requires all the attention of the educator who is generally not interfering or engaging in the activity. The educators remain at a distance, at the border of the scene. The educators’ relation to the children is mediated through observation, i.e. the observation is the key of the educational relation. Put differently, the educator does not play an explicit role in the children’s activity. The implicit role of the educator is, in turn, to make the children visible as “bildsam”, as “subjects of Bildung”.

This is where the practice of filming can itself be read as a pedagogization of the scene: The beginning phrase “What is there to see here?” is itself provoked by the camera angle. The view of the camera is not something simple or natural but a particular view suggested to the adults. The subtitle of the video is “the school of gaze”, i.e. the videographic material presents itself as an opportunity to school one’s own educational gaze. I am particularly interested in the position of observation as the medium of Bildung. The educator’s responsibility is fulfilled with the observation and documentation of the individual’s

18 This quote comes from the program of Bildung in Thuringia. This as well as the program of Hessen have been interpreted by Kerstin Jergus and myself in „Die Politik der Bildung. Eine theoretische und empirische Analyse“, in R. Reichenbach, N. Ricken & H.-Ch. Koller (eds.), Erkenntnispolitik und die Konstruktion pädagogischer Wirklichkeiten. Schöningh, Paderborn, 2011, 103-122.
engagement with world. It appears as if the camera had been looking for instances of *individual and unforeseeable encounters*: the swing not used for swinging, the shovel used for water instead of sand, or the mono-swing that is moving a tub of blue plastic. The educators are placed in the scene in order to witness these unique situations. It has been mentioned before that this has become the educators’ true responsibility – or, put differently, the authority of educational practice resides within the children’s self-directed activity or *Bildung* – like in the blue painted picture.

How do these observational practices shape the educational relations? One can already tell from the film sequence that practices of observation assign the educators the position of attending as well attentive inactivity. The adults’ and children’s presence differ even though there is a strong attention towards the children’s doings. Are we witnessing, here, *Bildung* as a regime of individualization and coming along with this: an increasing decomposition of educational relations?

3) *Bildung* as regime of individualization?

In a paper from 2003, Jan Masschelein and Norbert Ricken have posed the question: “Do we still need the concept of Bildung?”\(^\text{19}\) In this paper Masschelein and Ricken show that Bildung is to be seen as part of a particular power-apparatus (following Foucault). To be more precise, Masschelein and Ricken see “*Bildung*” as a particular crossing point of power relations in which the individuals start to consider their lives as dynamic enterprises, as individual enterprises that are to be carried out in an autonomous fashion:

“The establishment of the idea of Bildung can inform an analysis of the construction and establishment of a ‘government of individualisation’ or of an ‘apparatus of individuality’ as a power mechanism which still operates. Foucault’s concept of ‘apparatus’ (‘dispositif’) attempts to embrace different domains which are not separated methodologically and by discipline, but are jointly encompassed as theoretical and practical conditions”\(^\text{20}\).

Referring to Foucault, Masschelein and Ricken direct their attention to the way human subjectivity is formed in the light of the humanist notion of “*Bildung*”. In their view “*Bildung*” goes hand in hand with specific networks or relations of power. These relations provoke subject-formations in terms of individuality or individual becoming. The authors speak of a government of individualization or an apparatus of individuality.

This view of *Bildung* seems to be quite translatable to the field of early education (as presented here). It has been precisely shown above that *Bildung* appears as a kind of crossing point for theoretical and practical aspects, i.e. the theoretical description of observation that is distinguished from interpretation. I have also mentioned practices of gaze and practices of how to represent these practices, e.g. in videography. Certainly, there are far more aspects to be taken into consideration. Sandra Koch and Gesine Nebe have e.g. discussed the increasing significance of social research methodology in practices of observation\(^\text{21}\). As you can see the “will to truth” brings forth “new technologies” of “making sense of a situation”.

In the above-mentioned, but also in other texts, Masschelein and Ricken emphasize the “immunizing” side of *Bildung* and its regime of individualisation. According to the authors, this

\(^{19}\) J. Masschelein and N. Ricken, Do we still need the concept of Bildung? in *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 2, 2003, 139-154.

\(^{20}\) See ibid., p. 147.

\(^{21}\) S. Koch, G. Nebe, *Beobachtung – Dokumentieren – Bildung entdecken?* Ms. for „Multiplitrans 2013“.
regime obfuscates certain modes of human existence: being-togetherness or sociality. Bringing into view one last time the film sequence it is interesting to see that – while the observed scenes often show more than one child in action – the folders are folders for one/each individual. Thus, despite the complex sociality and mediatedness, the documentation ultimately relates to the Bildung or self-directed and individual activity of the single child. In this regard one could indeed ask whether the prominence of “Bildung” in early education obfuscates forms of sociality and togetherness. It is “Bildung” that appears as the natural ground for the individual’s experience and this is also why it is the major task or responsibility of the educator to observe and document it.

However, what speaks against the interpretation of early education or Bildung in the light of Masschelein’s and Ricken’s critique is the complex relational constellation within the early educational practice of observation. Masschelein and Ricken have argued that Bildung marks a governance of individualisation because it perpetually requires the individual to engage anew with the world. However, the matter is different here: “Bildung” appears as something that is always already going on in the children’s activities. Here, the natural quality imposes a “claim” on the side of the educator: to authenticate Bildung, to witness the unique process, to give it presence within the early education institution. In this regard, there is a shift in the power constellation: The authority of Bildung does not require the individual to govern itself in the light of future possibilities. Rather, the educator is called into the relation toward the children’s authoritative and self-evident processes of Bildung.

The position of observation entails an indissoluble double paradox:
- the paradox of non-interference versus representation and
- the paradox of confirmation and uncertainty.

The first paradox refers to the educator’s particular presence on the scene. He/She serves as the “representative” of Bildung; he/ she is writing down what is there to see (this is the mission of description). At the same time, the educator is not to affect the situation to be documented: neither on the level of activity (engagement) nor at the level of documentation (interpretation). The second paradox refers to the continuous call to re-assure the observer’s viewpoint. There are always new activities to be expected from the children. This is why the self-confidence of observation simultaneously requires openness. The double paradox brings about a powerful constitution of the educational subject: The totality of educational responsibility constitutes a continuous field of tension with regard to the self-directedness and dignity of the children’s activity.

To summarize the authority of Bildung brings about a very particular form of educational relation. It is a relation that has Bildung as center or point of reference (and not the experience that one makes with the other). The following figure attempts to grasp this constitution of relation in reference to Bildung within observation:

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22 See ibid., p. 150.
24 In our ethnographic field work in seminars for training educators (Jergus/ Koch/ Schröder/ Starke/ Thompson) we have witnessed this power-productive double paradox. Educators are supposed to manage every task of observation and at the same time they can never be sure to have mastered it.
As mentioned before the child’s activity rests at the center of the scene. The observational practice is entirely complementary to the child’s activity, because there is no external measure that could grasp this individual activity (as can be shown with the example of the shovel). The relation between educator and child is entirely woven into the framework of activity and observation. The observational practice “surrounding” children’s processes of Bildung, i.e. their engagement with “world”, provides a superior educational knowledge. In this context the educator is himself/herself the (dependent) “origin” of educational knowledge collected and validated in observation (compared/shared with other observations). In the self-description of the field of early education this orientation towards the child of Bildung is the path of professional development. It is the path of resource orientation and educational confidence.

4) Alterity and the withdrawal of Bildung

Is the development as sketched out here one of educational advancement and progress? Is this not exactly what thinkers like Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schiller were having in mind when talking about Bildung as world disclosure, Weiteröffnung? Humboldt described Bildung as the most unhindered, free and general interaction between ego and world – and as a matter of fact, he was very explicit that this interaction should not be compromised by social regulations and expectations. Even Adorno picks up on this view in his “Theory of Halbbildung” in 1959, even though the criticism of Bildung is presented as fundamental problem or question. One could argue that the practices of observation as presented and analyzed in this paper somewhat pick up on the classical concept of Bildung: Observation is presented in terms of witnessing the singular presence when children interact with the world.

Or is it more appropriate to follow the line of argumentation provided by Jan Masschelein and Norbert Ricken? They have pointed out the regime of individualization: In their view, Bildung itself suggests a very particular subject formation, a subject formation that neglects or obfuscates certain forms of sociality. Here, the individual is required to have his or her own development in mind, a development that has to be organized as a “story of Bildung”. In relation to observational practice, one could indeed present the educators as observers as placeholders for individuality: Observation produces an aura on the children’s activity. It requires the educator to become the discoverer of the children’s individuality.

However, even though both interpretations sound reasonable and justifiable I would like to take a different route at the end of this paper. For this, it is necessary to go back to the notion

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25 See Jergus, Koch & Thompson, 2013, p. 754.

of social practices and the continuous reshaping of social orders in these practices as thinkers like Butler or Laclau and Mouffe have pointed out time and again:

“The multiformity of the social cannot be apprehended through a system of mediations, nor the ‘social order’ understood as an underlying principle. There is no sutured space peculiar to ‘society’, since the social itself has no essence” (Laclau/Mouffe 1985: 96).

This quote denotes the non-identical side of practices and social reality. This, however, brings me back to the role and necessity of philosophy or educational philosophy: the analysis of social practices has to be complemented by that which escapes the intelligibility of practices, the impossibility of fulfilling representation. Starting once again with the videography I would like to show that Bildung and the significance of educational philosophy have something in common: to warrant difference and alterity.

The last still from the videography shows an observer and a child both sitting on a wall, turned toward the same side. The educator is busy with making notes. It does not become clear who is observed by the educator. The child, however, remains inactive on the scene. She is mostly staring in one direction, once in a while dangling the feet, generally absent-minded, unimpressed by the toys surrounding the scene. How are we to describe what is going on here? Are we to consider this scene as an interruption of observation or as a refiguration of the scene by boredom or inactivity? Does this scene “displace” the notion of the “child” as active individual? This scene offers itself for the attempt to view observation differently: the standstill of disclosure, the openness of discernment, the impossibility of identification. Rather than taking up a judgmental position towards “Bildung” and the practice of “observation” it is important to complement the analysis of practices by the possibilities of how things offer themselves for a different view.

The notion of Bildung becomes prominent, here, in the systematic void in world disclosure separating the subject from the fulfillment of experience, of its gaze. This provokes a different view of observational practice – by the educator and also by the camera (i.e. the spectator’s and the researcher’s view): Is it possible to leave the question “what there is to see” (in part) unanswered in observation? What are the modes of not-answering that we can think of? Are there any limits to the confidence of “observation” in early education? What are the modes and strategies that turn educational practices in something definite and finite? Are we to

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characterize the educational(-philosophical) gaze as a point of view that leaves alterity in play? How would such a gaze alter the figure drawn above concerning the educational relation?

I have argued here not to place Bildung in an identificatory construction, as a title for a certain type of behavior, knowledge etc. Rather the limits of identification and thus the limits of our experience are seen as an important reference point to shift the views and positions suggested in the social realm. In my view, this is the significance of educational philosophical endeavor. To be sure, this endeavour might bring about changes: Following Butler, the work on these limits can imply shifts within the norms of recognition and thus the possibilities of de-identification. Concluding this paper, I suggest that what is characteristic for the realm of Bildung and for educational relations is the emergence of new situations that outgrow former situations or go beyond them, e.g. go beyond the view of the child as continuous origin of individual activity. This might slow down or liberate our gaze, bring forth a different stance toward the situation at hand, and thus toward the claims posed on us.

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In the last 30 years the term ‘postliberal’ has borne several, often highly divergent meanings. It has been suggested by figures such as Zygmunt Bauman that in this range of repeated and sometimes wildly varying iterations we can see the unfolding of a ‘crisis of liberalism’ akin to the crisis which induced the collapse of the intellectual order of the ancien regime itself and which prompted political philosophers and early social theorists, from Hegel to Bentham, to seek out a new vocabulary for interpreting the shifting ‘post-mercantile’ (to use Sophus A. Reinhert’s term) cultural and epistemic realities around them.

I reserve judgement for the moment on the legitimacy of the often over-used ‘crisis’ as an epithet for the current predicaments of liberalism and liberal education. Instead in this lecture, I intend more modestly to disentangle several different strands of thought associated with the terms ‘postliberal’ and ‘postliberal education’, to identify the genealogies associated with a number of these strands that I consider to be significant and to suggest that what I take to be the most recent of them—a development within political and philosophical ‘postliberalism’ of the last ten to fifteen years—has begun to adumbrate a view of popular education, liberal education and indeed classroom educational practice (most especially in the terms of mass schooling in the so-called late industrial democracies), that poses a particular (and peculiar) challenge to the philosophy of education in 2014, albeit from unfamiliar quarters. Let me stress, however, that it is not only in relation to the latest expression that I perceive a lasting or living educational question. The exercise I am conducting is not at any stage merely
forensic or archival. The goal of our intellectual endeavours should not be merely to mirror reality accurately or describe it curatorially, but, as Dewey argued in 1917 in ‘The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy’, ‘to free experience from routine and caprice.’ ‘Unless professional philosophy can mobilise itself sufficiently to assist in this clarification and redirection of men’s thoughts,’ Dewey went on, ‘it is likely to get more and more sidetracked from the currents of contemporary life.’ All of the major versions of postliberalism are, I believe, active in the currents of contemporary educational life, even if it is to the most immediate of them that active educational enquiry—in an inevitably inchoate, unfinished and possibly even ‘pre-philosophical’ style—is presently and confusingly directed.

I also preface my overall task today with one significant disavowal. I am keenly aware as I examine these debates and interactions, that the term ‘postliberal’ may not in fact be an altogether accurate or convincing label to attach to some of the movements of thought on which I will touch at all. Indeed, it ought to be apparent that ‘postliberal’ and ‘postliberalism’ are highly contested and in certain respects doubtful banners to place over the protean clusters of ideas and argument with which I shall connect. Postliberalism may be little more than a flag of convenience for certain polemical interests and alignments, either in essence opposed to the liberal educational project tout court or indeed in their advocacy agitating within the established, if historically flexible, parameters of liberalism and liberal educational values quite simply for the enlargement of their moral or epistemological compass. This problem—of the extent to which ‘postliberal education’ is in many of its manifestations merely liberal education ‘remastered’ (to use a musical metaphor) in order to emphasize certain themes within its multiple harmonics and to suppress others—remains deliberately unresolved in my exposition—though I hope it might inform future reflection and
discussion. Recall, for example, the dismay with which E. D. Hirsch met the suggestion of Harry Brighouse that his prescriptive approach to curriculum planning was in key aspects ‘illiberal’ and his rejoinder that he considered Core Knowledge to be the last best defence of Liberal Education. I remain absorbed, nevertheless, in searching out and understanding the need that these movements or programmes with which I am occupied have felt in specific academic and historical conjunctures to appropriate the term ‘postliberal’ even as a campaigning slogan, a think-tank brand-name or a social media rallying call. Philosophers of education, I contend, perhaps Dewey-style, ought to be interested in all three of these possible motivations—and more.

‘[T]he prefix “post’,” remarks Wendy Brown,

Signifies a formation that is temporally after but not over that to which it is affixed. “Post” indicates a very particular condition of afterness in which what is past is not left behind, but, on the contrary, relentlessly conditions, even dominates a present that nevertheless also breaks in some way with this past. In other words, we use the term “post” only for a present whose past continues to capture and structure it.

The concept ‘postliberal’ first gained serious educational traction in a perhaps quite unexpected domain, but with subsequently important resonances for, and within, the successive rebrandings of the term. Postliberal theology arose in the 1970s in American and German divinity schools as a concentrated doctrinal and pastoral dissatisfaction with the philosophical and scriptural settlement that had come to be known as ‘liberal theology’ and which represented, as many of you will know, a prevailing 19th and early 20th century accommodation between mainstream educated Christianity and the Enlightenment—most specifically with the avalanche of discoveries of historical and textual criticism, the monumental advances in the natural and life sciences and the rise of comparative and analytic philosophical methods
gaining prestige against this broad modernising canvas. Largely abandoning the props of a biblical or ecclesial magisterium, Liberal theology accepted all of the major claims of the Enlightenment for the priority of reason and the practice of sceptical enquiry and in turn strove to develop a refreshed theological language equipped to reformulate the classical doctrinal truth claims of the historic Christian creeds in terms compatible with the rational and scientific spirit of the age. The strongholds of liberal theology were the universities and seminaries of the major Protestant congregations in Europe and America and their programmes of ministerial and pastoral training saw the movement impact on the work of these Churches in parishes, voluntary associations and even schools all over the world.

Post-liberal theology of the 1970s and 80s originated as a serious reaction against this settlement, perhaps best characterised by the leadership of the philosopher and theologian Stanley Hauerwas. The primary focus of Hauerwas’ work was the systematic promotion of a counter-cultural social and educational ethic protesting the hypocrisies of enlightened ‘modernity’ and critiquing the impoverished notions of autonomy and spirituality behind which, he alleged, it disguised structures of systematic violence, exploitation and anomie. Set against this pervasive consumer nihilism and cynicism of modern culture, Hauerwas and his followers daringly recommissioned more ancient and abiding forms of individual and communal formation, contemplation and discipline—dedicated to a resumption of the pursuit of theological truth and the affirmation of scriptural revelation within coherent and confident habits of philosophical dialectics. Echoing wider misgivings of the period articulated by secular thinkers such as Stanley Fish, Hauerwas critiqued what he called the ‘self-promotion’ of the liberal temper. While classical liberalism represented itself as a place of neutrality outside the partisan struggles that mark the contest of religious and other
non-conditional convictions, it was in fact an undeclared participant in these struggles, aggressively advancing its own values, which it masked as universal—values such as autonomy, individual freedom, and reasonableness—and circumscribing the concept of religion as private and personal in order better to police its subversive elements through the unacknowledged coercion of the liberal state. Liberalism—while affecting neutrality and tolerance—must then be seen not as the impartial arbiter but as the temporary victor in an ongoing battle for the maintenance of what William Cavanaugh, following Nietzsche rather than Rudolph Bultmann, went on to define as its three ‘religious’ myths: the myth of the violent state as the rescue from violence; the myth of collusive civil society as free space; and the myth of dehumanizing economic globalization as authentic, achieved catholicity.

Hauerwas and the champions of postliberal theology may have been heard at the time and since as voices of an exotic coterie specialism, residually present within the academy and school, perhaps, but firmly outwith the boundaries of mainstream majority educational study. Yet postliberal theology did refract certain important educational themes of the age, as the so-called ‘return of religion’ began to impact upon the politics of multiculturalism, religious education and the longstanding controversies of faith-based schooling. We can indeed see in some of Terry McLaughlin’s important work of the 1990s on religion in the common school and the place of Catholic schools in the democratic polity an intervention possibly even more prescient than his parallel writings on philosophy and educational policy. The sometimes overcharged rhetoric of ‘postliberalism’ or ‘postliberal theology’ would probably have provoked that rare yet characteristic capacity of Terry’s to be indulgent towards his earnest interlocutors without appearing patronizing, quizzical without being scornful (accompanied no doubt with one of his pithy self-mocking asides). There remains nevertheless a concern in
these aspects of Terry McLaughlin’s *oeuvre* with what we might call the limits of liberalism—or, better, with the self-imposed limits of certain prevailing or attenuated versions of liberalism which are then tested by the moral and epistemic demands of an increasingly plural and variegated polity:

A powerful argument for the involvement of the common school with the non-public domain arises from the need for the development in pupils of imaginative engagement, understanding and sympathy with views with which they disagree. Silence about the ‘non-public’ domain is not neutral in effect and is also likely to disfavour cultural minorities, whose own distinctive moral perspectives may therefore fail to receive attention. Indeed, such silence might itself constitute, in effect if not in intention, a form of repression. The aim of helping pupils to become ‘morally bilingual’ also requires connections to be made between ‘public’ moral language and the ‘non-public’ moral language of pupils if they are not to become schizophrenic. Further, the absence from the common school of wide-ranging substantial moral debate could scarcely be a good preparation for democracy.

For Terry, of course, this ‘bilingualism’ (or maybe what we might call today ‘intercultural multilingualism’) was something conferred by the interactive and collegial processes of being educated in difference in the first place, whether that be the difference of actual proximity to others (or ‘the Other’), or the humanist engagement with the diverse cultural repositories of civilization in a vibrant humanist curriculum hospitable to forms of thinking, feeling, remembering and experiencing upon which what he termed ‘Liberal Rationalism’ would impose no inappropriately universalizing or harmonizing educational contrivances. It seems entirely clear, that even in his return to Wittgenstein as the ground for a replenished recognition of the religious encounter that might actually also work as a pedagogy and (in outline at least) even a possible high school syllabus, Terry believed himself to be serving and strengthening liberal practice rather than simply rebuking or abandoning it:
Wittgenstein's general approach clearly calls into question a number of the major features and philosophical underpinnings of the Liberal Rational conception. From a Wittgensteinian perspective, it is no longer possible (for example) to maintain a sharp distinction for educational purposes between fostering religious belief and practice and developing religious understanding; the presentation of religion as uncertain and requiring rational assessment, decision and commitment misrepresents some of the central distinctive features of the domain; religious truth and reality are seen as requiring a much more subtle and nuanced elucidation, and so forth.

These and other remarks in the 1995 essay ‘Wittgenstein, Education and Religion’—such as the provocative commentary on the ‘limits to questioning’ in the educational recognition of religious living and religious witness in schools—undeniably echo some of the restlessness of the postliberal theological currents of the time (in which Wittgenstein’s thought was also prominent). But this is surely only a postliberalism lite, remaining fiercely loyal to the core principles of liberal educational aspiration whilst insisting eloquently that these principles are strengthened by a more inclusive definition of their meaning and a more receptive attitude to the spectrum of human experience with which they must deal if their fundamental vision of the flourishing person in the flourishing *polis* is to be realized. Interestingly, a further strain of thought can now be perceived emerging from this 1990s nexus, where changes in theological thinking and shifts in educational theory briefly converged. Post-liberal theology has in many respects faded from academic and ecclesial attention, but its educational legacy remains powerfully present in the fierce debates around religion and liberal democracy occasioned by the surge of religious atavism felt across the world on the cusp of the millennium and the accompanying argument of influential philosophers and teachers such as Phillip Wexler that we have crossed a ‘post-secular’ boundary in understanding the forces at work in the globalized era—with dramatic implications for the politics of recognition and way we deal with the question of ‘postliberal’ or ‘illiberal’ belief in our schools and universities.
Lest with even a philosopher of Terry McLaughlin’s magnanimity and range we consider the postliberal to be remote or esoteric set of preoccupations, it is worth noting briefly two significant works that emerged at more or less the same time as Terry’s important essays and which also sought to probe the limits of liberal education in a rapidly changing culture. I take them in reverse chronology only because of the uses to which I will put them and the recursive and cross-over nature of the contributions they made at key milestones in the evolution of several distinct but related expressions of ‘postliberal’ sentiment.

The important *Festschrift* of 1993 for Paul Hirst, edited by Robin Barrow and Patricia White, *Beyond Liberal Education*, paid unstinting tribute to Hirst while recognizing that a singular achievement of his work was to raise questions of meaning and value in education that might be answered differently from the perspective of an altered society or the resources of philosophical and intellectual traditions (such as Platonism) that Hirst had consistently eschewed. Several of the essays in the collection skillfully draw out themes in Hirst’s writings that require reconsideration (vocationalism for example) by the light of shifting economic and cultural realities. Others point respectfully to omissions in the priorities that he identified or in the sometimes limited range of examples of practice and application that he supplied on which the philosophy of education could deliberate to the point of consensual judgment. David Cooper amplifies some of the wider ‘postliberal’ anxieties of the day, and since, by returning in his own influential essay to the question of truth and querying Hirst’s investment in what Cooper labels (borrowing language from Dewey and Dummett) ‘warranted assertability’. It is important to emphasize that Cooper’s is not a fundamental rejection
of Hirst’s account of truth and its relationship to what human beings can reliably know, but simply an attempt to understand it and a recognition that Hirst’s commitment to a ‘public agreement’ model of liberal education ‘no longer backed’, as Hirst famously stated, ‘by metaphysical realism’, may run the risk, despite its many merits, of depriving liberal education of other potential sources of secular transcendent meaning—handicapping the pursuit of goals dear to certain schools of philosophical training, for example, such as unconditional service or selfless fulfillment in the loving contemplation of an absolute reality.

Jane Roland Martin’s essay in Beyond Liberal Education is in important respects a more direct dissent from the Hirstian construction of the curriculum and in many ways a foreshadowing of the much more agitated critical theory and poststructuralist critique of liberal education with which I associate the second strand of the postliberal experience, and to which I shall return. While welcoming Hirst’s attention to the need for the curriculum to explain itself in terms of an underlying rationale and a coherence with the forms of knowledge, Martin absorbs what were by 1993 very powerful impulses in the surrounding climate of critical theory and English Studies energetically challenging the alleged ethnocentrism, antifeminism and seamless universalism of the Humanities and of the larger Enlightenment agenda of which they were the supposedly unimpeachable educational channels. Martin’s attack on what she sees in the essay as the doomed attempt in schools and universities to preserve a ‘white man’s culture’ from the polyvocal witness of the colonially excluded, the sexually abjected and the politically and economically oppressed is configured as a serious reproach to Hirst’s supposedly ‘settled’ view of the curriculum and even to the discursive construction of the skewed ‘Western’ epistemologies underpinning it. It is worth observing in passing
that Hirst may be something of a straw man in this argument and his account of the curriculum unduly flattened by a reading that excludes, for example, its signature scepticism towards the dominant styles of curricular integration favoured by postwar governments and its openness to practical reform as human knowledge advances. But Martin’s is a strategic interpretation striving to illuminate zones of human experience untouched by the liberal understanding of legitimated knowledge. In the ‘beyond’ of liberal education, she discerns a crowd of witnesses, a kind of wretched of the earth, whose testimony and passions are definitively excluded from the conversation of mankind but who—ominously—will not put up with this for very much longer.

One of the most ambitious and compelling attempts to draw out from the shifting and evolving patterns of the 1980s postmodern humanities to which Martin was also indebted a quite new but nonetheless sympathetic programme for the refurbishment of liberal education came in 1987 from the renowned American philosopher of education C. A. (‘Chet’) Bowers, in his controversial but landmark work, *Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education*. Influenced by the readings of Foucault and Derrida that were by then strongly associated with the Yale School of Paul De Man and Harold Bloom—and reverberating with increasing volatility throughout the study of the humanities in the US and Europe—Bowers mounted a concerted re-reading of some of the canonical philosophers, psychologists and champions of the Liberal Educational tradition as he surveyed it: B. F. Skinner, Carl Rogers, Paulo Freire and, above all, John Dewey himself. At the same time, Bowers was also highly sensitized to what he took to be the ‘Conservative’ tradition in English-speaking educational thought, most obviously represented by Oakeshott, but also present in the Transcendentalists, and drew this body of literature into his overall examination of the strengths and limitations
of the liberal theory of education as it responded to the social, economic and cultural pressures of the late modern world.

The key insight that Bowers brings to his close reading of Dewey, Freire, Rogers, and Skinner is that whatever their very substantial differences, they share a common worldview the roots of which lie in the Enlightenment and the Enlightenment’s hopes for the emancipatory potential of popular education. Each figure is committed, he argues, to the power of critical reflection, to the sovereignty of the individual and to education as a path to individual freedom and social progress. What the four systematically neglect, according to Bowers (though Dewey and Freire are much less culpable in this regard) is the extent to which humans are embedded in a material mesh of economic, social and biopolitical relations which conditions both their possibilities for individual autonomy and corporate solidarity and the limitations placed upon both.

In keeping with the Foucauldian ‘unmasking’ of the technologies of disciplinary regulation held to be discursively implicated in even the most progressive forms of education, this embeddedness implies that only a decidedly limited spectrum of life can at any time become the object of deliberate reflection, appraisal and control at the levels prized by popular education. Liberal education in other words works, but only on a limited bandwidth of human experience, which it covertly modulates and confines. In keeping with the organicism and intuitionism of Oakshott, recognition of embeddedness also implies that the traditions into which human subjects are socialized are not simply the inert demands of the past, which impede progress and self-realization, but the indispensable materials with which we forge whatever limited individuality and self-fashioning we can provisionally attain. Once again, it is at least arguable that Bowers’ is a selective reading of his subjects, most especially Dewey, with whom he
has the greatest sympathy. The Dewey of *Liberalism and Social Action* or of *Democracy and Education* seems just as sceptical of evangelical autonomy and self-sufficiency and just as sensitive to interdependence as Bowers—though for Bowers Dewey consistently fails to acknowledge the full pressures of history on the actions of learning and teaching and insufficiently sensitized to what Bowers terms the ‘tacit dimension’ in the iterative processes of human knowledge production and judgment-formation. Perhaps understandably, a key characteristic of Bowers’ subsequent work has been the urge to elaborate a progressive theory of communitarian education commensurate with the threats to human survival posed by the crises of environment and climate. As I shall suggest in my final sections, these twin themes now loom large in much popular contemporary literature on ‘postliberal’ ethics, (in the work of Philip Blond, for example), where versions of liberal education are held responsible for cultivating the habits of possessive individualism and acquisition that now menace the planet.

I suggested at the opening of this lecture that the boundaries between the strands or styles of postliberalism with which I am concerned are fuzzy and confusing, sometimes even to the point of contradiction. In the 1990s, at least three working versions of ‘the postliberal’ were visible in the discourses of philosophy and the social sciences. From the perspective of a seemingly triumphant yet paradoxically ‘post-ideological’ New Right, which had reworked even the politics of its party-political opponents in its own image, the philosopher John Gray declared in his *Post-liberalism: Studies in Political Thought* (1993) that

> The position defended here is post-liberal in that it rejects the foundationalist claims of fundamentalist liberalism. That is to say that it denies that liberal regimes are uniquely legitimate for all human beings. Human beings have flourished in regimes that do not shelter a liberal civil
society, and there are forms of human flourishing that are driven out in liberal regimes. Liberal orders have, then, no universal or apodictic authority, contrary to liberal political philosophy.

For Gray, the residual value of liberalism inhered only interstially in ‘the practice of liberty, that is our historical inheritance.’ As I have suggested, however, quite different styles of ‘postliberal’ thinking in the same era was fueled equally vociferously by a totally contrasting conviction in important centres of scholarly opinion and humanities polemic that the energies of critique had forever broken open the postwar liberal consensus in favour of an emancipatory vision far to the left of mainstream liberal theory. Through the concentrated practices of reading, hermeneutics, and educational encounters more widely and deeply conceived, these forces were both exposing what they saw as the restrictions and hypocrisies of liberal education whilst reimagining radically new paradigms for learning and teaching. The essence of this analysis—which of course remains very strong in the academy to this day—was that the practices of liberal education, for all their many imperfections, had slowly incubated movements of thought and feeling of a radically adversarial and committed cast deeply sceptical of the hegemony of Western liberal-democratic educational consensus and the ambivalent purposes it had historically served. These subversive and insurrectionist critical movements such as multiculturalism; postcolonialism; feminism; psychoanalysis; historicism; post-structuralism, deconstruction; etc clearly exhibited an obvious genealogical origin in the older liberal arts and humanities (and they often dealt with the same primary textual material), but they were each unswervingly committed to disclosing and interrogating the suppressed tensions, contradictions and exclusions of their shared ancestry through a radical decen tring of high culture and a rejection of academic authority in the name of subaltern groups, silenced voices and marginalised witnesses part and present.
Of course it is important to note that for prominent strands of this movement the overthrow or wholesale reinvention of the humanities as then constituted was to be welcomed and furthered. This objective would be central to the stances taken up by certain important philosophers of education such as Michael Peters, John Willinsky, Denise Egea-Kuhne, Vivek Chibber. For many of them, it was not at all to be construed as a nihilistic undertaking, because it sought not the destruction of liberal education, but rather its comprehensive reimagining through a democratically empowered agonistic pedagogy of political struggle and passionate cosmopolitan dialogue, extending cultural admission to previously erased or forgotten groups. From this liberation, argued Trifonas would swing into view the open-ended horizon of the so-called ‘New Humanities’ of liberal education, enriched and transformed by their encounter with revolutionary impulses that the ‘older’ humanities helped inadvertently to foster. For other thinkers of course, such as Ronald Barnett or Steve Fuller (channelling the cyberfeminism of Donna Harraway), the very idea of liberal education and education in the ‘humanities’ was simply too bloodsoaked and too fractured by histories of injustice and connivance with imperial and orientalist oppression to survive in any recognisable form. Inspired by polemical readings of Nietzsche, Adorno and Foucault, this adversarial stance demanded the epistemological and ethical repudiation of the Western modern or liberal education model and its replacement by a renovated aesthetic and heuristic order the precise lineaments of which our own current limitations inveterately prevent us yet from seeing—a posthuman version, perhaps, of a Derridean or Levinasian ‘Education to come.’

If I am correct in my judgment that each version of postliberal education is imprinted by or contaminated with the versions that preceded or surround it, then I have
complicated the task of assessing the nature of its current inflections, even if this is
confined to mapping those movements active in the public and educational spaces that
persist in calling themselves ‘postliberal’ on even a speculative or calculatingly
tendentious basis. At the level of political philosophy, the intriguing synthesis to which
Bowers aspired in his searching reading of some of the canonical narratives of liberal
education is present in the cadences of David Chandler and Oliver Richmond’s very
recent 2014 synopsis:

Postliberalism is driven by a subaltern and postcolonial thrust away
from the dominance of the West, its political philosophy, and its ordering
of rights and needs (Bhabha 1994). It represents a shift away from how the
existing power and order were naturalised by a colonial liberalism, and
presented as emancipatory (Locke 1689/1991; Mill 1869/2010), towards a
new era in which a far broader range of agency is implicated in dealing with
structures that both produce conflict and institutions that make peace...For this
reason, postliberalism is representative of forms of critical agency that draw
on the local actors’ subjective agencies...Postliberalism redirects the social
contract away from an elitist and managerial ‘great arch’ between elites and
society (Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 2–3), to a flatter relationship within society
between its different groups, formed less hierarchically and based upon its
socio-historical continuities.

Recapitulating Bowers, we see in this overview a genuine effort to describe in
postliberalism per se an ethic that is continuous with the radical critique advanced by
the postmodern turn in theory and philosophy, alongside an embrace of forms of
decentred agency, localism and ‘socio-historical’ and institutional continuity enshrined
in, and protected by, much classical conservatism of the Oakeshott or Scruton type. In
the context of the post credit-crunch United Kingdom of today, governed by an edgy
coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, mired in the austerity-driven
processes of shrinking dramatically the reach of the postwar welfare state, and trapped
in a space of constitutional and economic self-doubt, postliberalism is for some merely
a consoling intellectual fantasy doing duty for the absence of political vision. For others,
it is a still more sinister camouflage for the massive responsibilisation of an already
beleaguered citizenry and the equally wholesale socialisation of economic risk. There remains, however, some sense that despite this confusion and understandable cynicism, faltering steps are being taken to interpret these developments and the choices they lay before us by the light of a revised political philosophy, influenced by Continental thinkers from Jean-Claude Michea, of The Realm of Lesser Evil (2009), to the revived civic republicanism of Philip Pettit’s Just Freedom: A Moral Compass for a Complex World (2014)—and on even to the political ontology of the theologian John Milbank in his Beyond Secular Order: the Representation of Being and the Representation of the People (2013). In terms of a viable political programme from which post-austerity education might draw some sustenance, analysis remains in my view almost ‘pre-philosophical’ in outlook, the preserve of think tanks, lobby groups and higher journalism, seeing in the making of educational policy a potential institutional arena for the development of a robust and thickly-reasoned postliberal practice, but extremely wary of rationalising this. David Goodheart of the centre-progressive think tank Demos argues that—

Postliberalism is a child of the two liberalisms—the 1960s (social) and 1980s (economic)—that have, together, dominated politics for more than a generation. But it is a restless and critical child, and one that cuts across some of the old lines dividing left and right. It does not want to go back to corporatist economics nor to reverse the progress towards race and sex equality...But post-liberalism does want to attend to the silences, overshoots and unintended consequences of economic and social liberalism...It aspires to a more realistic account of the human condition than liberalism offers—based on the idea of formation through institutions and tradition, on freedom based on security and the nurturing of capabilities, on the common life and common purpose. Autonomy and choice are not rejected but are understood in the context of the frameworks and institutions within which we know people flourish such as loving families or workplaces where employees have voice and recognition.

Now this kind of platform may offer much that is attractive and compelling to philosophers and practitioners of education, even if only as an invitation to reason about
the legacy of liberal education and its reinvention for the contemporary age. Yet along with several of the leading lights of the postliberal networks in the United Kingdom, Goodheart is a strong advocate of the employment-based pathway into school teaching, *Teach First*, and a stern critic of what he calls the complacent progressivism of Education faculties and Education professors, who he sees permanently seeking alibis for educational failure, trapped in producer-capture dogma and ideologically fastened to principles and to discourse with which few serving teachers can identify. It seems quite clear that public intellectuals such as Goodheart or Maurice Glasman or Philip Blond are not intuitively hostile to philosophy or theory, yet they have come to identify much that many philosophers of education cherish as, in their terms, a sterile and doctrinaire form of progressivism by which Liberal Education has been almost completely subsumed. In this analysis Liberal Education has become progressivism, and an incomplete, stereotyped species of progressivism at that. Equally alarmingly, at a more popular and vernacular level, social media networks and associations of teachers, lobbyists and journalist-commentators, sympathetic to the evolving aims of postliberalism, have also furthered this attack on classroom ‘theory’ and progressivism in the name of a networked professionalism no longer dependent on the stifling credentialism of the universities or the professional regulatory bodies. The teacher, blogger and tweeter Tom Burnett—himself a graduate in Philosophy from the University of Glasgow and the holder of a PGCE from another UK institution—now leads a (sometimes intemperately) scornful online chorus belittling the ‘cargo-cult’ irrelevancies of much educational research and calling with the science journalist Ben Goldacre for a new clean-slate spirit of properly scientific investigation into what works in schools for the improvement of outcomes for learners. Burnett’s following of some 15000 is now organised and privately sponsored as *ResearchED*, a conference of
teachers and their allies dedicated to the promotion of evidence-based education and research. A hard-working classroom professional, Burnett presents himself as a pyrronist champion of inclusion, opportunity and the success and happiness of young people—and there is no reason at all to doubt the integrity of that claim. His aspirations would be consonant with many of the core values highlighted throughout this lecture. Yet somehow the ‘postliberalism’ he represents (and I admit Tom Burnett may be averse to the imposition by others of a label he has never publicly endorsed) is disconnected from the larger workings of philosophy of education and the broader reaches of pedagogical and cultural theory. This seems to me to be both unsettling and portentous, suggesting that if an authentically refashioned ‘postliberal’ account of education is gradually emerging, philosophers of education must do more to understand and engage with it—drawing out, perhaps, our previous experiences of the diverse cultural and intellectual movements attracted to this banner. While appreciating keenly that nothing propinques like propinquity, I would earnestly venture to suggest that Jim Conroy’s model of liminal education from his 2004 book *Betwixt and Between*, may actually furnish the viable manner of engagement called for here, where Liberal Education is altered an enriched beyond its own imaginings by the threshold encounter with that which its has othered in preservation of its fragile identity.

The popular English school teacher and gifted educational blogger, Michael Merrick, recently offered an alternative agenda for English educational policy reform to the Blue Labour grouping within the UK Labour Party—the interest group founded in 2009 by Maurice Glasman with the objective of reintegrating a postliberal ‘politics of reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity’ into mainstream Labour policy-making and planning. In a speech to Blue Labour early in 2014, Merrick argued that it was time
for the Labour Party to rethink its educational philosophy in three broad and previously untouchable areas talismanic for the Labour Movement: Vocational Education, Social Mobility and the organization and governance of schools. Merrick’s short argument in all three areas, whether commanding ultimate agreement or dissent, was erudite, reasoned and critically informed. If this is an event and an intervention typical of the current and expanding expression of postliberal educational thought, then philosophy of education should cease seeing it as either a reactionary threat or an external unlicensed irrelevance and seek out opportunities to bring its potentially absorbing philosophical contribution to the table of debate.

Jim
Concurrent papers
The transmission of memory heritage in the family. Intergenerational dialogue and parental education

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1) Contemporary identity dynamics and the need for memory-making

Personal identity develops through a process of construction of the self, which in turn crystallizes by means of a network of relations between past, present and future. In this perspective, memory plays a crucial role, as it not only serves a cumulative function but also guarantees continuity across past, present, and future experiences. The subject, “who is”, finds confirmation of his/her existence in “what s/he was”: the past belongs to him/her and connotes him/her. Memory thus contributes to the integrity of the self. As P. Ricoeur posits, memory expresses the self-consciousness of a subject who perceives him/herself as unchanged through time. The permanence of the self in the subject’s identity rests on memory, which enables him/her to recognize the memories of the past as belonging to him/her, as the result of experiences that contributed to the making of his/her history.

Fostering the habit of memory-making becomes therefore a major educational imperative, which however is not without challenges, due to the growing exclusion of the past from our present dimension. This trend, together with our inability to envision the future and our complete focus on the present, makes the task of valuing one’s history and identity increasingly complicated, and makes us all “Mnemosyne’s deserters”. Educationalists and educators need to defend and promote the value of the past-present nexus —intrinsic to everyone’s self-making path—with a view to favoring the acknowledgement of one’s belonging to a personal history. The past has to be rediscovered as a living presence that inhabits and supports the present. Thanks to memory, the individual perceives him/herself as “identity” that does not vanish, because past events impress themselves upon our emotional mind, leaving traces behind that turn the past into present: “it’s a living, never extinct past”.

The family is an ideal environment for such memory-oriented work, not only because it is a primary relational and formative space but also because it keeps together all generations through blood ties but above all through symbolic and affective legacies. Intergenerational relationships represent a unique opportunity for parents to pass on a heritage to their children, enabling them to grow a sense of belonging and at the same time to continue to build up their history.

The family is a privileged arena where intergenerational relationships find their most authentic expression. The fabric of family lines offers a firm reference framework for an individual’s sense of identity, ensuring duration to personal histories. It offers a relational context that welcomes new family members, placing them in a dynamic bundle of individuals and histories that support identity formation, in a dialectical interplay of identification and differentiation.

2) The family as relational context of memory transmission

Inside the family, all individuals define their identity in relation to previous generations (those calling them to life), the present ones (those they share their life with), and the future ones (to whom they give life). This intergenerational exchange plays important educational roles: it fosters a sense of belonging and identification, promotes dialog, and guarantees the passing down of family traditions.

With the passing of generations, the past, present and future dimensions are joined together through the sharing of what has been constructed (heritage) and the introduction of new horizons (a life project). In this perspective, the development of a family memory offers a unique opportunity to become aware of one’s history, but also to understand the present and shape the future.

As A. MacIntyre aptly argues, the family is a “narrative unit of life”. In it, every single member can find the meaning of their acts, decisions, and behaviors, as if it were a narrative plot that keeps together and explains the experiences of all characters, by means of a binding force made of ethics and sense of identity.

It would be mistaken, however, to think that memory transmission always takes place in a linear and explicit fashion. In fact, each subject’s ethical orientations result from the—often implicit—interpretation of the values, attitudes, behaviors and experiences cultivated within the family. They develop in ways that often elude conscious appraisal: to a certain extent, they could be defined in terms of latencies that rest on very deep emotional nuclei.

Memory transmission in a family is imbued with experiences that are “not thought”, not elaborated, but that significantly influence the individuals’ ethical reference points. The events making up a family history and their affective connotations represent not only an important emotional heritage, but also a moral one as, in a sense, they pass down a sort of theory of life, a body of principles that orient it.

Thus the history of a family takes on the traits of a symbolic reference framework that, though implicit, is not to be assumed passively or a-critically. It is thus fundamental to devise parenting initiatives where family legacies become the object of conscious processing. Moreover, since the function of family memory is not to preserve but to re-interpret, such initiatives have to emphasize reflective approaches. In short, family cultures cannot be addressed superficially.

To be sure, belonging to a family means hosting a past made of traditions, models, and ethical values. This past, however, needs to be processed actively, so that family traditions can become a resource for the present, and not a burden. As observed by H. Arendt, all human beings starting their life journey bring with themselves novelty as long as they are allowed to introduce changes. In other words, though belonging to a family, everyone is committed to generating their own history, by virtue of their uniqueness.

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The transmission of family memory is thus a life-giving process that also takes place through departures from the inherited models. For family heritage to fully express its transformative power, it is essential that the transmission process be empowering, not stifling, thus stimulating each individual’s ontological uniqueness, their hermeneutic potential, and their agency with respect to life projects.

In this dimension of dialog and reciprocal acknowledgment, the key is to share meanings. The legacy of previous generations is passed down to the new ones in form of family heritage to draw on (not to be understood solely in economic terms but also from an ethical perspective). This heritage, however, is not simply received but rather responsibly assimilated, with a mind open to transformation.

In sum, the commitment to building bridges across generations has to take into account the need for patterns of meaning capable of highlighting common threads across different ages and histories, despite the specificities of each interpreting approach. All this requires an ongoing hermeneutic process on the part of all those involved, i.e. those who pass the heritage down to the new generations, and those who receive it. In this way, the family becomes a space of intergenerational dialog, dense with affection and meaning, sharing and introspection.

Family ties, built on identification as well as differentiation, become a fruitful opportunity to penetrate life paths and to understand how different generations respond to life’s challenges, to the inevitable transitions characterizing everybody’s life cycle, and to the deep questions that emanate from our condition of men and women, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, grandmothers and grandfathers, and so on.

3) Family transitions and new intergenerational dynamics

From an educational philosophy perspective, identifying ways of reshaping intergenerational dialog inside the family is crucial. Personal identity cannot be defined in isolation from the subject’s roots and affiliation. The educational challenge is that of restoring dynamism in intergenerational dialog, investing on relationship building and the sharing of stories and narratives, with a view to transmitting a life-giving heritage and establishing shared ethical values within the family. All theoretical statements and postulations however need to be related to familial and intergenerational realities as they appear in concrete socio-cultural contexts.

A thorough review of family relations in contemporary society is beyond the scope of the present work. For the sake of argument, however, it is important to briefly touch upon some trends that have been highlighted in recent sociological studies. Particularly worth mentioning among these is the weakening of intergenerational relationships. The generational context that once used to frame the arrival of a child appears to have lost its original supportive power, leaving new parents more isolated and alone in their parenting role.

A number of scholars share the view that this state of affairs, together with most couples’ attachment weakening over time, can be identified as the reason behind a growing tendency towards exclusive, excessively sentimental parent-child relations in the family. Since being part of a family context is a multifaceted experience, where manifold relations interlace

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diachronically and synchronically, it is unwise to reduce the parenting role to the exclusive bond between father/mother and child. Family relations are best understood as extended bonds: they require interaction not only with our closest loved ones, who share our everyday life, but also with family members belonging to past generations.

The brief considerations above point to the educational need to reinvigorate the generative power intrinsic to intergenerational relations, starting from a thorough understanding of the forms they take in contemporary families and devising appropriate educational supports to help them express their formative and identity-making potential to the fullest. This also calls for an in-depth analysis of the new stresses and strains impacting on family bonds, as they often generate unknown ways of passing down family legacies.

In sum, it is important to gain insights into the wide phenomenology of today's intergenerational exchanges within the family and their symbolic contours, with a view to designing adequate strategies for the sharing of knowledge, practices, values, and world representations, which taken together form a unique cultural heritage for all family members.

In order to explore the role of family heritage across the whole of a family life cycle, we can focus on the identity and relational dynamics that come into being during a crucial phase that repeats itself across generations, i.e. the transition to parenthood and thus the arrival of a new family member. To be sure, this event marks a critical and totalizing moment for the couple. At the same time, it gets inscribed in a horizon of generativity that transcends single individuals, as it belongs to a wider narration. The gift of life takes form within a history: it is given to the new parents, who in turn received it from their own parents, who had it from their own parents in their turn, on and on backwards in time. In this chain of life transmission, what is passed on from generation to generation is not only the gift of life in itself but also a wider heritage whose symbolism is extremely rich yet often tacit.

The transition to parenthood has deep existential meaning for the individual. At the same time, it involves as deep a restructuring of one’s affiliation. The new parents are thus confronted not only with implicit, yet powerful, processes of identification with their families of origin, but also with a family heritage that they have to make their own and renovate. In other words, mothers and fathers face the challenge of shaping a new “us”, which features traits of continuity with, as well as differentiation from, the respective families.

Being able to gauge these complex identity issues related to parenthood and the multilayered processes of coming to terms with family legacies, acknowledging one’s roots, and distancing from internalized models represents a fundamental pursuit of educational research. All this necessitates occasions to investigate the phenomenology of family life.

4) Transition to parenthood and family heritage: research perspectives
Investigating the diversity of intergenerational relations within the family as well as the building of a sense of family across generations requires a situated approach. A particularly appropriate methodology to these ends is the narrative approach, which allows the researcher to work on stories and with histories.

It must be pointed out that preferring a method over another also involves precise epistemological choices. In our case, narration is understood as a heuristic as well as reflective tool that triggers two fundamental processes:

- bringing to the surface the meanings of family events: through reflection, parents can reexamine the significant phases of family transitions, thus processing those surplus meanings that, when personally experiencing the events, they could not work out. In particular during the transition to parenthood, the retrospective analysis of events can create the conditions to gain deeper insights into the intense emotional strains that the generative experience put on new fathers and mothers.

- valuing relations: narratives highlight the importance of our relations with people and make us gratefully aware of the heritage passed down to us. Helping individuals establish their place in relation to one or more specific stories, i.e. supporting them in the discovery of the traces that other people have left in their lives, has a major educational as well as ethical import.

Thanks to the qualitative research work carried out over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to accompany parents through the early phases of parenting. This allowed me to explore how individuals taking their first steps in the process of building their own identity as fathers and mothers deal with family legacies, reflect on familial histories and process them in a more conscious way, thus better understanding the web of relations underpinning them.

For those who are preparing for parenthood, dealing with one’s family past is never mere information retrieval but rather a process of evoking a tightly interwoven fabric of feelings, faces, and events, i.e. a real story. This story is often neglected and unsaid. Our hectic daily routines, our exclusive focus on the here and now due to increasingly pressing professional and personal responsibilities do not allow us to open our minds to the past and to memory. In this light, it is essential to create adequate conditions for fathers and mothers to access and process that universe of values and affection they come from.

Especially in the early stages, the parenting role is often reduced to practical infant care. Yet in this crucial phase, where momentous identity transitions take place, new parents need time to pause and engage in a hermeneutic process.

This calls for methodological tools that activate memories, in all their semantic complexity. In the research project mentioned above, I used particularly symbolic and evocative tools assumed to help parents in the representation of family legacies and intergenerational bonds. These were:

- A family heritage diary, focused on the three main relational dimensions underpinning parenthood, i.e. couple relationship, parent-child relationship, intergenerational bonds. The narrative approach is central to diary writing, as it raises awareness of the deepest relational dynamics involved in the transition to parenthood. Complementary to narration is an ample resort to photographs as a springboard for recollection of events and emotions that can be processed reflectively, in order to bring to the surface symbols and latent representations. Diaries are written not only during parenting courses but also at home, to allow parents to carve some time out of their daily schedules and reflect on their history.

- A family tree, to raise a sense of lineage through the graphic representation of generational lines (great grandparents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, children,

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grandchildren, etc.), where each subject takes a specific place within the relational system spanning over time. From a symbolic point of view, the family tree also highlights the relational pattern underpinning the family: every node of the tree connects in ascending, descending and transversal order with other nodes. Further, this pattern also favors a reflection on the quality and typology of intergenerational bonds, highlighting aspects of continuity and discontinuity, cohesion and departure.

The family memories elicited through these tools are not to be intended as comprehensive, but just as the first steps of a hermeneutic process that casts a light on the complex identity issues emerging when genders and generations come together\textsuperscript{18}.

5) Parenthood, memory need, reflection

The analysis of the parents’ diaries showed that the families of origin are constantly referred to, though often unconsciously, in the processing of one’s ethical values. Though with a fresh and modernizing approach, the new parents acknowledge—through recollection—the existence of a family heritage made of rituals, rules, traditions, caretaking practices, and so on. Some scholars have termed this “the tent of values”, a safe place where family members can share beliefs, split responsibilities, and feel a sense of ethical belonging\textsuperscript{19}.

Reflective devices are thus essential to the surfacing of those nodes that connect past, present and future, giving voice to a family history that spans across time, generation after generation. The sense of belonging and the acknowledgement of one’s gifts and debt emerging from reflective practices provide the new parents with a sort of anchor. Retrospection and the discovery of one’s roots build a sense of continuity that is not limited to a mere replication of lived scripts but becomes an ongoing, dynamic exploration\textsuperscript{20}.

A. Muxel reminds us that “rather than a link between past and present, family heritage is the present dimension of the past, guardian of childhood memories, and faithful servant of today’s wishes, interests, claims and questions”\textsuperscript{21}. For new parents, it can thus represent an identity-defining resource that sets their lives in relation to a wider family history, despite the inevitable specificity and uniqueness of the family that they have just generated. The empirical studies carried out by Muxel offer valuable insights into the kind of connection linking individuals to their family memory and into the different identity levels affected by intergenerational legacies.

The mechanisms by which family memory is developed, internalized, and recollected are mainly three: reviviscence, transmission, and reflection\textsuperscript{22}.

\textsuperscript{18} G. Gusdorff, Mémoire et personne, PUF, Paris, 1951.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ivi, p. 39.
Function | Narrativ emodes | Discourse | Time’s roles | Time’s nature | Oblivion’s roles
---|---|---|---|---|---
Reviviscence | I | Subjective | Relive one’s past | Extra-temporal | Preservation tool
Transmission | We | Normative | Join a collective history | Collective, historical | Acceptance of novelty
Reflection | Self | Objectifying | Process one’s past in order to project oneself into the future | Retrospective | Commitment to truth

Reviviscence is the act of bringing past experiences and events to the surface with a focus on affection. In a way, it refers to the intimacy of memories. Recollection, in this case, occurs in a sort of atemporal dimension, what Proust refers to in terms of involuntary memory. It is an inner, intimate form of recollection, that searches time for eternal moments and events. Oblivion plays a central protecting role in this process, as it erases old wounds that inhibit one’s progression in life.

Transmission, on the other hand, meets the individuals’ need to (re)discover the genealogical bonds that join them to other family members. It leads to the revelation of a “we” that delineates one’s sense of belonging as well as one’s identity. Here oblivion guarantees the process of differentiation, i.e. the negotiation and personalization of one’s family values, which prevent transmission from being reduced to mere replication.

Finally, the third dimension of family memory, i.e. reflection, is the most analytical and evaluative of the set. It involves analyzing one’s family overall experience as a basis for one’s projection into the future. Acknowledging one’s family past becomes, in this case, an opportunity to step back, recapitulate, recognize one’s family heritage and plan one’s future. Oblivion here supports one’s quest for a salutary distance and for truth.

In my studies with the group of parents mentioned above, this threefold approach to family memory highlighted the meanings that are generated when memories are passed down from generation to generation as well as the processes that underpin the development of parental identity.

a) Reviviscence
Rather than as a nostalgic process, parents experience the recollection of family memories as an opportunity to better understand their personal history, through the lenses of a past that lingers in the present. In the process, their identity seems to acquire additional emotional and existential depths. Their parenting and relational styles as well as the values they draw on in their present dimension become saturated with memories.

Having access to a time and a place to process the past through memory telling enables parents to restructure their story, linking the events into a coherent and personally meaningful web. Discovering their own family’s particular style of being a family, fathers and mothers can strengthen their own identity, embedding their transition to parenthood and their own parenting role in a wider context.

The affective dimension of reviviscence emerges clearly in the parents’ discourse, especially when particularly intimate family scenes are brought to the surface, as shown in the following quote: “When I was working on my family tree, some memorable moments spent with uncle G. came to mind. He was my dear uncle, who took me to work with him in summer. How can I ever forget the utter joy of waking up at six in the morning to go to the market to get his
fruits and vegetables stall ready? For me, he has been a real life mentor, he taught me the beauty of the relationship with people”.

b) Transmission
The parents’ written and oral narratives showed a degree of intergenerational convergence that had never been perceived before then, when distance and indifference seemed to prevail. In the transition to parenthood, fathers and mothers discover a hitherto implicit sense of loyalty to their family heritage, as expressed in this quote: “Now that I’m a father, I know I want to live important life moments as a unique opportunity to be a family, as it used to be for my own family.” This continuity is not a mere replication of the same patterns of behavior, but rather the acknowledgement of a distinctive family style, of a rich heritage made of relational styles, of a body of meaning-making rules. These rules do show a path to follow, yet they prompt a process of personal reinterpretation at the same time. The new parents thus become protagonists of a new family model, as shown in the following excerpt: “I treasure all the values I’ve been taught but since my daughter was born, I’ve found my own ways to live by them”.

c) Reflection
As mentioned above, the making of a family heritage requires interpretative and creative skills. It cannot freeze the past, because traditions need to push the individual forward, towards the future. This heritage is not a passive internalization, but rather a free interpretation, of the values from the past, in keeping with the individual’s tension towards the new.

In our studies, this interpretative and creative process—absolutely vital to the expression of one’s ontological uniqueness—appeared to be the most fragile aspect of memory making. In their reflections, parents seemed only slightly aware of the intrinsic dialectic nature of intergenerational contact. The inevitable uncertainty (and novelty) involved in the task of personalizing the heritage received from one’s own family is not verbalized spontaneously. Yet, the originality of the individual cannot emerge without a process of distancing from one’s identity models.

This weakness points to the need to support parents in the process of coming to terms with intergenerational differences and with the new dimension that accompanies every next generation. This may well involve helping parents break with their past. A narrative tool as those discussed above can serve this function, as it raises the subject’s awareness of both continuity and discontinuity. Autobiographical memory supports processes of change against a background of deep attachment to one’s history. The heritage of the past is not compromised if an heir interprets it freely and in ways suitable to his/her own context. A mother in our study writes: “My parents taught me absolutely core values: resistance to difficulties, work ethic, responsibility, and discernment. Today I think I’ve found my own way to live those values, in terms of perseverance and determination, honesty and justice, to which I’ve added my own sensitivity”.

Far from being a mere body of undisputable ethical rules and values, one’s family heritage has to be understood also as a difficult though fruitful mediation between family past and individual conscience. Only in this way can the past inherited through the family heritage be really tangible. It may be uncomfortable but it is close and vital. The development of one’s personal identity is favored by the acknowledgment of difference and novelty. Elements of departure and discontinuity, though embedded in one’s family heritage, let the novum in and reveal the innovatory potential of family heritage. Through the dialectic of identification and
differentiation, in the form of P. Ricœur’s *idem-ipse*\(^{23}\), each generation builds its own profile within the lineage.

**6) Parents’ memory as “dialog of memories”**

The examination of one’s own family history through the threefold approach of reviviscence, transmission, and reflection is something that fathers and mothers do individually, gaining greater awareness of intergenerational relations in their own family line. If we conceived of this recollection process as a solipsistic one, however, we would lose sight of the fact that the development of parental identity is not only an individual pursuit but rather a couple event. In this light, it is essential to present this process as fundamentally a co-participation of husband and wife, in which each single parent critically explores his/her own family heritage against the backdrop of the one received by his/her spouse. On a biographical and historical level, parenthood is a dialog of differences that, rather than developing into an undifferentiated whole, generates a relation of different existential paths.

If on the one hand we have to acknowledge the original difference of the two members of the couple, on the other it is essential to emphasize the dynamic process of synthesis they are expected to initiate when they become an “us”. Father and mother jointly rewrite their history, mediating what they have received with their uniqueness, both singular and dual\(^{24}\).

The content analysis of the parents’ diaries and audio transcriptions revealed a large variation in the patterns of synthesis between past histories and future expectations. Among these are situations of complex intergenerational dialog, considerable imbalance in the recollection processes in favor of one family of origin to the detriment of the other, scant distancing alongside excessive idealization, or cases of enthusiastic attachment to one’s roots alongside disapproving attitudes and division.

The reflective work carried out with parents, intended as co-participation, points to the need of designing parenting programs that offer an opportunity to openly and confidently share biographical differences. Although this focus on one’s past experiences, families of origin, and reciprocal representations may generate initial anxiety, it can develop into a precious unifying tool that supports one’s commitment to the pursuit of a shared project.

When parents embrace this dialogic approach, the contact between the respective family histories can foster reciprocal understanding and involvement in the transmission of family legacies to the new generation, as shown here: “My wife and I wish that our respective families would go on teaching us the importance of family unity and that our son A. would always feel like spending time in the family, as is still the case with us, to experience that sense of connection and respect that we believe is a fundamental value to pass down to the generations to come.

**7) Conclusive remarks**

The foregoing revolves around the contention that the family constitutes a fundamental relational environment fostering the transmission of legacies and the development of identities. Being part of a family history gives the individual a sense of connectedness as well as reference points that, although bound to be critically assessed and personalized, still offer precious guidelines.

Through a guided exploration of their families’ past, parents can reflect on the complex network of past and present relations underpinning their single identities. By processing this


heritage, new generations can discover a precious body of models, rules, and values to draw on, feeling that they do not have to start from scratch building their own.

Increasingly weak patterns of belonging and fragile intergenerational ties certainly affect family relations and point to the need for parenting support systems that emphasize the intrinsic value of intergenerational dialog, especially in that crucial phase of an individual’s life cycle that is the transition to parenthood.

The procreating experience represents a turning point, which transforms the identity, integrating it with new tasks and functions. Fathers and mothers experience a kind of crisis that requires to find a new balance, creating a link between past and future. To start this process of integration between the identity profiles of the past and new scenarios of the future, it is crucial that parents can approach in a reflexive manner the plot of family generations.

If fathers and mothers are able to give a broader sense to the birth of a child, they have the opportunity to place the experience of giving birth in a wider horizon. Passing through time and retracing the chain of transmission of life, it is possible to arrive at a symbolic overcoming of the narrow confines in which parenthood is often enclosed. Becoming parents is an experience that goes beyond the single story of a father and a mother, because it is part of a richer family history: a story that allows to feel connected with different generations and to recognize the symbolic heritage that is handed down over time.

Storytelling practices can provide new fathers and mothers with an “affective armor” made of values and reference points from the past that will help them face life’s challenges. A narrative paradigm is essential in order to expand the potential of a hermeneutic approach to the past. Narrative approach allows to stay in the phenomenology of relations, because it offers a space for thought and memory; and then it allows to gather family biography and to question the inheritances.

The solicitation of memory, through narrative tools, is a clear methodological choice, consistent with the objective of revealing the dynamic processes of identity formation, but also the value of the past and the strength of the bonds between generations. The past is a fundamental guiding principle in child-rearing across generations and can be fruitfully focused on in parenting programs, through self-reflective activities and through the sharing of family autobiographies.

The experience of research conducted with parents, in fact, has given rise to the need to recognize the uniqueness of their family history, but also the need to compare their stories with those of other parents. By pooling experiences and feelings, many parents have discovered the beauty of sharing stories and come out of isolation. A large number of families, in fact, today suffer from the lack of an informal supporting network. Parents support must be implemented also through the proposal of opportunities to socialize, to talk with other parents, to share the legacy receipts, to compare family traditions: in this way it is possible to get out of a widespread privatization of family ties, through a sharing of family memories.

It is in light of these considerations that we propose a model of parenting education, not only in pairs but also in group, structured around the critical retrieval and examination of a family memory.

The comparison with other stories can break free from excessive concentration on own family dynamics. This decentralization helps parents to overcome the excessive self-reference, which often prevents to activate authentic reflective processes. The hermeneutic work done on the family legacy, through the comparison with other eyes, can be enriched by new perspectives.

In a pedagogical perspective and with reference to this subject of family inheritance, I consider important to conclude with a reflection on the symbolic bond that connects inheritance with responsibilities, receiving with giving. When designing training programs aiming to interrogate family history and get the bond which links generations, it is restrictive only analyzing the processes of reception, that is “what we have received from our predecessors”. In a pedagogical perspective it is important to make people aware of the fact that family memory is not only a gift but also a commitment.

Further, fostering a reflective approach to intergenerational legacies enables new parents to reappraise their family history in terms of J.T. Godbout’s threefold gift system of giving, receiving, reciprocating. These three steps are central to a family memory as well, a memory saturated with gratitude, innovation, and responsibility.

Parenting programs need to place special emphasis on the latter aspect, responsibility, to help parents transform memory into moral obligation, namely into a committed ethos towards all that exists, as postulated by R. Guardini in his “pedagogy of service” and by H. Jonas in his “responsibility principle”. The new parents’ commitment to preserving and renovating their family heritage needs to be accompanied by a responsible approach to their roots, so that the legacies passed down by past generations are not confined to the sole affective dimension but assume the form of ethical responsibility. In this perspective, addressing one’s past means both searching answers to present needs and taking on the symbolic responsibility to give voice to a history to which we are all deeply indebted.

Dressed in borrowed robes of economics: who and what should schools serve?

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If public schools should serve the economy, which economy should they serve? The essay begins by criticizing the claim (by highlighting the contradictions of education and business’s exploitation meme), but then digs deeper into the subtler characteristics of thriving human economies and how they are best complemented and served by education. An alternative economic structure is then described, based more on local cooperation with natural and communal needs and formative patterns. Ultimately, the place of cultural education in economics will be considered, especially in terms of public education’s responsibility for promoting a sustainable eco-centric economics. The critique is theoretically supported by Wendell Berry, E.F. Schumacher, Matthew Crawford, and such keen economic accountants as Henry David Thoreau, William Shakespeare, and Jane Austen.

1. Introduction

"Contemporaneity, in the sense of being up with the times, is of no value. Wakefulness to experience -- as well as to instruction and example -- is another matter. But what we call the modern world is not necessarily, and not often, the real world, and there is no virtue in being up-to-date in it. It is a false world based upon economies and values and desires that are fantastical -- a world in which millions of people have lost any idea of the materials, the disciplines, the restraints, and the work necessary to support human life, and thus have become dangerous to their own lives and to the possibility of life. The job now is to get back to that perennial and substantial world in which we really do live, in which the foundations of our life will be visible to us, and in which we can accept our responsibilities again within the conditions of necessity and mystery. In that world all wakeful and responsible people, dead, living, and unborn are contemporaries. And that is the only contemporaneity worth having" (Wendell Berry, Standing, 165). [Emphasis added]

Business is not good. As the US and world economies struggle to revive from "the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression," it is vital to consider what kind of economy is best. Should "casino capitalism" return to full vigor, with its extractions, extortions, booms and busts and rewards handed to the few at the expense of the many? Does it benefit rural areas, ecosystems, and human cultures in general to return to business as usual? The economic crisis has spurred public and private institutions (the distinctions increasingly difficult to discern) to kick start economic growth. But unless this "crisis" is seized as an opportunity to reconsider long-held economic assumptions, returning to business as usual will likely perpetuate the system’s pathologies.

In this jittery and vertiginous age of firehose-force information and the warp and wobble of a globalizing economy, it seems rebellious and radical to deliberate, to dive beneath the swift and relentless currents to examine bedrock beliefs. But humans must do so to steady themselves in the stream to establish something more sustainable. Global capitalism and its handmaiden digital technology are powerful and coercive forces to be reckoned with. Unchecked, they can overwhelm structures most conducive to human and more-than-human flourishing. They are memes requiring deeper examination. Their misfit in public education discourse and action indicates the fraudulence when it comes to serving human and more-than-human economies.
Business is an exploitive meme (aided and abetted by digital technology) and it has no business in human and more-than-human service economies. Because of its hegemony, we who work in those professions -- especially in education -- are expected to abandon humanistic traditions and obediently adapt to the urgent, singular concern of preparing students to become "college or career ready." We must not, for instance, consider the state of our communities and the republic or whether our children are prepared to perpetuate them. We must give no thought to the condition of the public mind, whether it is more or less capable of deliberating and choosing well among the vagaries and vicissitudes of a common existence. We must care not about how people are cared for (in anything but the most venal terms) or whether the essential conditions for promoting human and more-than-human flourishing are cultivated and maintained. Business is the new master and it has imposed templates and vocabularies for educators and taxpayers. Now we must think of children as clients or customers (or is it as products?). Children must learn to sell themselves and we teachers must aid the sale by improving the product price. We must forget our principles and traditions in education and speak the language used in an occupied territory.

But now is a very good time to slow down to investigate what an economic education can accounts for – especially when the present economy’s percussive booms and busts are still reverberating. While many of the traditional criticisms of exploitive economics have merit, they are quite well known and do not need to be repeated. A different tack is needed, one that sets a better foundation for more productive human economies. Wendell Berry’s quotation above describes well this new tack: “The job now is to get back to that perennial and substantial world in which we really do live, in which the foundations of our life will be visible to us, and in which we can accept our responsibilities again within the conditions of necessity and mystery.” But if public education is expected to grow a newer, more vigorous economy and to soothe anxieties about the future, then investigating the real needs of the invisible order of the human economy can rectify many damaging habits.¹ A good place to begin is by examining some deeper definitions of economics and then by investigating the role public schools might fill in an authentic economic education.

2. Three Economies
   In an essay entitled, “Two Economies,” Wendell Berry argues that the cause of the “modern ruination of farmland” and communities is an industrial economy that fails to comprehend “the great economy,” that larger wheel within which the little (industrial) economy must turn (Home 54). Instead of Ezekiel’s wheels turning one inside the other, Berry argues that industrial economy produces William Blake’s “wheels tyrannic,” gears grinding against one another: the human economy against the Great Economy. Berry is persuasive about these two economies, about the ways that “Ezekiels” harmonize and nurture and “tyrannics” exploit, disintegrate, and degrade. But there is yet another wheel inside the “little economy,” another value exchange undergirding human-made material exchanges. It is the real human economy and it supplies the conditions needed most for humans to flourish. It is hinted at by Berry when he questions the validity of one of the principal shibboleths of the exploitive economy: competition.

¹ This concept of an invisible order, of nature’s integrated whole and the benefit of cooperation with it, comes from Alexander Pope’s poem, “Epistle IV, To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington,” an excerpt of which says:
   Still follow sense, of ev'ry art the soul,
   Parts answ'ring parts shall slide into a whole,
   Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
   Start ev'n from difficulty, strike from chance;
   Nature shall join you; time shall make it grow
   A work to wonder at perhaps a Stowe
Can a university, or a nation, afford this exclusive rule of competition, this purely economic economy? The great fault of this approach to things is that it is so drastically reductive; it does not permit us to live and work as human beings, as the best of our inheritance defines us. Rats and roaches live by competition under the law of supply and demand; it is the privilege of human beings to live under the laws of justice and mercy. It is impossible not to notice how little the proponents of the ideal of competition have to say about honesty, which is the fundamental economic virtue, and how very little they have to say about community, compassion, and mutual help. Thus if we are sane, we do not dismiss or abandon our infant children or our aged parents because they are too young or too old to work. For human beings, affection is the ultimate motive, because the force that powers us, as Ruskin [] said, is not 'steam, magnetism, or gravitation,' but "a Soul" (What Matters, 127-8). [Emphasis added]

The ruination is evident throughout the states, especially in the "rust belt" states I grew up in, and in the rural areas around the country long-since passed over when its extraction was completed by professional vandals. But human economies demand more, because they are peopled by souls.

I present two encounters, one real and one fictional, to illustrate how these two different human economies can function. The first was related to me a few years ago by my student, Jennifer. Jennifer, like most of the working class students in this state college has worked many menial retail jobs in her young life. But she felt especially exploited, distressed, and demoralized by her job at a pet store, in spite of her love for both people and animals (a quality of the true human economy), and she felt hampered by store policies and practices that contradicted her values. The employees at the store worked on commission, but they only received it for selling dogs. Consequently, the employees only cared about the dogs (and only then as product, a chance to make money) and they left the care of the other animals to Jennifer, who cared personally and ethically about and for all of the animals. So, while the other employees were busy getting dollars for dogs, they left the care of the other animals to Jennifer.

Two economies were grinding against each other at the pet store. The reward system in the material economy focused on selling as many dogs as possible, which exploited the True Human Economy (THE). In practice, employees were coerced into abandoning care for animals and human relations in order to push dogs on customers, whether or not the customers wanted them. Similarly the pet store training induces employees to exploit every conceivable trait cultivated from the THE of goodwill, -- that is, kindness, congeniality, generosity, reciprocity, and so forth -- in order to make the sale. We know how guilty we can feel (and a little outraged) when a salesperson is nice to us. Even if we feel coerced or "played," some part of us feels obliged to reciprocate with kindness and generosity. The salesperson's smile and kind manner is exploiting the THE to make the sale. We know it and our souls resent it. The customer who ducks her head to avoid making eye contact knows this and is really ducking a charge on her account. We are now quite a distance from what suits the THE, where real needs are met by both parties who share in producing and maintaining the commonwealth. The THE of care and nurturance, the one that contains the values humans treasure most (after all, don't humans prefer to be in like and in love?), is plundered for the benefit of higher ups, who bear no social expense.

The common warning in sales is "Buyer, beware," which means don't trust the seller. And yet trust is the basis of the most fruitful experiences in the THE. When these two economies

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2 Technically this is a malapropism, since caring only about profit is properly known as greed.
3 See Crawford, Shop Class as Soul Craft.
meet, as they often do, an *Ezekiel-like* material economy would not overwrite human relations between buyer and seller; it would not subvert the potential between two strangers to get to know one another, to appreciate the other’s perspective or conditions, to learn from one another, to potentially form communal bonds, or to enjoy one another’s company. It would seek to discover if there is a mutual need that can be satisfied by a product or service and on that basis would the material economy be employed. Otherwise, it would not and must not dictate the terms of relations between the two. Although Wendell Berry was speaking of modern poetry, his argument is practically applied here: “The use of life to perfect work is an evil of the specialized intellect. It makes of the most humane of human disciplines an exploitation industry” (Standing, 300).

The clash of the two economies and the way the human economy is distorted, exploited, or subverted is relatively easy to notice in the retail setting. It is subtler, but no less present — and much more dangerous — within families and larger cultural constructions themselves. The Bronte sisters, Jane Austen, Tolstoy, Dickens, Hugo, and other famous authors of social relations in the 19th century describe very well the strain on human relations caused by gender and class divisions, inheritance practices, and long-standing social prejudices. A tradition where only men of a certain social standing may inherit land and wealth triggers not love, appreciation, kindness and generosity, but rather a social and material crisis, which leads to suspicion, doubt, distrust, envy, rivalry, and “pride and prejudice.” The family persists under false premises; members are raised to collect and maintain wealth and reputation. The children are not protected and enabled as either children or forthcoming adults. They are raised to be human but to inherit, to carry the family name and reputation, and to play their part in perpetuating the economic *corporation* the family has become, all of which subverts the THE based on intimacy, affection, care, and concern.4 With money, status, and reputation as primary objectives, competition, envy, pride, and greed (three of the famous seven deadly sins) spark acrimony, not harmony and love. These toxic social elements are key indicators of a troubled human economy, one that does not lead to flourishing. The children are like the canaries in the bad mine.

While the authors listed above have described these social crises well, the best fictional example comes from Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. Lear ignites the social tragedy in his first long speech, thereby grinding the two human economies against each other. He attempts to give the largest portion of his kingdom to the daughter who professes the greatest love for him. Lear says:

> ....Tell me, my daughters  
> (Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
> Interest of territory, cares of state),  
> [And thus, Lear wishes to rid himself of all responsibility while retaining all privileges, which is a key troublemaker in social history: the maintenance of power and authority without responsibility.]  
> Which of you shall we say doth love us most,  
> That we our largest bounty may extend  
> Where nature doth with merit challenge? Goneril,  
> Eldest-born, speak first. (I.i.48-54)

Lear misunderstands the two human economies and thereby mangles both. His extortion forces deceit and the potential moral prostitution of his daughters; he is straining the human economy and its human-hearted scales.

4 Of course the major strain on this human economy comes from the enforced belief in a domination hierarchy, with one human ruling all others.
GONERIL.
Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter,
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty,
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;
As much as child e’er lov’d, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable:
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.  (I.i.55-61)

... and of his second daughter:

REGAN.
I am made of that self mettle as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short, that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness’ love.  (I.i.69-76)

The sisters’ outsized language indicates the perversion. Theirs is hyperbole, extracting language from the stratosphere (Goneril: “Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty,” and Reagan: “I profess myself an enemy to all other joys, which the most precious square of sense possesses.”). The language dehumanizes, because it exceeds human carrying capacities and it severs principle and action. But Cordelia refuses to grind the two economies. She speaks from within the natural proportion of the human economy (if perhaps a little too far, from a “a tardiness in [her] nature”). [With THE language indicated in italics]

... LEAR.
A third more opulent than your sisters’? Speak.
CORDELIA.
Nothing, my lord.
LEAR.
Nothing?
CORDELIA.
Nothing.
LEAR.
Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.
CORDELIA.
Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
According to my bond, no more nor less. [Emphasis added]
LEAR. [pushing the perversion]
How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,
Lest you may mar your fortunes.
CORDELIA.
[Indicating how the THE accounting is kept and reminding her father how he will be accounted for]
Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov’d me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.

*Why have my sisters husbands, if they say*

They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.  (I.i.86-103)

The humane daughter, Cordelia, speaks from the Tao, which is to say that there is nothing to be said; the human order is maintained (in her mind and speech, at least). She has lived and continues to live in the THE with its properly human-scaled values: a daughter to her father; and in time, a wife to her husband and a mother to her children; as above, so below. Cordelia’s speech reinforces the dear economy against Lear’s violations, serving to remind him of his rightful human place as her father, not her idol. But Lear feels spurned, which excites his wrath.

Lear:
...The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite,

[Which is Lear’s hypocrisy here, and it’s what power often does: mistakes what power can do, misunderstands what is at play -- what is available, possible, and practicable when it is in charge.  Money and power are like King Midas or Caliban.  They fumble and cheapen what they touch when they insist on dominating the Great Economy or the THE.]

shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbor’d, pitied, and reliev’d,
As thou my sometime daughter.  (I.i.116-119)

So Lear renounces his and Cordelia’s relationship and their membership in the THE and thus triggers the human cataclysm with a curse. That economy is redeemed, if too late – by a primary agent of the THE: forgiveness.

Shakespeare describes two other economic clashes in *King Lear*. Primogeniture’s warping effect is portrayed in Edmund’s plot against his father. Gloucester, reads a letter that Edmund, the bastard son, has forged to dupe his father into believing the author is Edgar, the legal and first son. In the letter “Edgar” offers to share half his fortune with Edmund if Edmund will aid him in murdering their father). Gloucester reads the letter aloud:

This policy and reverence of
age makes the world bitter to the best of our times;
*keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot
relish them.*  I begin to find an idle and fond bondage
in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as
it hath power, but as it is suffer’d.  (I.ii.47-52) [Emphasis mine].

Gloucester believes the treachery because his *heart* knows that there is injustice latent in this human economy. The bastardizing system can not acknowledge natural conditions and needs and does not apologize for their usurpation. Rather it forces natural merit into Procrustes’ bed, “a dull, stale tired bed” of human conceits. Later, the other economic clash appears in Edmund’s reckoning of the system that defines legitimacy. He contrasts the bloodless artificiality of custom with the “lusty stealth of nature” in his audacious soliloquy:

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5 Admittedly a modern audience could be excused for expecting to account for her personal needs in that economy, something separate from her relations to others.
Thou, Nature, art my goddess, to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us
With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition, and fierce quality,
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
Go to th’ creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got ‘tween asleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund
As to th’ legitimate. Fine word, “legitimate”!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th’ legitimate. I grow, I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!  (I.ii.1-22)

Stand up for bastards, indeed, for what is a bastard in a bastardized human economy? Though misguided, Edmund is pointing to a vital aspect of humanity that requires care and feeding, not pruning or strangling. Since we are humans with souls, we require certain conditions to develop and thrive, but not just individually, collectively. We need each other, in trust, love, and compassion. We need to encourage and support one another. We flourish in a distinct nurturing environment and we diminish in distrust, competition, fear, and scarcity. A good human economy turns Ezekiel-like inside both a good material economy and the great economy. The present economy and its meme are unworthy of public educational endowment, because of its ethos of exploitation, competition, and the perpetuation of fear and scarcity, and the advantage to a few at the expense of everyone and everything else. But the economy that promotes flourishing should be education’s masterpiece.

3. Economic Education

"Every true man, sir, who is a little above the level of the beasts and plants does not live for the sake of living, without knowing how to live; but he lives so as to give a meaning and a value of his own to life." Luigi Pirandello

"Our survival, our culture, and our civilization, if they are to be even worthy of survival, depend on our ability to supply to the feeling of reverence the arts necessary for its enactment (Berry, "Imagination," 68).

And what kind of economic education do we have in American schools? It is odd that since the 1970’s American school missions have hewed more and more toward career development and yet curricula ignore fundamental human questions about work, work life, and even basic economic systems and functions. Schools will train students to please future employers, but no education will occur on what it might means to sell one’s skills or to work for another, or to incur debt or to become part of an elaborated and specialized economic system. Graeber and Acemoglu have persuasively argued, for instance, that debt has been

6 IZ Quotes. Web. n.d.
a primary driver of human history, and yet debt escapes study. If schooling must prepare students for a servile economic future, then why doesn’t the curriculum study economics and what it means to be an “economic person?” Sir Albert Howard expresses this curious dereliction of authority more generally:

"Authority has abandoned the task of illuminating the laws of Nature, has forfeited the position of the friendly judge, scarcely now ventures even to adopt the tone of the earnest advocate: it has sunk to the inferior and petty work of photographing the corpse..." (81.)

It is unethical for public education to ignore fundamental economic questions about how to live sustainably, especially while also perpetuating unexamined assumptions from the exploitive economic meme: that schools should promote personal careerism at public expense; that anything and everything is for sale; that ethics is irrelevant; that the merits of exploitive economic systems should not be questioned or considered; and that negative effects are trivialized or swept off the books as “externalities?” In the thrall of the exploitive meme, schools prepare students to become cogs in the great global economic machine, where skills and talents as careerists are available to the highest bidder, regardless of the worth of the product or service, the costs to the environment, or the desires of the "employees," as humans before, during, and after work.

When science and mathematics are yoked to exploitive economics their reductionist and materialist aspects are also harnessed and exploited. They become subjects less to explore and understand the world and more to materialize, isolate, and control for corporate profit. Language arts shrinks to the calculable properties of business communication and a vague, subject-less “critical thinking.” Social studies, arts, music, foreign languages, health and other traditional subjects of a broad and rich curriculum must now elbow each other for a place at the shrinking table. And to do so, they must argue their worth by the standards of commerce and global competition. Thus, the great educational chance – to humanize through the humanities – is lost.

Deeper insight into the essentials of a proper education to serve the THE can be discovered by examining the role of work in human and economic development.

4. Work in Economic Education

[a poetic paraphrase of Foucault]
You do work
Work does you
Be ever careful
Of the work that you do

My mother- and father-in-law were born in Spain in the first two years after the Civil War. “Everyone was poor,” they will frequently recount. They all struggled and labored to repair a cracked and broken country. Setting aside the well-known controversies and brutalities about the Franco dictatorship, there was among the commoners an extraordinary camaraderie, an esprit de corps, due both to the common mission and the daunting conditions. Spaniards of that era are rightly proud of what their generation accomplished. But, now retired, they can’t stop working. No one I’ve met from their generation can. They know who they are and what they are about when they are working. And they rest anxiously.

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My in-laws’ generation twins the one from the Depression-era in the states. And both appear ancient and exotic by modern standards, where the escape from work by every conceivable technological or economic trick is default behavior. The delirious speed of the current, data-propelled economy that presses every matter into material for sale pushes careers off track. In this new exploitive economy, careers can no longer hold up to the dictionary definition as: “a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life” or “a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling” [Emphasis added] If taken seriously, the mercenary turn halts pursuit of a personal calling. The new call is the market’s, now emptied of content and dedicated to endless, flexible motion. Ancient myths warn that ignoring one’s calling – that “still small voice” – risks the wrath of the Fates, which promises debility. The soul’s decline is the result of being made an unwitting body of obedient motion to someone else’s exploitive scheme. A calling has no place in exploitive economics, except inasmuch as it can be exploited to suit the system. Still, a calling, a vocation has pride of place in human endeavors, because humans have souls.

Education should consider the role of work in human life. What are the consequences of doing or avoiding work? Is there such a thing as good work or bad work? What are the social or psychological consequences of forcing others to do the “dirty work” to gather one’s leisure? Are all labor-saving devices good? Thoreau considers the deeper metaphysics of work:

There is some of the same fitness in a man’s building his own house that there is in a bird’s building its own nest. Who knows but if men constructed their dwellings with their own hands, and provided food for themselves and families simply and honestly enough, the poetic faculty would be universally developed, as birds universally sing when they are so engaged? But alas! We do like cowbirds and cuckoos, which lay their eggs in nests which other birds have built, and cheer no traveller with their chattering and unmusical notes. Shall we forever resign the pleasure of construction to the carpenter? What does architecture amount to in the experience of the mass of men? (50-51).

The economist E. F. Schumacher complements Thoreau’s arguments. He claims that “right livelihood” in Buddhism gives work a prominent role in human development. Work properly develops humans in three ways: their faculties; overcome their ego-centeredness by joining others in a common task; and by bringing forth “the goods and services needed for a becoming existence” (54). By contrast, Thoreau describes the frequent meanness of common labor. He says,

Most men … are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market. He has no time to be anything but a machine” (6).

To Schumacher’s list I add two criteria for work in “right livelihood:” the first, (an amalgam of Berry and Thoreau) is to get closer to the essence and meaning of things; and the second (from Matthew Crawford) is to overcome narcissism by getting out of one’s own head to imagine from another’s perspective, be it animal, element, or machine.

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a Merriam Webster Dictionary.
According to Berry, Schumacher, Thoreau, and Crawford, work provides a unique opportunity for a primary and intimate engagement with the world. It is a practical, theory-testing thrust into the world of energies and elements beyond oneself, and therefore an essential subject in a proper economic education. It turns the child and the school outward, to service-learn in the various human and more-than-human communities. For example, students and teachers could study how wealth (which means the condition of well being) is best promoted, how means and ends are related and how know-how is an orphan without know-why. Science, math, and commerce can reduce, isolate, and manipulate, but humans as living beings with multiple memberships in multiple living systems, must understand compositions and integrations of systems and how life attracts life, one thing relating to another. While physics is important, it is meta-physics — those deeper, invisible orders that constitute vital economies — that sustain life and communities.

The humanities should aid understanding and appreciation of what makes us human and valuable on our own terms, at least as a counter-narrative to today’s fetish with the exploitive meme and its machinations. It is disturbing that an argument for the worth and dignity of humans is necessary. But to paraphrase Bertrand Russell, we need defenses against the meme’s seductive eloquence. And we are a forgetful species. We forget the intentions behind our inventions and schemes, and that forgetting leads to psychological, social or physical enslavement (a Pygmalion-like spell). We depend upon them — they have their purposes — but then we become too dependent upon them. We construct buildings to escape weather extremes, but then remain indoors when the weather is temperate. We invent religions, then we worship them and they claim our souls. An idea helps with a task and then it seizes control of our thoughts and feelings. We need a more conscious wealth checker.

So machines, mechanization, techniques, and technology must be studied as well, since they have been co-operatives in work throughout human history. With Schumacher’s criteria for mechanization we can ask of all four, do they enhance human skill and perspective or do they do the “essentially human part of the work,” and leave humans to serve the slave (55). This command-and-control workplace with servile workers is familiar to those who work in major retail franchises in the US. Every element is shaped, coded, ordered, and smoothed to maximize efficiency and profit and minimize worker discretion. The rigid system demands worker compliance. The worker is a functionary employed to operate pre-determined, top-down systems that incorporate her discrete skills, skills soon replaced when the system can replicate them. Management is equally implicated in control schemes. All managers have become de facto “data managers.” They are there to maintain the data-control systems holding it all in place. And their other job is to work on the workers’ attitudes, to facilitate conformity to the air-tight system. They also have very little professional discretion (after all, their management methods are part of corporate training and stem from the procedures manuals, with data assessments in place to ensure compliance); individual decision making is professionally risky). Little work remains outside these tightly prescribed “resource” management systems, and so, there are fewer opportunities and less flexibility to allow the development of talent, awareness, skill, expertise, or spontaneity, in short, to come to know yourself and the world as a full-fledged human being.

9 It makes sense, because we are busy serving our “indoor” schemes.
10 One of the best indications of how inhuman and anti-natural these systems are (be they work sites, schools, prisons) is how much effort is required to keep the people in line. And observe how the employees or students strive constantly to vitalize the stultifying environment, with humor, stories, relationships, even troubling romances, because they have souls.
11 From this perspective, work and its role in human development should be a central human rights concern. And metaphysically, we must wonder when Pygmalion-like considerations are applied: do our schemes and machines become graven images? Do they become ideas, orders, and implements that distract or derail the human soul’s rambunctious searches?
This "command and control" system is evident in public schools as well. It is logical, given that both institutions have come to share fundamental assumptions of top-down control (what Riane Eisler calls, a "domination hierarchy") and the necessity to control through standardization and to employ technical means to do it. Standardized testing, curriculum packages that disallow teacher discretion or local adaptation, constant and increasing administrative directives at the state and federal levels (usually appearing as unfunded mandates, made more hypocritical by the decreasing funding for anything other than special needs) reduce the likelihood of spontaneity, surprise, or even interest. Human relationships are increasingly controlled and prescribed by management systems, constructed from equal parts suspicion, greed, fear, and fashion. But the controllers need not consciously choose this; it's in the water. Under the influence of the exploitive meme, if your instruments promise greater control, you must want them. In one sense, students' experiences in command-and-control schools are good behavioral training for work in command-and-control businesses. But there are too many human considerations left out. How, for instance, can humans cultivate the THE in these industrial segregation systems?

5. Conclusion
Jennifer in the pet store and the tragedy in King Lear, indicate that economics must be understood in a much broader and more substantive and integrated context, as both a system of value exchanges and one responsible for promoting well being. Once understood as such, the humanities, arts, and sciences have a much more dignified and rightful place in an economic education. They need not be bastardized or “dressed in borrowed robes” of venality. Hayden Carruth says,

How shall our children live in a world from which first the spirit, then history, and finally nature have fled, leaving only the mindless mechanics of process and chance: Will any place exist for a humane art in a society from which the last trace of reverence -- any reverence -- has been rubbed out?" (“Essay on Ezra Pound,” in Berry, "Imagination in Place, 69).

We humans are reverends. But how can we revere when so many things that we have allowed to be built in our name are unworthy of reverence? We can reclaim reverence, and joy, and wealth through our active, lively participation in life. And public schools can help.

References
Towards a transactional constructivist paradigm for a democratic education

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Abstract
Educational challenges that globalized and postmodern world issues to us are focused less on technical and instrumental skills than on general capabilities of being creative persons and participating citizens. Therefore, the main and meaningful categories for the coming educational scenario seem to be democracy, cosmopolitanism, difference, dialogue. Nevertheless, moving the spotlight from scientific rationality and technical competencies towards the domain of public ethics and social relationships does not mean to neglect the importance of knowledge, its manifold dimensions and implications. Habits, values, vices and virtues are acquired, in any case, from the living context, along a process often eluding explicit acquaintance and, therefore, the intentional engagement of educators. In order to enlarge the range of education to include actions, social practices, and behavioral styles it is necessary to rethink many points of reference. New paradigms are needed.

Kant first applied the “Copernican revolution” to knowledge theory, but Dewey claimed that Kant’s point of view was still “Ptolemaic” and affirmed a further revolution explaining that knowledge was no longer to be considered as a complicated affair between a disembodied mind and an outside reality. Dewey represents knowledge as a dynamic overall process in which three components are in a transactional relationship: inquirers, subject-matters to be investigated, objectives aimed at.

Assuming as viable the Deweyan framework entails some relevant changes concerning the educational setting. To begin with, the traditional belief that knowledge is capable of representing a world outside of our experience is untenable. If so, Dewey’s “Copernican revolution” seems to meet the constructivist epistemology from several points of view.

Constructivism has many voices and a number of approaches. It is worth noticing that the “cultural turn” that occurred in the late ‘80s has shifted emphasis from cognition and biology to social and cultural perspectives, and today many constructivists have distanced themselves from reductionistic assumptions of early “radical constructivism” by reformulating constructivist thought within the discourses of the humanities and social sciences. It is the case of “pragmatic social constructivism” suggested by Jim Garrison, as well as the “interactive constructivism” of Cologne.

May we trust that the coming education will fulfill, on the ground of these conceptual premises, the Deweyan “Copernican revolution” that we are still waiting for?

Introduction
The starting point of my inquiry will be an annotation concerning the theory of knowledge. In the history of gnoseology, unlike what has happened in the history of astronomy, at least two “Copernican revolutions” have been proclaimed. In 1787 Kant announced his revolution in the Preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. About one and a half centuries later John Dewey realized that the merit for the actual revolution about the way of understanding and interpreting the processes of human knowledge was to be attributed to

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1 Kant I., Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Hartknoch, Riga 1787.
him, showing an explicitly critical attitude against Kant and branding Kant’s epistemological scheme as still being "Ptolemaic".

Replacing classic "reason" with "intelligence in operation", Dewey marked an epoch-making turning point, a shift that the natural sciences historically inaugurated and that Dewey expects to extend to every sphere of social life. Nothing can better fix the relevance and weight of this revolution than Dewey’s own words at the end of his work The Quest for Certainty:

“From knowing as outside beholding to knowing as an active participant in the drama of an on-moving world is the historical transition whose record we have been following”.

It is worth to underline here that Dewey’s revolution is not so much about the replacement of one centre with another, but about the dissolution of an absolute centre at all. This step was possible thanks to the anti-dualistic perspective characterizing Dewey’s point of view. Regarding this, Raymond Boisvert notices:

"Dewey, long before French philosophers made the death of the "subject" popular, identified, not the cogitating self, but the affairs of the world as "subjects". They are subject-matters to be investigated. The "objects" are the objectives aimed at in such investigations. Humans are "inquiners" who, as a result of some interest, are examining the subject-matters in light of a particular objective.

This means that the epistemic relation is no longer dual-faceted and mirror-like: the knowing subject on one side, and the known object on the other. Now it will consist of three dynamically interwoven terms: inquirers, subject-matters and objectives. In addition, such a research definitely moves from a purely contemplative attitude towards an operational one, since the inquirer, trying to solve a problematic situation, acts experimentally, manipulating the situation and taking aim at reconstruct a new order.

Now, what was the real "Ptolemaic" scheme of knowledge? It was the one that, concerning the subject-object or internal-external relationship, gave absolute primacy to the alleged objective reality, assigning to the knowing subject the position of mere mirror, more or less conscious, more or less misleading. The Platonic metaphor of the cave can symbolically condense the meaning and implications of the "Ptolemaic" epistemological scheme. According to it, the truth is the light coming from an external source that dazzles, while the process of acquiring knowledge is nothing more than the effort of self-transformation, care-of-the-self steering toward the full acceptance of the truth. It can be useful to note that, compared to the astronomical discourse, the positions seem to be just reversed. Copernicus removed the Earth (i. e. subject, interior) from the center of the astronomic universe and placed there the Sun (i. e. object, exterior). By doing so, he paved the way for observing universe from a decentralized point of view, for an understanding that seems to be typical of science, less anthropomorphic and less focused on the subject.

2 Dewey deals with the topic of the “Copernican revolution” in his work The Quest for Certainty (1929).
The "Copernican revolution" announced by Kant develops in an exactly opposite pattern. It puts the subject at the center of the gnoseological universe, as the figure standing out with the outside world in the background. Here, it is clear that Kant uses the term “Copernican” in its broadest and most general sense in order to emphasize his own radical shift in perspective. However, Dewey’s criticism sounds interesting because, in taking too literally the comparison with astronomy, it gains a complete overhaul of the explanatory scheme. What is at stake is no longer the exchange of position between subject and object, but the overall reconstruction of the playground with significant consequences on all configurations, including, indeed, the identity of the subject and object, and the relationship between inside and outside.

The degree of importance that a reflection concerning the epistemological revolutions has on education can be assessed through a question that remains undoubtedly further upstream and sounds as follows: what kind of care and assistance for the knowledge acquisition processes in education? And, above all, what does it mean “knowledge” from the point of view of education? It is clear enough that many factors come into play in the complex sphere of education (i.e. ethical, political, emotional, social, etc.). Nevertheless, I would argue that the ways in which we transmit, acquire and conceive knowledge is a factor of primary importance, such as to be considered a kind of meta-educational function. I am convinced that moral attitudes and manners, political leanings, aesthetic preferences and modes of social relations are matter to be handled reflectively as well as pieces of knowledge to be acquired and passed on. If this proposition is justifiable, then, from the point of view of philosophy of education, the task is to understand the forms, channels, contexts, languages that underlie and constrain the learning processes on the light of a general epistemological prospect. In this sense, constructivism seems to me a rather promising paradigm and, in any case, worthy of being discussed.

1. **Constructivism in philosophy.**

I want to spare referring to “constructivism” as a current cultural phenomenon and almost a “culture war” ramped up in the later decades of the last century, especially in the United States. I would use the term "constructivism" to indicate more generally that profound turning point that occurred along the path of Western philosophy when Descartes stated his hyperbolical doubt questioning, first, the knowledge as the mirror of nature⁶.

Once the naive confidence in the correspondence between conclusions of knowledge and reality was undermined, only two possibilities were in view: looking for God’s warranty (it is what Descartes and Berkeley do) or trying to recover the relationship on the ground of logical evidences and epistemological constructs. In this regard, the Giambattista Vico’s thought deserves special attention. The Italian philosopher, deeply adverse to Cartesian rationalism, dealt with the issue of knowledge in a completely different approach. Even though he was clearly anchored in a theological horizon, instead of appealing to God in order to get a stable foundation for human knowledge, Vico upholds a clear and unbridgeable distinction between human and divine knowledge. The final outcome is that he represents the human knowledge as nothing but a construction.

His work *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia, ex linguae latinae originibus eruenda*, sets the cornerstones of an epistemology that will guide Vico throughout the whole course of his philosophical activity. He opposed to the Cartesian reason the *ingenium*, as the faculty of discovery and invention. Within the cognitive domain of human *ingenium*, knowing is the same as making (The *verum factum* principle). Therefore, human knowledge, from whose

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range Vico excludes the essence of nature and man, is an act of making. It is what happens, in particular, with mathematics, where the human mind, to compensate for its limitations in the knowledge of the true nature of things, imagines abstract and fictitious elements, such as the “point” and the number “one” from which it performs infinite tasks creating a world of forms and numbers. Hence, the operational nature of the mind and the autonomy of the process of knowledge from the external reality are stated without hesitation. It is for these reasons that Vico is recognized as a forerunner of the constructivism.

Kant’s transcendental philosophy was the first that, without any reference to God, tried to reconstruct the correspondence of the human mind to an objective reality. After all, the enterprise came to a failure since Kant, overturning in favor of the epistemic subject the traditional relationship, had to pay the price of an irretrievable loss of objective reality, fallen, from a cognitive point of view, to the rank of *noumenon*, real but unknowable.

No matter how large and multi-faceted the archipelago of constructivism might appear, it seems to me that the basic assumptions of its program could be list as following:

1. Vico’s principle of coincidence between knowing and making;
2. Kant’s weakening of ontology in favor of epistemology;
3. The essential thesis that the two thinkers hold concerning human knowledge, namely that it does not reflect a presumed objective reality outside.

If we accept that our knowing, both at the perceptual and logic levels, is not a mere function of external stimuli; if we recognize that the relationship with the outside world can never be immediate; if we realize that, moreover, we are necessarily bound to our specific cognitive apparatus, then the world is not what it is, but what we build. The multiplicity of worlds within which we live is the result of our symbolic activity that is carried out with a series of effective moves, i.e. operations that are evidently constructive by nature and that, with the same evidence, are not provided by the world and do not belong to it, but depend on the subject. Nelson Goodman has sorted some of such operations, identifying them as a) Composition and decomposition, b) Assignment of weight and importance, c) Sorting d) Elimination and integration, e) Deformation.

Even though he strongly upholds the constructivist epistemology, this author has also warned against the risks of relativism into which such a vision of the knowledge might run. If the external reality ceases to represent the canon, then the criterion of truth will be lost too, together with the possibility of comparing and evaluating different constructions. In fact, Goodman replaces the criterion of truth with others such as relevance, accuracy and internal consistency of a knowledge system. Can these criteria save constructivism from the risk? Goodman’s response consists of his appealing to the context and practice, to the parameters of significance emerging from the historical and cultural general prospect.

This means that, in this view, the construction of worlds obeys constraints of socio-cultural nature, even more emphasized by the reference to “the tradition that evolves,” called upon to perform the function of "razor" in the selection of "classes" according to their relevance.

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The constructive activity essentially consists in building "classes", that is primarily a logic-linguistic task. This is confirmed, for example, by Ian Hacking's response to the question "The social construction of what?"\textsuperscript{12}. In his book bearing this title, the author focuses his attention on the classes constructed by the human sciences that stand out as "interactive kinds". The interactivity of the objects of human and social sciences also shapes for them a specific way of knowledge construction based on the pragmatic effects that knowledge comes to produce. The "classification" of a person, a behavior, or a situation, when acting in such a way as to induce transformative reactions, affects, in a circular movement, the state of knowledge itself and its matters. It influences sometimes the mutation of categories and interpretive horizons included the past and the memory; to the extent that – as Hacking claims - "every generation writes history afresh"\textsuperscript{13}. In the final analysis, an "interactive kind", as a powerful metaphor hiding its true nature, exerts a great influence on a pragmatic level.

This happens because - as stated by the Author,

"Which labels stick depends less on their intrinsic merits than on the network of interested parties that wish to attach these labels"\textsuperscript{14}.

If you take the example of the feminist debate starting from Simone De Beauvoir's statement "On ne naît pas femme: on le devient"\textsuperscript{15}, so what does it mean that sex differences are socially constructed? Construction of sexed individuals, the category of gender, bodies, souls, subjectivity? Hacking's answer is that the object of construction is only an idea and that it takes place within a context that he calls "matrix" (the framework of institutions and practices that generates the idea and within which that idea is effective). The fact that the process of building here is confined to the sphere of ideas in no way reduces its scope, because ideas, understood according to the constructivist paradigm as classes and kinds emerging along the history of human activity, really build the frames and meanings of the world.

2. Education as sense making.

As I have argued at the beginning of my speech, education is, above all, a matter of knowledge. But, rephrasing the title of the Hacking's book, I would like to ask: "Knowledge of what?". If we take a glance at our pedagogical tradition, the most obvious answer is "knowing the contents of a curriculum", which is composed of pieces that correspond, as a general rule, to particular areas of codified knowledge (history, literature, geography, mathematics, etc.). The so-called "subject-matters" are nothing more than a gathering of armored classes presented as true explanations and images of reality. Such a curriculum looks like a world of immutable forms, where learning means to acquire discernment about the essence of each of them (often shown as mere recitation of definitions), and keep in mind the network of relations between one another.

At the end of the '60s and beginning of the '70s there were many voices of criticism against the traditional school systems. Despite the different backgrounds and cultural positions, most critics have shared, however, the lack of confidence in formal education in the name of the irreplaceable value of the contextualized educational practices\textsuperscript{16}. From this point of view, learning proves its value if it is "meaningful"\textsuperscript{17} for the learner and not for the system that decides and imposes it. Besides, education is expected to be effective in solving real

\textsuperscript{12} Hacking I., \textit{The social construction of what?}, cit.
\textsuperscript{13} Ivi, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{14} Ivi, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{16} I am referring, above all, to Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire and don Milani.
\textsuperscript{17} For the specificity of the term “meaningful learning” cfr. Ausubel D. P. et Alii, \textit{Educational Psychology: a cognitive view}, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York 1968\textsuperscript{1}, 1978\textsuperscript{2}. 
problems, here and now, in terms of a transformative impact, as a possible device for liberation, for an increasing degree of awareness and involvement in the political and social life.

School systems, in most cases, seem to rest on a vision that has its roots and its legitimacy in institutions and forms of social organization that no longer belong to our time. This is the case, regarding the theory of knowledge, of epistemological paradigm of the metaphysical realism. All school systems, together with the typical formalization of knowledge, have been built in the spirit and in the time of modernity, as sub-systems of nation states, aiming to work as a useful instrument of social selection. At present, we can clearly see to what extent the structure of the nation state is weakening because of pressures from globalization, on the one hand, and from localism, on the other. The challenges for the coming education revolve essentially around categories like difference, cosmopolitanism, pluralism, democracy, and dialogue. In the perspective of an education attempting to meet humanity in its plural unity as its target, it is not enough to expand and integrate the old curricula with additional pieces of definite knowledge. We need a different paradigm.

Constructivism deserves to be put to the test as an epistemological view from which to draw some significant elements of change, especially with regard to some most recent formulations of it (since the 1980s). They critically look beyond the cognitivist matrix of the early constructivism approaches (i.e. Piaget, von Glasensfield, von Foerster, Maturana and Varela, etc.) and develop along the routes of a clear “cultural turn”. Of particular interest seems - from my point of view - the program of “Interactive Constructivism” of Cologne for its strong commitment to the issues of education and the attention that writers like Stefan Neubert pay to Dewey’s pragmatism, on the ground of the constructivist implications of his thought. As representative of the “Interactive Constructivism,” Neubert believes that Dewey’s pragmatism has the merits of an irreplaceable heritage in order to think and rethink ideas such as democracy. Quoting the author,

“Dewey understands democracy as a way of life, that is, as something that is realized in action. Institutions are necessary, but the heart of democracy is interaction, transaction, and communication [...] Dewey intimately connects democracy with participation as well as diversity in human life-experience [...] Dewey connects the micro-cosmos of human face-to-face interactions and the macro cosmos of social and political institutions on a local as well as global scale through his subtle theory of the role of democratic publics and the necessity of a vital civil society.”

Not only that, but Neubert addresses Dewey also in order to rethink and refresh the concept of “observer” of the early constructivism and to reconstruct it in the light of a less reductionist perspective, even enlarged to theoretical contributions coming from other sources of the most recent debate. Quoting again the Author:

18 On the topic of power profound metamorphoses in the postmodern age, cfr. Marramao G., Contro il potere, Bompiani, Milano 2011.
"An observer constructivist theory of knowledge - Neubert maintains - can inspire a critical re-reading of classics such as Dewey pragmatist that takes seriously both (post-)modern criticisms of naturalism and realism and poststructuralist approaches to discourse and power.\textsuperscript{22}

In this sense, the observer is not an outside spectator, much less a faithful witness of the observed object, but, according to the whole constructivist tradition, he acts, in any case, as a participant observer, potentially aware, moreover, of being part of the objects observed in the field. This entails the important consequence that cognitive activity, assumed as dynamic and interactive in essence, is a source of unescapable changes of the object and is the driving force of a circular and recursive process that disrupts all schemes based on the epistemological subject-object dualism\textsuperscript{23}.

The most important Deweyan contributions to constructivism are related, in Neubert’s view, to his experience theory, habit theory and communication theory. The experience theory marks a fundamental point in overcoming the dualism between knowledge and action. The value Dewey attaches to primary experience as a holistic mix is the sign of his acknowledgement of indeterminacy, contingency, uncertainty of human existence, so that, as Neubert puts it,

“Dewey’s radical understanding of the meaning of contingency is a trait that links his philosophy to postmodernity. Its importance for constructivism lies, in part, in the fact that for Dewey it is precisely the precariousness and incompleteness of our established systems of belief and knowledge that time and again calls upon us for new experimental constructions.”\textsuperscript{24}

The habit theory, in turn, highlights the inextricable relationships among constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions, which occur within the socio-cultural practices. A habit acts, on the one hand as a structured and structuring device to the extent that it incorporates and strengthens significant traits of the culture to which it belongs. On the other hand, unlike the mere custom, it leaves room for the creative processes of revision and reconstruction of routines when situations become indeterminate or “tensional”\textsuperscript{25}. The theory of communication, finally, seems to anticipate, in Neubart’s opinion, the “linguistic turn” of the second half of the XX century\textsuperscript{26}.

Coming back to our main theme that is education, the question is: Which are, then, the possible implications and directions that the epistemological horizon of constructivism can provide?

\textsuperscript{22} Neubert S., \textit{Pragmatism and Constructivism in Contemporary Philosophical Discourse}, p. 1. The text is published on-line: \url{http://www.konstruktivismus.uni-koeln.de/english/index.html}.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{24} Ivi, p. 4.
First, you can start prospecting the operational guidelines for a reconstruction of the educational scenario where the center is no longer occupied by the figure of the teacher and the subject-matter. It would be a "Copernican revolution", with Kantian connotation if the claim was to place at the center the student instead of the teacher, the logic and the psychology of learning instead of the power of the curriculum. A different scene takes place if, on the contrary, we take as a starting point Dewey’s revolution. There would be no longer two terms contending for the centrality of the field, but a completely new scene in which the primacy is given to the overall dynamics getting started inside. The final result will be a setting where such a practice of inquiry develops in which teachers and students participate as members of a community, with different tasks and responsibilities. A framework where, furthermore – taking Boisvert’s suggestions - you deal with “subject-matters” having the character of relevant “affairs of the world” and where objects to be learned properly are “objectives aimed at”, that is, “ends-in-view”, in Dewey’s vocabulary.

In a context of teaching inspired by Dewey’s “transactional constructivism”, learning takes the shape of an active process, autonomous and creative and, concurrently, situated and transactional. The paths of learning, actually personalized, will significantly rest on ecology of mind of each learner, on his/her experiences and horizons of sense and will aim, as their final outcome, at transformations concerning the processes of knowledge, their structure, the conceptual frameworks, the sense-making and values.

It is evident that, in a perspective in which the theoretical-reflective domain is not separated from the practices of action-research or - if you prefer –research-in-action, the context holds a prominent position. Contextualization, in fact, means giving priority to the role of the whole setting in which ideas, information, and behavioral patterns are distributed within the environment and available for learning, that is for transactions between the inter-mental (social) and the intra-mental (individual) spheres. In this sense, the learning environment can be considered as a “community of practice” specifically characterized by the fact that the shared practice is nothing less and nothing more than inquiry in action while the commitment of learners is the conscious choice to actively and intentionally appropriate information, thinking styles, behavior patterns, heuristic approaches.

Empirical evidence shows that the traditional scheme that assumes that learning the item “A” is the consequence of the teaching of “A” (cause) misunderstands the complexity of relationships between teaching and learning. In fact, the activities of learning on one hand and of teaching, on the other hand, move along asymmetric and largely independent lines, outlining, rather, a network of multifaceted interactions that are uncertain and unpredictable by nature.

Becoming aware of this asymmetry could be quite bewildering in a frame of classic linear causality, but it is not if we assume the perspective of a different paradigm. Complexity is the condition that characterizes all the time the field of human action and production, so that human sciences dealt with uncertainty and idiographic objects since their origin. Once

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27 Boisvert R. D., John Dewey. Rethinking our time, cit.
30 Barbara Rogoff rephrases the Vygotsky’s notion of “internalization” as “appropriation”, in order to highlight the autonomous and personal side of learning, that is the sense-making which each learner is engaged in while he/she shares common knowledge and practices. Cfr. Rogoff B., Apprenticeship in thinking: cognitive development in social context, Oxford University Press, Oxford (UK) 1990.
complexity has become a celebrated epistemological paradigm\textsuperscript{31}, what is new for human sciences is that their alleged limits turn in a merit.

One of the typical event developing in accordance with the logic of complexity is the dialogue, as verbal transaction and communication. When two or more persons are in dialogue, they constantly look for a balance of communication in a way that the first message provokes a replay that, in turn, provokes a replay, and so on\textsuperscript{32}.

If we give a glance to the process of communication taking place between teacher and learner, we can imagine two different prospects. The former is the traditional setting where at first the teacher speaks and the learner listens to, then the learner speaks trying to repeat what the teacher has told and, finally, the teacher makes an assessment. The latter situation is one in which a complex and dynamic exchange occurs; it is a different game involving all the classroom as an environment in which all the participants are at work, while many factors are at stake. I would like to call such a situation “dialogical setting” in order to mark the quality of a field that has its proper boundary lines, but has not a stable center, nor a default schedule. It is something that can remind, to some extent, the Socratic attitude on the ground of which it makes sense to teach what you do not actually know.

Otherwise, unlike Socrates-midwife, a constructivist teacher has not to just make the learner recall what he/she is expected to already know\textsuperscript{33}. Indeed, he has to engage himself, without irony, to offer the learners scaffoldings and “assistance”\textsuperscript{34} for their own discoveries and inventions. In this respect, I want to conclude with a quotation from Jim Garrison. He says:

“Constructivist educators must realize they are altering their students’ identity in ways that cannot be predict in advance\textsuperscript{35}.”

\textsuperscript{32} Lipman M., \textit{Thinking in education}, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003\textsuperscript{2}.
\textsuperscript{33} Cfr., particularly Plato, \textit{Meno}.
\textsuperscript{35} Garrison J., \textit{Toward a pragmatic social constructivism}, cit., p. 50.
The crisis of Western culture as a foothold to foster cosmopolitan engagement: The inner paradox of education

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Abstract. The concept of education in Western culture is grounded in the ideas of emancipation and freedom, on the one hand, and on the idea of self-improvement, on the other hand. Indeed, the idea of education as self-empowerment and conquering is a very effective and widespread metaphor: the subject of education must strive to always obtain more, beyond what he has realised. The will to go beyond, to overcome ourselves and “to get more” has more than a “pacific meaning,” so to speak. To “overcome ourselves” can easily drift into the will to go beyond and to overcome others by abusing and denying them. This relationship does not consider only the surface level of our thoughts, an occasional, unwanted shift, or a narrow and poor concept of education grounded only in competition. Instead, it regards our culture as a whole that has shown in its history both a will to think of human beings as an end in themselves (Kant, 2006 [1785]) and a will to abuse and deny the human being as a human being (with respect to this, our history is certainly full of examples). Contemporary with this awareness – and not by chance – we attend to a deep crisis of the Enlightenment’s education project, which demonstrates its cultural belonging and internal contradictions (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002 [1944]; Foucault 1979 [1975], 1997 [1994]; Rancière (2003) [1983]; Giroux, McLaren, 1989; Biesta, 2007, 2010). Thus, as educationalists, we are called to work within a problematic notion of truth. On one hand, to educate entails a strong concept of truth, and being in education entails taking a position on truth, choosing a way to act, and bearing the responsibility for our choice. On the other hand, we work with a weak concept of truth: truth is conceived as openness, as sense and meaning; truth is also perspective, as an indescribable work towards changing (Standish, 1992; Smeyers, Blake, Smith, Standish, 2000; Biesta, 2003).

The aim of this contribution is to provide some groundwork to argue how these paradoxes can be used as a picklock to open and look inside our ideas about education and democracy. The loss of a vertex from which to master – and to conquer – everything and the awareness of the lack of a privileged position to understand others should be a key to consider others from a different perspective. In recognising that our grounding is only one possibility that we have chosen, in this loss of a centre, we can enhance a real dialogue among human beings by attempting to overcome the inner violence of our culture and fostering a cosmopolitan engagement grounded in differences.

Introduction

The questions of fostering democracy and enhancing cosmopolitan engagement are two classical issues in educational research. We can say that, broadly, education research consists of or is intertwined with these issues. The amount of reflection has increased in the past few years, thereby enlarging its field of application. Branching out from a strictly scholarly perspective has become a decisive point on the social and political agenda and an important matter for policy makers. Themes such as cosmopolitan citizenship, inclusive education, and the way to centre the curriculum in the learning of democracy are central issues not only in educational research but also in the political agenda.

Three decisive factors have contributed to this situation: a) first, the migratory flows that have brought about our multicultural society, with all its richness and possibilities as well as its dilemmas and contradictions (Parekh, 1997; Torres, 1998); b) second, the birth and development of totalitarianism as well as the everlasting menace of its return, which has contributed to the awareness that the conquer of democracy is not a given and that a fulfilled
democracy can later change into a totalitarian regime, as before and as again; and c) third, with the full development of globalisation, we have attended not only to the entrance of new people on the global scene but also to new countries. The need for economic relationships with them places us into unknown situations in which we do not “dominate the scene” as democratic countries. Despite this paradox, we must make agreements with other forms of government. This fact, in particular, has unmasked all the hypocrisy of our colonial gestures towards others (Said, 2004; Crossley, Tikly 2004; Rizvi, Lingard, Lavia 2006). When we are not in a mastery position, we have difficulty relating to others. Thus, the dilemmas and the paradoxes of citizenship in a cosmopolitan scenario remain unresolved, and we are well aware that we are all but innocent in our thinking and acting – and, thus, in our educating.

Thus, fostering democracy has become a twofold task: first, enhancing democracy in the Western world and attempting to realise its full meaning in the concrete life of the people; second, fostering and expanding democracy in the world, knowing it as only one possible form among other forms, with all the well-known paradoxes of this situation.

Indeed, the question of how to think and, particularly, how to act about human rights and human dignity – keeping in mind that “human rights” and “human dignity” are culturally inflected concepts – still engages our attention. From an educational perspective, the issue at stake is even more problematic because teachers, educators, and anyone else with a stake in education are called to act, to choose, and to take position. Thus, the “philosophical side” of the question – the analysis of the roots of our culture – strictly and directly involves a concern about the pragmatic and the political sides of the problem (Giroux, McLaren, 1989; Foucault 1997a [1994], 1997c [1994]). Because we think of education as the process by which the subject becomes a subject and a society becomes a society (Dewey, 1916, 1929b, 1938), education is at the very heart of these questions.

I am aware that it would be considered a flawed perspective to see the crisis of Western culture as a foothold to push the actual form of democracy, fostering cosmopolitan engagement. Democracy was born in Western culture, and it is strictly intertwined with Western thought, making it difficult to think only of democracy without relating it to our culture and to our forms of knowledge. The space of thinking, acting, and living opened by Greek thought is still our space and our ground. Moreover, the concept of education is completely immersed in our culture, and it should not be otherwise; education is the way for culture to reproduce and to enhance itself (Dewey, 1916). To think of education as the fundamental process of the formation of social consciousness and individual subjectivity entails being grounded in this culture.

Nevertheless, we begin to be aware that the “dark side” of the West is not an accident, so to speak, but is strictly intertwined with our gaze towards the others. The concept of education in Western culture is grounded from its beginning, on the one hand, in the ideas of emancipation and freedom, and on the other hand, in the idea of self-improvement. The subject must always strive to get more, in addition to what he is and what he has already realised. Indeed, the idea of education as self-empowerment (“self-overcoming”) and conquering is an effective and widespread metaphor. The will to go beyond, to overcome ourselves, and to get more does not have only a “pacific meaning.” To overcome ourselves is a very Western root, and it can branch into the will to go beyond and to “overcome” others through abuse and denial.

This relationship does not regard only the surface level of our thought, an occasional, unwanted shift, or a narrow and poor concept of education grounded only in competition. Instead, it regards our culture as a whole, which has shown in its history both the will to think of the human being as end in itself (Kant, 2006 [1785]) and the will to abuse and deny the human being as a human being (with respect to this, our history is full of examples).
Contemporary with this awareness – and not by chance – we attend to a deep crisis of the Enlightenment’s project, which shows its cultural belonging and internal contradictions (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002 [1944]; Foucault 1979 [1975], 1997 [1994]; Rancière (2003) [1983]; Giroux, McLaren, 1989; Biesta, 2007, 2010). At least since Nietzsche (2001) [1882], we have known that the “universal human nature” is an abstraction that entails a power position. At least since Heidegger, we have known that our reason is historical, a possible way to look at the world – not the only one nor necessarily the best (Heidegger, 1971 [1954]). This crisis and its consequences, with its nihilistic drift, challenges education and democracy at its roots (Smeyers, Blake, Smith, Standish, 2000).

One of the best expressions of this twofold tension is contained in the Enlightenment project, which, “[...] understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear, and installing them as master” (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002, [1944] p. I, emphasis added). Stating it more clearly, it is difficult to divide mastery from domination. The question at stake is whether it is possible to guide this process and “avoid a position of mastery” (Biesta, 2010, p. 41)

This attempt, of course, entails a large number of problems that are situated at the heart of this crisis. As educators, however, we have little choice: “[...] the reduction of complex educational aims and purposes, of the whole question of what education is for” (Smeyers, Blake, Smith, Standish, 2000, p. xi) shows that we are faced not only with a crisis of our culture that challenges our form of democracy but also with a crisis, if not a surrender, of education in terms of global care and the growth of human beings. Questions such as how to think about others, how to harmonise our actions with the inclusion of newcomers, which types of thought we should choose for a truly shared world, and whether our concept of education is large enough and good enough to manage all these transitions at once have long been on the educational agenda and are of vital importance for our educational system and for our society.

The aim of my contribution is to argue how these paradoxes can be used as a picklock to open and examine our ideas of education and democracy. The loss of a vertex from which to master – and to conquer – everything and the awareness of the lack of a privileged position to understand others should be a key to consider others from a different perspective. In recognising that our ground is a possibility we have chosen, in this loss of a centre, we can enhance real dialogue among human beings in an attempt to overcome the inner violence of our culture and foster a cosmopolitan engagement grounded in differences.

Looking at our gestures

Starting from the second half of the twentieth century, authors such as Derrida (1978 [1967], 1982 [1972]), Foucault (1973 [1969], 1979 [1975]), and Levinas (1981 [1978], 1998) have noted, from different perspectives, the question of the basis of the Western thought, emphasising its tendency to create a vertex and a position (both theoretical and political) from which to master everything – and everyone. The roots of this issue are noted by Heidegger [1927, 1950, 1954] in his analysis of our history as the history of metaphysics. In his works, we can recognise our fundamental gesture: to place ourselves as a subject who “stand[s]-over-and-against” the world (Heidegger, 2002 [1950], p. 69). The slippage from the “standing-over” to the dominion position and from the dominion position to the totalitarian position is the possibility of our thought, and, tragically, we have attended to this shift.

At the same time that a man becomes the subject-in-front-of-the-world and against-the-world, he acquires the status of an object among other objects – or, to say it more clearly, he has become a thing-among-the-things. Thus, the problem is whether this type of subject is useful and to what extent he is useful. It is important to be aware that this violence is not an unwanted consequence, an accident of our thought; it is contained all along in our thought as
metaphysical (and, thus, rational) thought. Stressing this concept, we should say that the 
very heart of metaphysics is the will to conquer.

Herein lies the other side of the coin. Western culture has a particular interest in examining 
its own. The more that a concept, a tool, a way of life is important and fundamental, the more it 
should appear unquestionable— and the more it should be put under examination. The birth 
of the “concept” — and the “concept’s work” — is also the birth of doubt about the world and 
the will to master this uncertain world. As long as the world is safe and even trustworthy, we 
do not need to question the Western issue par excellence — the “to ti én einai” question. We 
SIMPLY live in the world that is as it shows itself. We begin to have the difference, and 
particularly the difference between the real world and appearance, when a distance emerges 
between thought and the world. Thus, Western thought is, since its beginning, the removal of 
any possibility of remaining on safe ground. It is clear (in the common experience as well) 
that we begin to ask about something when we are no longer sure of it. The Western way of 
being is, first and foremost, skeptical. We do not live in the world but in our continuous doubt 
about it. It is important to acknowledge our history because we do not think and act on safe 
ground consisting of an ever-present objectivity. The birth of rationality — and, thus, the birth 
of objectivity - is, in itself, an offspring of this type of skeptical thought. To put it differently, 
our ground is uncertainty, and objectivity is built on it, in thinking and in acting and, thus, in 
educating.

The very nature of Western thought, its “essence”, using a highly problematic word, is in this 
compulsion. I want to immediately remove any psychological meaning from this word; with 
this term, I intend something that is so much more inherent, so much more innate to our 
thought that in removing it, we should no longer have our way of thinking. Our disposition to 
saw our chair, so to speak, is as innate in our genetic code as is a scientific disposition; 
indeed, they are very much related. Our concept of science and our concept of education 
would never emerge without the “method of doubt”.

Moreover, as educationalists, we work within a problematic notion of truth. On the one hand, 
to educate entails a strong concept of truth. Being in education entails taking a position on 
truth, choosing a way to act, which brings with it the responsibility for our choice. On the 
other hand, we work within a weak concept of truth: truth as openness, as gesture, as sense 
and meaning. Thus, we must make do with an open and unresolved concept of truth 
(Standish, 1992; Smeyers, Blake, Smith, Standish, 2000; Biesta, 2003). This paradox 
stresses education, both in theory and in practice: on the one hand, the push to pursue what 
is right and what is true; on the other hand, the awareness that what is right for me, here and 
now, should be wrong for others — or for me in another time and in another place. For more 
than a century, we have definitively lost our innocence; we know ourselves as a point of 
view.

Thus, my point about education is difficult and urgent. Philosophy can choose the theoretical 
richness of its main way because it does not have the burden of acting (although, from Marx 
to Gramsci to Foucault to Rancière, we have had a very different version of philosophical 
work). Educational research, both theoretical and empirical (and with respect to this, there is 
no difference), lies always in the choosing, in values and ends, exactly as the very nature of 
the “object”: the human being. Being in educational research entails a responsibility to think, 
to argue for existential frames, and it is here, in the complexity of education above all, a 
culture that has lost its vertex.

In education, we are called to act on something and by someone with no regard to whether 
there is evidence arising from or determined by “pure” theory. Indeed, the model in which the 
action emerges as a “natural product” of a safe and univocal knowledge— an effective and 
enduring one — is, for a number of reasons, untenable. These reasons are not only scientific 
and philosophical but also, and primarily, social and political. Here, we can recognise, as in a
mirror, the corresponding paradox of democracy, the only regime that is able to put itself in question, to ask about its rightness, its legitimacy. If democracy is not only a form of government but also a cognitive form and way towards meaningful knowledge, we must acknowledge its imperfection as its specific character. In other words, the weakness of democracy, as a contemporary mode of associating living and knowledge gestures, is also its force. We can take the measure of the wealth of a democracy by looking at the diversity of positions that the democracy itself bears and fosters. I will make this point by beginning with John Dewey.

**Going beyond the crisis via education**

We owe the concept of democracy as contemporary, shared, “conjoint communicated experience” and the liberation of “personal capacities” to John Dewey. He clearly states that the “essence” of democracy lies in the relationship between the growth of sharing and the “liberation of powers”. Opening new possibilities is grounded, as he states, in “the widening of the area of shared concerns”.

“A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and National territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond; they consequently put a premium on variation in his action. They secure a liberation of powers which remain suppressed as long as the incitations to action are partial, as they must be in a group which in its exclusiveness shuts out many interests. The widening of the area of shared concerns, and the liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities which characterise a democracy, are not of course the product of deliberation and conscious effort. […] But after greater individualisation on one hand, and a broader community of interest on the other have come into existence, it is a matter of deliberate effort to sustain and extend them”. (Dewey, 1916, p. 101, emphasis added)

To extend sharing and the field of what exists is, in Dewey’s thought, the central aim of a mature democracy. It is fundamental, in this analysis, that Dewey addresses the dichotomy between “full subjective freedom” and “constrictive social need”, which should entail a surrender of interests and desires. To realise – and to understand – myself, I have to extend the sharing of my interests, and I have to expand my relationships. The interests, the knowledge, and the mind, in Dewey’s writings, come into the world with the world. Exactly in the same way, he addresses the dichotomy between subject and object in knowledge, emphasising the centrality of the relation in knowing the world (Dewey, 1929a, 1938; Bentley, Dewey, 1949). With respect to this idea, Dewey’s statement about the relation between mental operations and social life is interesting:

“[…] when knowledge is regarded as originating and developing within an individual, the ties which bind the mental life of one to that of his fellows are ignored and denied. When the social quality of individualised mental operations is denied, it becomes a problem to find connections which will unite an individual with his fellows”. (Dewey, 1916, p. 347)

Here, with respect to our ends, Dewey raises a central issue. If we are able to speak about the very nature of democracy as openness and if we acknowledge the question of cosmopolitan engagement as the question of otherness, it is because, both socially and theoretically, we are losing our centre – and our mastery position. Insofar as our culture witnesses a deep crisis, we can engage with the heart of these problems.
There are two grave difficulties in this issue: a) we are faced with the well-known paradox of seeing – and changing – a system from inside, with an internal perspective and the tools of the system we want to go beyond (Biesta, 2007; Bridges, 2009; Smeyers, 2009); and b) we have a tendency to forget the indescribable openness of our thought, the work to go beyond what we are, searching only for answers for here and now. The present (so we think) urges us to this. However, to be effective in these concerns, education should not provide only answers for here and now with respect to processes determined in other places (particularly the economy and politics), but it also must place on the agenda deep questions about its roots, sense, and function. Because education is the place where our life as a whole takes form, a perspective on the basis of the educational process constitutes a primary point of view on the issue and a laboratory for this “work of occurrence”. Such a philosophy of education is the very heart of practice, if practice is not only the making but also the reflecting of a completely different way of thinking and acting. Giroux and McLaren, speaking about “a new public philosophy of education” in the 1980s, state,

“[…] this is a philosophy for the post-modern era. It is not one that seeks ideal fathers through the grand narratives that characterised the work of Marx, Freud, Durkheim or Parsons. […] It is a philosophy that is a decidedly concrete. It is one that embraces a politics of difference […] that views ideology and human agency as a source of educational change. […] But there is also […] a sense of the need to push the history of the recent decades against the grain in order both to question its purchase on knowledge as received truth and to shift the debate on educational reform from one dependent on a claim to a privileged reading of the past to one committed to a provisional and relational understanding of the truth and commitment to investigating culture, teaching and learning as a set of historically and socially constructed practices”. (Giroux, McLaren, 1989, pp. xi-xii)

To grow up is to participate in a shared community, taking form in this community and in the values and knowledge in which our life is grounded, fostering the sharing of possibilities:

“Since education is a social process, and there are many kinds of societies, a criterion for educational criticism and construction implies a particular social ideal. The two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent in which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups. An undesirable society, in other words, is one which internally and externally sets up barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience”. (Dewey, 1916, p. 115)

To think about education is to think about the culture in which education is situated. Because the meaning of education lies in transformation, it is in the educational process that we manage the possible change of our culture.

The ways in which we actually live our citizenship and our society are not related only to the state of economy and to the contingent political relationships. They entail, at a deeper and concrete level, a vision of otherness and democracy, of our culture as a self-centred system, and of how and to what extent it is possible to open up our way of thinking and acting. This vision is a profound gesture of our society, so it remains in an implicit dimension that is very difficult even to glimpse.

One way to approach the concrete question of a democracy challenged by otherness is to acknowledge which relationships between democracy and education we might and should construct to support them, increasing their intrinsic power of inclusion and, thus, enlarging and opening up these concepts. I think that, from this perspective, the “use” of the philosophy
of education is a mood, a gesture in which we should engage the knots of education, moving them from the known and usual places in which we have collocated. This use should be fruitful, if not essential. We need to leave behind the obsession to act immediately, insofar as these are urgent questions. From Nietzsche to Foucault, we know that this work is possible only with a distance from the present that puts us at the heart of the present problems.

Thus, the question of what type of education we ought to enact with regard to otherness goes to the very heart of what democracy and emancipation comprise. Quoting Biesta,

“[…] to be emancipated means to act on the basis of the assumption of equality. This has the character of a forced entry into a common world, which, as I have shown, not only means that the call for equality can only make itself heard by defining its own space, but that it must also proceed on the assumption that the other can always understand one’s arguments”. (Biesta, 2010, p. 58, emphasis in original)

Here, a very Western idea, so to speak, is stressed to acknowledge the question of otherness. Surely, we are not far from truth in saying that the question of otherness, the question of exposure to otherness, is the very heart of education from the beginning of its task. Thus, we do not need an “educational point of view” on the relation between otherness and democracy; we need to engage with the real content of this knot, knowing that this is, primarily, an educational knot. To make this point, we can work with a powerful idea of education that addresses the educational process with respect to what is beyond and with respect to the challenge of uncertainty. This is a twofold question: how are we challenged by uncertainty, and how do we move towards uncertainty in an attempt to go beyond the crisis of our culture?

In my opinion, this crisis has continuously been included in Western thought because the “method of doubt” is the beginning of our specific form of thought. Now, we are able to see the range and the possibilities of this crisis, and we are able to see how our thoughts, our forms of rationality, and, thus, our forms of life are a choice. Of course, I am neither commending irrationality (which is only the other side of the coin) nor discrediting reason. On the contrary, we see the fullness of reason in its weakness, and the care and concern for this weakness is care for a true democracy in a shared world.

Because we are aware that reason is not an unavoidable event but is an event nevertheless, we know ourselves as historical and cultural beings with no privileged position to understand – and, thus, to master – the other. It is pivotal, in my opinion, to underline the degree to which this is not an abstract “philosophical issue” but is a concrete issue about the evolution and the survival of a culture. To remain within the limits of what is available here and now condemns the species to extinction. This is not about philosophy but about natural history. Of course, problem solving, in its wide meaning, is basic; of course, education, as the whole process and as “learning”, is also about this content. Nevertheless, if we have a stake in our own evolution, it is not only about these facts. There is a wider function that involves “beyond” and possibility. Surviving entails the capacity to posit new problems in new ways. It entails the talent to imagine other options with respect to the present; it requires us “to consider the bearing of the occurrence upon what may be, but is not yet” (Dewey, 1916, p. 171) that, in Dewey’s words, “is to think” (ibidem).

References


On violation, violence and citizenship in post-apartheid schools

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Abstract
Against the backdrop of growing calls for harsher measures against learners found guilty of acts of violence, and in recognition of the growing trend that public schools in South Africa have become associated with stabbings, shootings, rapes, assault, humiliation and discrimination – for students and teachers – the motivation for our research work on violence in schools is to offer an as-yet unexplored glance at what could be described as the other side of violence. Central to this unexplored glance is a measured acceptance of the potentiality and impotentiality of violence within any individual and society. As such, violence in schools – as has been evident in both apartheid and post-apartheid citizenship – cannot simply be renounced on the basis that we find it repugnant. The mere renunciation of violence is not only meaningless, but is especially hollow in the face of a growing list of statistics of both students and teachers facing untold horror in the classrooms and on the playgrounds of schools. In many instances, the renunciation of violence by education authorities and politicians, as teachers and parents will allege, has been a mere disguise for the abdication of responsibility for the violence. The renunciation of violence in this pattern of response is devoid of understanding, and equally empty of pre-emptive recourse.

Partly then in response to the violence, and partly in response to what we currently perceive to be an inadequate response by the education authorities, we hope to offer an interpretive analysis in order to think differently about violence in schools and about how a citizenship education of becoming can deal with the unpredictable consequences of violence in its own potentiality. It seems to us that given the confident onslaught of violence, there is nothing else, but to offer insight into the nature of violence itself and, by so doing, to search for unexplored ways of humane response and being. We do not presume to hold a magic wand that will sanctify schools into the safe zones that they ought to be and as which they should serve in any society. What we are looking and hoping as articulated previously in Citizenship, education and violence: On disrupted potentialities and becoming (Waghid & Davids, 2013), however, is a renewed engagement, a slight tilting of the perspective, so that something other than how violence has always been responded to will emerge. In this paper, therefore, we firstly, explore conceptions of a violated citizenship and schools as sites of violation, and secondly, we offer a re-considered view of violence in a post-apartheid democracy – one which offers unexplored options of summoning others to speech and being.

Introduction
Violence has always been a close, albeit unwelcome, companion of humanity. Recently we have witnessed its horrific display from the squares of Tiananmen and Tahrir, Malala Yousafzai with a bullet in her head, to the maiming of serving soldier Drummer, Lee Rigby in Woolwich. Closer to home, we have lived through one of society’s greatest persecutions, South African apartheid. While people hoped that the end of apartheid would seal the insanity of violence, and that peace would define the new democratic South Africa, its society has seemingly become more violent – perhaps more apparently so, because in the absence of an oppressive regime, or the absence of any easily understood conflict there can be no simple reason for the barrage of violence bombarding its society. And yet, to blame the persistence of violence - and in terms of the central concern of our book, the debilitating violence in South African schools – on an apartheid past, or on inadequate post-apartheid policies, would not begin to explain the confident onslaught of violence. To understand violence, we would need to understand conceptions of citizenship – what is understood by deliberation and compassion, and the discourses of rights, responsibilities and belonging. And if William James, the quintessential American philosopher of the previous century is right
that violence is constitutive of human nature (1926: 258) then it makes sense for us to offer a humane response to dealing with violence.

We commence this paper with a brief overview of what we consider as the dominant and traditional conceptions of citizenship education. By using these understandings, we continue by reconceptualising a conception of citizenship education that, we argue, can be more responsive to disrupting violence in schools.

Citizenship Education as a Deliberative, Compassionate and Responsible Encounter with the Other

What emanates from two significant collections published in 2008 – The SAGE Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Democracy (edited by James Arthur, Ian Davies & Carole Hahn) and Global Citizenship Education: Philosophy, Theory and Pedagogy (edited by Michael A. Peters, Allan Britton & Harry Blee) – is that understanding the practice of citizenship education depends on having some understanding of both citizenship and citizen. The notion of citizenship refers to the relation of belonging persons have to the social and political domain (De Ruyter & Spiecker, 2008: 352) – that is, a notion of citizenship in a minimal sense. In a maximal sense, citizenship also refers to a citizen as a culturally and intellectually well-developed person who contributes to the cultural enlightenment of a nation (De Ruyter & Spiecker, 2008: 354). Moreover, following Yuval-Davis (2011: 46), ‘the notion of citizenship can be seen as the participatory dimension of belonging to a political community’. In other words, a person has citizenship when she participates in the affairs of a political community. For this reason, citizenship is considered as ‘an individual contractual relationship between the person and the state’ (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 48). And what determines the contract and relationship respectively are the political, civil, social, economic, cultural and spatial security rights that protect citizens and, the duties and responsibilities people have to enact through participation. Therefore, to educate people as citizens amounts not only to understanding what the practice means but also to instil in them capacities for participation to come to understand one another and to engage about matters that affect them (Roth & Burbules, 2007: 5) – thus, enhancing their sense of belonging.

Our reason for looking at citizenship education in terms of deliberation, compassion and responsibility is to focus more on the participatory actions of people whether as citizens belonging to a nation state, or as cosmopolitans belonging to the global world. When students are educated to freely express themselves, consider plurality of opinions and, respect the limits of reasonable difference when questions of political coercion are at stake, they are initiated into a discourse of public reason. And, when they engage with others in renewed efforts to find political coexistence which they and others can reasonably endorse as morally acceptable, they engage in dialogue. Hence, for Callan (1997: 215) the purpose of citizenship education is to educate future citizens (students) that they need to participate reasonably in dialogical engagements. Simply put, citizenship education involves educating students to engage in deliberation.

For Benhabib (2011: 75) citizenship education is about instilling in students communicative ways through which they can lay claim to their ‘right to have rights’. The communicative project through which people can be connected to their claim of having rights is referred to as democratic iterations – which are intended to transform and enrich meanings. Iterations are meant to enhance inclusive participation of all those whose rights interests are affected; equality of participation; the questioning of controversial issues; and achieving democratic justice especially in relation to human rights treaties (Benhabib, 2011: 151-152). Thus, deliberative citizenship education has in mind the achievement of the right to political coexistence amongst diverse individuals in pluralist communities Likewise, deliberative citizenship education is equally concerned about the outcomes of democratic justice for all citizens.
Both Nussbaum (1997) and Noddings (1992) offer an account of citizenship education that resonates with compassionate imagining. Nussbaum (1997) articulates citizenship education as pedagogical encounters constituted by compassionate imagining. In other words, a compassionate citizen is one who not only recognises the vulnerability of someone else but actually relates the other person’s vulnerability to her own experiences and to act humanely towards others who might experience the vulnerability. Similarly, Noddings (1992: 22) offers an ethics of care that can enhance the realisation of compassionate imagining through positing that people have to attend fully and openly to one another by creating caring relationships amongst themselves. For Noddings (1992: 21), when people care, they recognise the humanity within themselves and in others with an emphasis on ‘living together, on creating, maintaining, and enhancing positive relations’. In this sense, citizenship education underscored by an ethics of care seems to be inextricably connected to the enhancement of compassionate imagining – that is, for a citizen to be educated about compassion, also involves learning about caring relations whereby she can live harmoniously with others on the basis of recognising one another’s humanity.

To talk about responsibility vis-à-vis citizenship education requires that we offer an account of Derrida’s (2004: 91) seminal idea of responsibility. For him, to think of responsibility is to equate it with ‘a summons requiring a response’ (Derrida, 2004: 91). That is, when people are summoned to act in a particular way by responding to a situation, they are said to act responsibly. The way in which people should act as they respond to a particular situation is considered by Derrida as acting with ‘freedom of judgement’ (2004: 97). If they can freely judge, Derrida (2004: 105) posits, they act with unconditioned autonomy by accounting for something. In other words, acting with justification as well as taking risks can lead to achieving the unexpected or the improbable. Only then a person is said to act with responsibility. Now if we relate the idea of responsibility to citizenship education, then it can be said that responsible citizenship education ought to engender understandings that students should be encouraged to take risks coupled with giving an account of their citizenship.

Thus far, we have shown how the participatory dimension of belonging to a political community can be considered on a continuum from being more deliberative, compassionate and responsible to being less so. It is not that citizenship education has been realised in either a deliberative, compassionate or responsible way. Rather, existing liberal conceptions of citizenship education can most appropriately be couched as forms of education that vary from being overwhelmingly deliberative, compassionate and responsible, to being less so. Our analysis of citizenship education, however, breaks with traditional explanations of citizenship education being conceived in relation to people’s political memberships in nation states. We contend that inasmuch as deliberative, compassionate and responsible citizenship education seems plausible enough to cultivate in schools, such a form of education is not enough to engender appropriate learning that can contend with violence in schools. Next we shall build on existing understandings of citizenship education in order to think differently about the practice and, most importantly, to reconceptualise the notion of citizenship education that can be more responsive to disrupting violence in schools.

Rethinking Citizenship Education

The notion of a pedagogical encounter vis-à-vis being a citizen is premised on the following three considerations: driving oneself to act freely to actively taking a stand; being answerable to others; and to experiencing others rather than knowing them with certainty on the basis of curbing one’s rush to judgement about others. It is with such an idea of a pedagogical encounter in mind that we envisage to reconfigure citizenship education along the lines of Jacques Rancière’s (1991) ideas on democratic education, whereby those who engage in a democracy do so with emancipation in mind – that is, they disrupt the way a particular social order is configured. Put differently, acting democratically means to announce your position. And, when people announce themselves they demonstrate the capacity to actualise their
equality – that is, their ability to think, speak and act freely to take a stand or what Rancière (2007) refers to as disrupting the chains of reasons. Secondly, acting as an intelligible citizen actually involves summoning other people to use their intelligence – that is, ‘an intelligible citizen is one who obliges the other person ‘to realise his [her] capacity’ (Rancière, 1991: 15). By summoning people to use their intelligence, is in fact to remind them that they can see and think for themselves, to prompt them about their abilities and capacities, and not just always relying on others to see and think for them – a matter of being answerable oneself and to others. Unlike traditional views of citizenship education that aim to educate people to speak, a reconsidered citizenship education starts from the assumption that a person is already intelligible that is to say, a ‘speaking being’ (Rancière, 1991: 11). To be an amateur citizen is to deal with what is imperfectly put on the table by others - without authoritatively rushing to judgement about say imperfect formulations of the concept democracy. As such, the amateur citizen allows for the evocation and enactment of yet-to-be lived and realised experiences.

Firstly, what the aforementioned view of citizenship education foregrounds, is if students are encouraged to engage, deliberate and to speak out when they need to – on behalf of themselves or on others – then indeed, they would have been taught to be present not only in terms of their own education, but in terms of knowing and being themselves. This would contribute to make the school becoming a place of democracy, which, in turn, would stimulate students in the direction of an active and responsible enactment of citizenship. Secondly, citizenship education that encourages students to see things for themselves intelligibly will invariably have the effect whereby teachers are not always required to intervene. Educators at these schools would feel confident about the capacity of students to intelligibly interact and engage in discussion and debates. Thirdly, a reconsidered citizenship education that inspires students to be touched by the demeaning of others will engender in them attitudes that would curtail their rush to judgement of others. Such a school would for once make it easier for students (and educators) ‘to create and sustain, not only a non-violent school culture, but also one that is friendly to all … [and] a school that has the will to become a zone where harassment, ridicule, devaluing, and demeaning are not allowed …’ (Roland Martin, 2013: 196).

In sum, there seems to be a dyadic relationship between the idea of a pedagogical encounter and that of a reconsidered view of citizenship education. A pedagogical encounter guides citizenship education in particular ways and, in turn, a reconsidered view of citizenship education alters meanings that constitute a pedagogical encounter – thus, offering the spaces necessary for new and unanticipated encounters and meanings. Unlike narrowly linking citizenship education to exercising rights and responsibilities, and experiencing a sense of belonging, a reconsidered view of citizenship education views the citizen as someone who equally exercises thoughts and speech, intelligibly encourages others to see things for themselves, and suspending a rush to judgement about imperfect others and their encounters.

**On Potentiality in Schools: Cultivating a Citizenship Education of Becoming**

Following Aristotle, Agamben (1999: 179) distinguishes two kinds of potentiality: generic potentiality such as saying that a child has the potential to know; and potentiality as becoming associated with someone having knowledge or an ability to do and become. It is potentiality as becoming that interests Agamben, such as a teacher having the potential to teach (to do). On the one hand, a child who has the potential to learn (to do) is obliged to experience an alteration through learning – that is becoming another (Agamben, 1999: 179). If there is no alteration in thought or opinion, then perhaps learning has not taken place. On the other hand, the child who has the potential to know (generic potentiality), ‘is instead [one with] potential … on the basis of which he can also not bring his knowledge into actuality by not making work’, that is, by not learning and hence, become another. In other words, the potential of students to learn does not always mean they will actually learn. Rather, the
potential of students to learn can also have the effect whereby they do not learn – that is, a matter of their potentiality not passing into actuality – either through an unwillingness, or incapacity to learn. Instead, a student’s true potential to learn is associated with bringing all her incapability or impotentiality (potential not to be) to the act of learning without being annulled in actuality. To, therefore, have potentiality, means not to reach the actuality of that potentiality, since the potentiality of doing, learning and knowing resides within the potentiality of it, and not within the actuality of it. Consequently, a reconsidered view of citizenship education that resonates with an impotentiality or incapacity for judging (as judgment has been suspended) is commensurable with a potentiality of becoming.

A reconsidered view of citizenship education is also connected to the practice of seeing things differently. What seeing things in a different way also projects is the impossibility or impotentiality to see things in the same way. What a reconsidered view of citizenship education foregrounds seems to be connected to a potentiality of becoming. Consequently it would be appropriate to talk about a citizenship education of becoming vis-à-vis potentiality. In considering how such a view of citizenship education potentially guides the notion of community, Agamben argues that the coming community is one whereby ‘[whatever] singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong, without any representable condition of belonging’ (1993: 86). For Agamben, the community of becoming exists now – that is, a community to which all belong without claiming to belong and which is engendered ‘along a line of sparkling alternation on which common nature and singularity, potentiality and act change roles and interpenetrate’ (1993: 20). The fact that ‘the coming community’ is not constituted by belonging, means that students would be initiated into practices on the basis of a genuine commitment to bring about change without privileging any dominant cultural community. Citizenship education that educates students about potentially coming into community also has in mind bringing students ‘into a communication without the incommunicable’ (Agamben, 1993: 65). That is, students are taught that nothing should remain unsaid in a community of becoming even if speech denounces the ‘vacuous declarations of human rights’ (Agamben, 1993: 87) that are often ignored by powerful nations.

In sum, a citizenship education of becoming has in mind, evoking the potentiality of students to cultivate communities of becoming where they do not belong and share a common identity. Such a reconsidered view of citizenship education considers students as humans who co-belong as they endeavour to be attentive to the issues of the day. Only when students are taught to articulate speech that potentially engenders more speech without reaching actuality would they remain part of a community of becoming – a community that does not expect of them to belong, share a common identity and to negotiate difference.

On Conflict and Violence in Post-apartheid South African schools
There are two elements common to citizenship during apartheid and after apartheid. One is the prevalence of violence, and the other is schools as the sites of violence. If violation defined the brunt of apartheid, then schools presented the ideal space, and opportunity through which to defy it. While education was seen as a vehicle for restitution, social justice and political reform, it was also used as a retaliatory weapon against the abuse of education as an oppressive tool. These two functions – of restitution and weapon – present a particular complexity regarding what the purpose of education/schooling ought to be, which ironically (or perhaps not) still occupies a space in post-apartheid democratic society. Disruption and violence at South African schools, say Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe (2004: 170), contributed to bringing apartheid education to an end – arousing expectations that schools would become peaceful and calm spaces. Yet, two decades into democracy the violence continues to determine how, and indeed whether, schools/schooling function at all. According to Zulu et al. (2004: 170), violence at schools has gained momentum, as generation upon generation have become socialised into violence. Teachers, as the perceived custodians of order, are expected to restore the order which has seemingly been lost in the violence.
Often, however, the responses from teachers have not only themselves been dis-orderly, but have taken on more radical forms of disorganisation, as teachers, like their students, have also begun to understand violence as the only language of response to violence. These responses have taken shape through the perpetuation of corporal punishment, described as the most common internal violence perpetrated by schools against students, and of male teachers in particular displaying disturbing aggression in the form of physical assault and rape (Mncube & Harber, 2103: 14).

Of course, the education authorities have designed and implemented numerous policies and strategies in an attempt to reduce violence in schools - leading to various detailed official policies, documents and publications applicable to many facets of the management of public schools showing the government’s commitment to establishing safe and effective teaching and learning environments (Joubert, 2008). However, with children more likely to encounter violence at their schools than within their homes or communities (Leoschut & Bonora (2007: 107), and with teachers resorting to more aggressive forms of so-called discipline (Mncube & Harber, 2013: 14; Zulu et al., 2004: 174), it does not seem that schools are effectively dealing with violence.

Perhaps, then, we need to address the issue of violence in schools by drawing on Mouffe’s (2000: 130–131) contention that violence is to be accepted as part of human nature, and as part of something called the ‘dimension of the political’. For Mouffe, the rationalist view of human nature, which denies the negative traits within society – such as violence, is not the necessary basis for democracy, but is instead its weakest point. She argues that the political community should not be seen as an empirical referent, but rather as a discursive surface. To this end, the political community is constituted by a multiplicity of beings, and expectations – which means that there will always be those on the inside and those on the outside; and those who are violated, and those who are not. This means that, if one of the ideals of post-apartheid South Africa was violence-free schools, the full realisation of what this means can never be achieved by virtue of the fact that the political community of a school is constructed along a ‘social imaginary’, and therefore unreachable and unrealisable. Violence, as part of human nature – which is akin to making us humans, and therefore open to practices and beliefs of exclusion and discrimination – means that the ‘social imaginary’ of a violence-free society is only as possible as it is impossible.

If we accept, as Mouffe does, that violence is to be accepted as part of human nature, then we have to accept that students in our schools possess the capacity for violence. But, because schools are not ‘enframed’, we cannot assume that the antidote to violence is the teaching of a particular form of citizenship, since this would assume that we can compartmentalise or ‘enframe’ both violence and citizenship. If we move from the premise of a common political identity, we contend that post-apartheid South Africa, while accepting ‘submission to certain authoritative rules of conduct’ (Mouffe, 1992: 30–31), also accepts that many different communities might have differing conceptions of the good. To this end, post-apartheid South Africa, while connected by a common bond, is, however, without a definite shape, and therefore is in continuous re-enactment. This means that we cannot think of communities, schools and schooling as a collective – because this would imply being assimilated into a dominant culture, which shares a common good and therefore always runs the risk of exclusion. If we accept that schools are not ‘enframed’ (limited to orthodox practices), and if we accept that schools are constituted through violence by virtue of it being an accepted part of human nature, then it does mean that we have to start looking at schools differently. Therefore, if schools are not ‘enframed’ and are constituted by a ‘discursive surface’, then students at these schools is not a collective. Rather, they, together with the homes and communities that constitute them, co-belong to a common bond of being at school. And the violence that they bring through their violations co-belongs to the communities through which they are constituted. The response from schools to counter the
violence, therefore, cannot be ‘enframed’ by what ought to be taught at schools, or what disciplinary procedures ought to be implemented.

**Disrupting Violence in Schools – Establishing Potentially Becoming Schools for Citizenship Education**

To enact one’s humanity requires that one recognises the frailties within oneself and others, and actually acts upon someone else’s vulnerability. Cavell (1979: 433) posits that, related to one’s connection with the other is the view that one has to acknowledge humanity in the other, of which the basis for such action lies in oneself: ‘I have to acknowledge humanity in the other, and the basis of it seems to lie in me’ (Cavell, 1979: 433). To this end, it is insufficient to have knowledge of another’s vulnerability such as a student being bullied, and not act against it. The conception of responsibility we are arguing for here is strongly connected to a moral action that is informed by a sense of fairness and justice. To Derrida (1994), justice comes in the form of responsibility to the other as difference – that every individual has a responsibility to live with the other and to treat the otherness of the other justly. In not acting responsibly, one does not enact one’s humanity in relation to the other, and so doing, fails to recognize that one’s humanity is so because of a relational co-belonging. This means that the teacher would need to re-consider her response to the bully. Instead of humiliating or excluding her, she would need to enact her responsibility to the bully by recognizing her humanity, and then her vulnerability. The propensity for violence, while conceived and perceived as acts and positions of strength, might not necessarily be so. Rather, it might be better understood as an enactment of a vulnerability, which has found a misplaced expression.

Schools, as constitutive of, and constituted by society have to be spaces where the cultivation of responsibility and humanity are uppermost in pedagogical encounters. This means that what teachers teach, and what students learn have to be conceptualised and enacted from, and within a basis of responsible action, which will be expressed through a humane connectedness. A teacher’s relationship, therefore, with students ought to be shaped by an acknowledgement that they be considered as fellow human beings, and therefore respected. This form of respect emanates from a democratic iteration, which not only encourages dialogue, but is informed by a ‘talking back’. As such, students participate in the acknowledged co-belonging, they recognise their own potentiality in shaping their own views, without fear of being disregarded or humiliated. By engaging with views different to what they have known, and believed to be true, teachers create new pedagogical encounters, and cultivate for themselves new ways of becoming. By teachers not acknowledging their students as fellow beings, and by students not acknowledging their teachers as fellow beings, their engagement becomes merely that of talking to the other - and at times, pass the other. In not recognizing the vulnerabilities inherent in each other, the potentialities for both teachers and students are not only impaired, but stunted in terms of becoming.

A school community of becoming is one that is potentially in the making, – that is, it is not yet but potentially it can be. As such, there is more hope in it (the becoming school community) to deal with violence- for at least three reasons: Firstly, a school community of becoming is not yet actually such a community, that is, a community that can deal with violence. It is potentially so with all its impotentialities in being such a community. Such a community immediately lacks a shared, intersubjective identity – that is, a community without any reference to either identity or difference. In such a school community, the affiliate individuals neither share an identity, nor do they make reference to their differences. Students as members of a school community are affiliated on the grounds of being persons. They are not members of the school community as members with a common interest deriving from a shared identity with other students. In other words, members of a school community contest one another’s membership in relation to prioritising their humanity. And if being human implies honouring the sacredness of life, members of a school community become internally
disconnected from using violent ways to cause bodily harm, even death to others. As members of a community of becoming that co-belong, individuals of whatever identity endeavour to disrupt incidences of violence for the sake of being human and living their humanity. Such a school community of becoming does not make the end of violence its aim, instead the struggle against violence becomes a continuous human experience.

Secondly, a school community of becoming comprises of ‘whatever being[s]’ in its singularity (Agamben, 1993: 20). Here, members of a school community are not members because they belong to a school community but rather, for ‘its being-such, for belonging itself’ (Agamben, 1993: 2). So to consider members of a school community in their singularities would be tantamount to see them as beings such as those that can prevent or disrupt violence – that is, whatever they (members) want that is lovable. Of course it might be quite endearing for some individuals to inflict pain on others, but what makes it lovable is that someone else also finds the perpetrated act of violence congenial. Of course, we cannot imagine that victims of violence would in fact enjoy being harmed. So lovable in this sense does not only refer to the act of the individual but also the experience of someone subjected to the act, in this instance, violence. Hence, a school community of becoming is one that can orientate its members towards what is lovable. And, violence is indeed not lovable.

Thirdly, a school community of becoming also emphasises ‘the suspension of the transition from potential to act, and the maintenance of impotentiality within potentiality’ (Mills, 2008: 109). To be considered as a community that can be able to thwart violence is also to recognise that the act towards eliminating violence might not be without its predicaments. This in itself would make the desire to eradicate violence a potentiality or a possibility. This means that a school community intent on countering violence has the potential to do so and simultaneously the impotentiality to do so – that is, they are not able to do so. But this potentiality members of a school community of becoming has, makes it possible for members of such a community to exercise their freedom in their own singularity – ‘a singularity that is finite, and nonetheless, indeterminable’ (Agamben, 1993: 67). What this implies, is that a school community of becoming in the quest to quell violence, freely expresses itself in a determinate and simultaneously in an indeterminate way in relation to whatever is ‘within an outside’ of the event. For Agamen (1993: 67) ‘outside’ is at the threshold – ‘a passage’ that gives access to the event. More specifically, a school community of becoming is at the threshold – ‘the experience of being-within an outside’ (Agamben, 1993: 67, italics in original). Our understanding of ‘being-within an outside’ implies that a school community of becoming sees itself as a community that sees violence from ‘within an outside’. Although the violence to be dealt with is outside of a community’s reach, it (the community) grasps an understanding of the violence as if it is experienced by them (the community). And being in such a singularity at once places the community of becoming in a position to think of possibilities and impossibilities as to how the violence can be combated.

Previously, we have argued that a reconsidered view of citizenship education is concerned with teaching students to co-belong as humans to a school community without insisting on what is common and shared. Likewise, through a reconsidered view of citizenship education students are taught to bring about change without privileging any dominant cultural community – meaning that change is neither facilitated nor cultivated through the dominance of the collective, but through the co-belonging to multiple singularities. And, through a reconsidered view of citizenship education students are initiated into practices of speech whereby they exercise the ‘free use of the self’ to speak their minds, yet suspend judgement that would ensure that communication continues even in the face of sometimes troublesome and disruptive speech. What follows from such a reconsidered view of citizenship education, is that the notion can only be internalised by a particular school community – that is, a community of becoming – a community that is yet to be and one that can contend with whatever comes its way, including acts of violence, because they recognise that communities of becoming are shaped by its fluidity, rather than something which is fixed or
fixated. If students are to be taught what it means to co-belong as humans, they are in fact initiated into pedagogical activities that value respect for the sacredness of human life. Similarly, through a reconsidered view of citizenship education, students are initiated into practices to see things differently and that they do not privilege this or that community or the dominant community to which they loyally support. They are taught that their beliefs and actions ought not to be pre-determined by the community to which they belong, since this would mean that if all the teenagers in a community indulge in binge drinking then everyone ought to be doing it. Rather, as a community of co-belonging, they see things in their singularity in relation to whatever is lovable – thus abhorring violence which cannot be lovable. This would mean that if they see or know of something, which violates who they are, or violates others, they would not be afraid to speak out against it.

In conclusion, firstly, to be initiated into what it means to honour the sacredness of human life, students should be taught what relations amongst humans involve – that is, how they co-belong. And, teaching students that as individuals they co-belong they build relations of care and trust in the classroom as part of an ongoing critical lesson in human relations (Noddings, 2006: 103). This implies that students are taught not to stand by silently while their co-students do things they believe are genuinely wrong, such as showing contempt for others, or when they witness the humiliation of a student who might be different in terms of sexual orientation, religion, or ability. Secondly, to be taught what it means to do whatever is lovable, students are in fact initiated into discourses that emphasise whatever does not inflict harm, neither is it experienced as harmful by others. Thirdly, a reconsidered view of citizenship education teaches students what it means to see things from ‘within an outside’ without rushing to judgement. In other words, a reconsidered view of citizenship education ought to teach students what it means to be ‘within an outside’ – that is to be within violence and to explain it without rushing to judgement in their explications about violence. Likewise, students should be taught that violence is not meaningless for some humans. But students should be taught that such understandings of violence work against being human as it leaves people vulnerable under attack of such inhumane actions. In a different way, students should be taught the courage to resist violence and that a betrayal of violence is not admitting defeat but is actually inspiring in the quest to be human. In this way, a reconsidered view of citizenship education can go a long way in teaching students to co-belong. It will be a practice of potentially becoming.

References


Exhausting the fatigue university: In search of a biopolitics of research

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Abstract: In this paper, we analyze the conceptual space opened up by tiredness and exhaustion in relation to education, particularly with reference to the student-professor relationship within a university research framework. Such an inquiry into the nature of being tired and/or being exhausted is of personal interest to both of us. We are researchers in the field of philosophy of education. One of us is a teacher at the university, the other one is a PhD student. As such, we encounter valences of tiredness and exhaustion all the time in our professional lives, both in terms of our own work and in the work of other students/researchers. And yet, due to the emphasis on productivity which we encounter daily in terms of professional goals, standards, and expectations, speaking (let alone writing) about the topic of fatigue is accompanied with a certain taboo. Our contention is that tiredness and exhaustion are necessarily at the heart of the research experience, and as such, cannot be ignored by educational philosophers.

While critics are quick to point to fatigue as a symptom of larger forms of exploitation, is it not possible that tiredness and exhaustion, which are both expressions of fatigue, also have redemptive possibility overlooked by these very same critics? This is the clue given by two philosophers, Giorgio Agamben and Gilles Deleuze, which we have followed here. In the following, we will study tiredness and exhaustion 1) in their common, philosophical and educational meanings, 2) as concepts indicated by Agamben and Deleuze and, finally, 3) how these concepts relate to each other in a concrete educational situation that includes academic advising and research. Through these steps, we will draw a critical distinction between being tired and being exhausted, which will enable us to argue that only by thinking through the problem of fatigue can educational research become more than a mere symptom of a “fatigue society.” Indeed, it is through the very “illnesses” of exhaustion and tiredness that the biopolitics of research can be problematized and opened up for new configurations.

At the end of this paper, we will share a few questions that seem relevant to the concrete educational situation of research and academic advising. These questions will not resolve the issues outlined here, yet we hope that they will make the problematic of fatigue a central educational concern and focus of future philosophical research.

Introduction

In a famous passage in Lewis Carroll’s Through the Looking Glass, Alice and the Red Queen “somehow or other, […] began to run” (1872, 39). The little girl “was getting so much out of breath […] till suddenly, just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, they stopped, and she found herself sitting on the ground, breathless and giddy” (41). What surprises Alice is that, despite the race, she and the Red Queen are still at the same place. In our opinion, this scene could be a metaphor of our actual society, which is, in words of the cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han (2010), a fatigue society (Müdigkeitsgesellschaft). According to this German author, our society is not disciplinary anymore (Thou shalt not!) but based on the achievement (Yes we can!). The subjects of this new society are constantly pushed to achieve goals and tasks, thus they are expected to be faster and more productive than ever before. The typical disease of this society of achievement is fatigue. Indeed, the fatigue society is so pervasive that even the last bastion of rest—sleep itself—is now under threat by the colonizing forces that emphasize productivity, efficiency, and constant self-monitoring (Crary 2013).

Alice and the Red Queen’s race might also give a certain insight into research as it is experienced in what we would call the “fatigue university.” Even more than knowledge,
cleverness or curiosity, a strong physical and psychological condition has become essential to survive research: we have to run, and keep running, in order to bear the current pace of publications, research projects applications, etc. The old adage “publish or perish” is an injunction to maximize one’s utility to a knowledge economy through research or else one will lose opportunities for grants, research positions, or tenure. If one submits to such an injunction, then researchers are more than ever exposed to the risks of escalating fatigue. All the while, this frenetic pace does not necessarily improve research; on the contrary, it often seems to lead us nowhere (D’Hoest and Bárcena 2011).

In this sense, fatigue would seem to be a kind of social and educational sickness brought about by the very real working conditions of a biopolitical knowledge economy—an economy that concerns the investment in and management of life itself (Foucault 1990; Hardt and Negri 2001). Indeed, it is only within a biopolitical framework emphasizing health, optimization, and achievement that fatigue would even register as a political, economic, and educational issue. Importantly, fatigue is not merely a regrettable result of the achievement paradigm but rather is its central product, for it is through fatigue that ever increasingly refined and sophisticated tools and strategies of self-improvement can be designed and implemented. And if such fatigue cannot be surmounted, then the individual will be abandoned by the system as a form of “collateral damage.” In this sense, fatigue is internal to and constitutive of biopolitical logistics.

While critics are quick to point to fatigue as a symptom of larger forms of exploitation, is it not possible that tiredness and exhaustion, which are both expressions of fatigue, also have redemptive possibility overlooked by these very same critics? This is the clue given by two philosophers, Giorgio Agamben and Gilles Deleuze, whom we will explore in this essay. Although not considered educational philosophers as such, their work has become more and more frequently cited in educational philosophy and theory in relation to a host of contemporary issues (see, for instance, special issues in the journal Educational Philosophy and Theory on both Agamben and Deleuze for overviews of emerging scholarship on these figures). In this paper, we analyze the conceptual space opened up by tiredness and exhaustion in relation to education. Our contention is that, nowadays, tiredness and exhaustion are necessarily at the heart of the research experience. In the following, we will study tiredness and exhaustion 1) in their common, philosophical and educational meanings, 2) as concepts indicated (more than elaborated) by Agamben and Deleuze and, finally, 3) how these concepts relate to each other in a concrete educational situation that includes academic advising and research. Making a critical distinction between being tired and being exhausted will enable us to argue that only by thinking through the problem of fatigue can research become otherwise than a mere symptom of a fatigue society bent on producing quantifiable achievements in the name of optimal performance quotas. Indeed, it is through the very “illnesses” of exhaustion and tiredness that the biopolitics of research can be problematized and opened up for new configurations.

A Brief Review of Tiredness and Exhaustion

What does research have to do with tiredness and exhaustion? Such an inquiry into the nature of being tired and/or being exhausted is of personal interest to both of us. We are researchers in the field of philosophy of education. One of us is a teacher at the university, and part of his job is to advise students on their dissertation; the other one is a PhD student, who is writing a dissertation under the supervision of an academic advisor. As such, we encounter valences of tiredness and exhaustion all the time in our professional lives, both in terms of our own work and in the work of other students/researchers. And yet, due to the

1 See for instance Educational Philosophy and Theory 36, no. 34 (2004) for a special issue titled “Deleuze and Education” guest edited by Inna Semetsky as well as the forthcoming special issue in the same journal on Agamben.
emphasis on achievement which we encounter daily in terms of professional goals, standards, and expectations, speaking (let alone writing) about the topic of fatigue is accompanied by a certain taboo. For faculty, to admit fatigue is to admit to a “lack of willpower” or to a “lack of passion” or even worse, such admissions demonstrate a certain “ungratuitousness” for one’s professional life while so many academics are under-employed or un-employed. For students this means that they are labeled “unreliable” or “lacking promise” and thus are cut from large research projects, conference panels, and so on. The following is an attempt to break through this taboo on discussing fatigue in order to understand how society at large and philosophy in particular have constructed the complex concepts of tiredness and exhaustion. Our goal is to lay some groundwork for a much more in-depth analysis of the same concepts found in Agamben and Deleuze.

According to Oxford Dictionary, “tired” means “in need of sleep or rest.” After the race, the Red Queen tells Alice: “You may rest a little now.” Indeed, Alice may rest a little because the race has tired her - Carroll uses the word “exhausted” (“just as Alice was getting quite exhausted”). The same dictionary registers two meaning of “exhausted”: 1) “drained of one’s physical or mental resources; very tired” and 2) “completely used up.” In the common, everyday uses of the terms, tiredness and exhaustion are thus clearly related: there seems to be a difference of degree between “tired” and “exhausted.” “Exhausted” is more than “tired” (a comparative), to the extent that it can mean the extreme form of “tiredness” (its superlative). In the description of Alice after the race, the use of “exhausted” instead of “tired” indicates that Alice could not have run much more or faster than she was doing, since she was actually reaching her limits.

For the French historian of philosophy Jean-Louis Chrétien, fatigue is an essential phenomenon of existence, and, as such, it has always been a philosophical theme. In his book De la Fatigue (1996), the author surveys the history of philosophy and points to some interesting elaborations of fatigue by Aristotle, Sartre, Lévinas and others. As Chrétien is right to point out, nobody gave more importance to “tiredness” (Müdigkeit) and “exhaustion” (Ermüdung) in philosophy than Nietzsche; indeed the author dedicates a whole chapter to Nietzsche and the “great fatigue.” Throughout his work, Nietzsche seems to refer to tiredness and exhaustion indifferently, and the various ways he describes the two are never fixed, yet he does suggest that there are different sorts of tiredness. When Nietzsche refers to tiredness, he usually points out a symptom we have to fight, for it is a sign of Christian decadence. Roughly speaking, tiredness deserves, in Nietzsche’s thought, the same treatment as disease: Christianity is “at the very least a sign of abysmal sickness, weariness, discouragement, exhaustion, and the impoverishment of life”. (Nietzsche 1967, 23).

Christian values provoke weariness, that is, make us weaker, and it is against these values that we have to struggle in order to recover our authentic forces from the grip of this “will to decline.” Chrétien concludes: “Fatigue becomes the more including, the more general denomination of everything we should say no to” (our translation 1996, 138). But sometimes Nietzsche refers to an original “tiredness,” which is the reverse of the “fatigue” we have just depicted: what Chrétien calls the “fatigue of the fatigue.” In this sense, to be tired is to be tired of tiredness, of Christian values, and this is indeed a good sign. Nietzsche experienced original tiredness himself: there is a kind of tiredness which is a force, and not a weakness. It is to be tired of the tiring: to be tired of “the good” (and not to be tired of the suffering).

Thus, according to Nietzsche, tiredness always carries a value, and it is usually negative, for it weakens us, making us decadent. The only case in which tiredness is positively considered

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2 The German language seems to confirm what has been supposed above: exhaustion (Ermüdung) is a degree of tiredness (Müdigkeit).
by Nietzsche is when tiredness is a good sign: it is good to be tired when tiredness is a force that reacts against tiredness.

As we discussed previously, the current educational dogma emphasizes becoming an active worker, citizen, student who realizes his or her full potentiality in the name of economic efficiency and productivity (Lewis 2013); but, obviously, the more active you are, the more tired you become. Therefore, we can expect more tiredness from the current educational system: students, but also professors, are expected to be more tired than ever (given that, for example, there are more tests to pass, more student work to be graded, more papers to write, more grants to apply for, more conferences to attend, and so on). Thus, if activity is an educational goal, tiredness should be a healthy symptom, a sign that we are being truly active. And indeed, symptoms such as testing fatigue testify to the constitutive role of being tired under high-stakes testing. Interestingly psychological research shows that this fatigue does not necessarily impair test taking outcomes, and in this sense cannot be offered as evidence against high stakes testing (Ackerman 2009). Tiredness is not an obstacle to taking the test and maximizing outputs but is part and parcel of a fatigue society, becoming an opportunity for the student to continue to devise motivational strategies and skill sets in order to achieve optimal outcomes.

However, this natural tiredness which is internal to high-stakes testing and its fatigue cannot be drawn out to the point of becoming tired with being tired: activity has to remain permanent, the machine has to keep running, no matter which degree of tiredness affects us. We cannot avoid tiredness, but, as far as possible, we are expected to avoid its limit: exhaustion. We are educated to avoid exhaustion: we are educated in how to guard some reserve of our energy despite “getting so much out of breath.”

This brief review thus leaves us with several remaining questions. First, is there a real difference between tiredness and exhaustion, and, if so, is it one of degree instead of kind? It would seem that common, everyday usage of the terms in the English language would suggest the former rather than the latter. Yet, being tired of being tired (as Nietzsche writes) could indicate a qualitative (rather than merely quantitative) transformation from tiredness to exhaustion. A second question then follows, is there any space for rethinking being exhausted in the space of research? If exhaustion is the real taboo here, does this not indicate that there might be something fundamentally disruptive to the biopolitics of the knowledge economy about exhaustion (and its relation to tiredness)? Could fatigue, tiredness or exhaustion be desirable in education? To further develop these lines of inquiry, we now turn to a careful reading of the themes in Agamben and Deleuze. What will emerge is a rethinking of the biopolitics of exhaustion as a kind of redemption of the tiredness of the researcher within and yet against the fatigue university.

Agamben on Study, Potentiality and Exhaustion

In this section, we would like to turn more explicitly to education and its particular relationship to fatigue. To do so, we will begin with an overview of Agamben’s reflections on studying and their connection to exhaustion. In particular, his gesture toward Bartleby the Scrivener as the exhausted figure of study will lead us to Deleuze and a more in-depth discussion of the potentially positive powers of exhaustion as the redemption of fatigue. In short, we will use Bartleby as a hinge or fold between Agamben, Deleuze, and the concepts of education and fatigue. The result will be a new appreciation of fatigue that is directly relevant to the question of research in the “fatigue university.”

Before turning to Bartleby directly, it is important to understand the relationship between potentiality and education in Agamben’s work. For Agamben, study is the quintessential educational experience of potentiality as such, freed from any ends or measurable actualizations (Lewis 2013). This is important because in the fatigue society, potentiality is usually only thought in relation to some actualization (which can be measured and thus
improved upon). Potentiality as such, according to Agamben, has a particular tautological structure which holds within itself mutually exclusive opposites in a single formula. Speaking of potentiality, Agamben writes, “the tautology ‘it-will-occur-or-it-will-not-occur’ is necessarily true as a whole, beyond the taking place of either of the two possibilities” (1999, 266). In such a tautology, each alternative is returned back to a purely contingent state. Thus, potentiality is a suspension of distinctions such as occurrence and non-occurrence, being and not being, in order to keep open a perpetual field of contingent possibilities. The field of contingent possibilities is the precise location of human freedom as the opposite of necessity (something must occur or not occur) and impossibility (something that occurs cannot not occur). As Agamben writes, “…the root of freedom is to be found in the abyss of potentiality…. To be free is, in the sense we have seen, to be capable of one’s own impotentiality…” (183).

What makes us human is the capability to not be: the impotential of our potentiality. This description is important for educators because, as Agamben argues (1995), study is an educational experience of potentiality: it is a time and space of indecisive, rhythmic turning from undertaking to undergoing, stupidity to lucidity without necessary end. Held in this perpetual sway, when asked what one is studying, it is essential to answer with an indeterminate formula: “I would prefer not to say.” In this formula, the studier remains indistinct, yet free in this indistinction. Freedom here is both positive and negative. The studier is free from the compulsions of an educational system obsessed with assessment of outcomes and measurement of potentialities, but also free to be continually otherwise than assessments and evaluations predict. Given that the fatigue university concerns itself with developing skills and capabilities for the purposes of actualizing these skills and capabilities in educationally and socially measurable forms, study seems to be nothing more than an obstruction or annoying rest stop on the way toward full optimization and thus economic utility. Indeed, the studier would most likely be labeled as suffering from lethargy or fatigue, and thus crossed off as a mere degenerate excess of the knowledge economy.

Interestingly, for Agamben, Bartleby the Scrivener is the “most exemplary embodiment of study in our culture” (1995, 65). Bartleby, as a studier, withdraws his capabilities to copy from actualizing their potentiality in the form of work and prefers not to write. At this precise moment, when Bartleby famously prefers not to copy yet remains in the legal office as an “employee,” he embodies the tautology of potentiality: no longer a worker he is not yet something else either. Indeed, his impotent gesture opens up a space and time that suspends the daily functions of the office, spreading exponentially to the point of driving his employer to the brink of madness. As a studier, Bartleby is interminably moved between two antithetical poles: “the potential to be (or do) and the potential not to be (or do)” (1999, 255). To prefer not to opens and sustains an indistinction to be and not to be that defines the tricky terrain of study. Only in this suspension is Bartleby freed to study and to become a paradigm of study. But to move in this space and time of study is to be exhausted by study. In a slightly different context Agamben again argues that the artist who puts down his pen and turns his or her back to Genius embodies “exhausted and suspended time” (2007, 18) not unlike Bartleby who renounces the practice of his craft through the suspending function of his “I prefer not to.” But what precisely is exhausting and exhausted about Bartleby? What distinguishes his exhaustion from the simple tiredness of his coworkers and employer, both of whom are frustrated by Bartleby’s lack of willful intentionality?

For answers to these questions, we must now turn to Deleuze. But first, an important linguistic remark. “Exhausted” is the word that has been used by the translators of Agamben’s “Bartleby, o della contingenza” and Deleuze’s “Bartleby ou la formule” and “L’Épuisé.” The original words are “épuisé” in French and “stremata” in Italian; Agamben writes: “Lo scriba che non scrive (di cui Bartleby è l’ultima, stremata figura)” (1993, 53). The adjective “stremata” points at the extreme of the force, which has been reached, the limit of the energy that has been exceeded. We will see in the following that, whereas Agamben and
Deleuze are not thinking through the same words, “stremata” and “épuisé” point in the same direction. In this light, the clue given by the English language - the one word “exhausted” - happens to be a good lead.

**Deleuze: The Positive Power of Exhaustion**

“The Exhausted” was written by Deleuze three years before his death, as he was fatigued by a long standing lung disease (Cull 2011). Interestingly, the Spanish Dictionary *Maria Moliner* describes “cansancio” (“tiredness”) as provoked, sometimes, by a lack of breath; that happens to Alice, who, while “getting quite exhausted”, ends up breathless. Besides, we often use this expression, “breathless”, to indicate “tiredness” or “exhaustion”: in French, “breathless” can be translated by the expression “être à bout de souffle” - like Godard’s film— which literally means “to the end of the breath.” Thus, Deleuze thinking concepts like tiredness and exhaustion is no accident; rather, exhaustion and tiredness, that is, his permanent condition of breathlessness, have been the structural accident of Deleuze’s life that have, like Nietzsche’s various illnesses, pushed him to philosophize.

In “M comme Maladie” (“M stands for Illness”), extracted from Parnet and Deleuze’s *A to Z*, Deleuze expounds upon his fragile health condition. To him, illness (“maladie”) is not something bad (“mal”), since illness serves the thought much better than a good health condition does. To think is to be attentive, to be listening to life, and illness sharpens life; in this sense, illness makes thinking easier. But Deleuze insists on the fact that tiredness and illness are not quite the same. Yet both concepts are existentially related: illness increases and brings tiredness forward. To be tired means: “today, I have done what I could”; tiredness is the signal for the end of the day. In this interview, Deleuze never uses the word “exhausted”, but it was recorded in 1988-89, a few years before writing “The exhausted.” In this later text, Deleuze provides a startling description which is worth citing in full:

"The possible is only realized in the derivative, through tiredness, whereas you are exhausted before birth, before self-realization or realizing anything whatsoever….. When you realize some of what is possible, it’s in relation to certain goals, projects and preferences: I put on shoes to go out and slippers to stay in….the realization of the possible always proceeds through exclusion, because it presupposes preferences and goals that vary, forever replacing predecessors. It is these variations, these substitutions, all these exclusive disjunctions (daytime/night-time, going out/staying in…) that are tiring in the end. (1995, 3)

In this passage, Deleuze begins by noting a difference between being tired and being exhausted. To be tired is to “realize” some sort of potentiality in relation to certain goals, a possibility. Thus when one takes a test in order to measure skill acquisition, one is legitimately tired for one has attempted to realize a possibility: “today, I have done what I could.” While it is perfectly acceptable and legitimate to be tired, Deleuze notes that such realization “always proceeds through exclusion.” Thus the goal of taking the test produces a certain exclusion: not winning. Sets of “exclusive disjunctions” are produced such as “going out/staying in.” Deleuze continues:

"Exhaustion is altogether different: you combine the set of variables of a situation, provided you renounce all order of preference and all organization of a goal, all signification. It is no longer so as to go out or stay in, and you no longer make use of days and nights….. That does not mean that you fall into indifferentiation, or into the celebrated identified contraries, and you are not passive: you press on, but toward nothing. You were tired by something, but exhausted by nothing. (1995, 3-4)

One is exhausted not by realizing a set of defined goals but rather by renouncing all preferences, all goals, and all determinate outcomes. Like Bartleby, Beckett’s Mr. Knott “does not reserve any combination for a singular use that would exclude others—whose
circumstances are yet to come” (1995, 4). Rather than particular uses determined by particular goals, the combination holds within itself all possibilities equally: “The combinatorial is the art or science of exhausting the possible, through inclusive disjunctions.” The exhausted tallies combinations, permutations, enumerations, and infinite lists to the point where he or she “replaces projects with tables and programs denuded of sense” (5). In this sense, for Deleuze and Agamben, Bartleby and other enigmatic figures of study are exhausted because they are in a state of perpetual potentiality. Whether Agamben’s tautology or Deleuze’s combinatorial, contingent possibilities remain open, and thus withdrawn from actualization.

“The Exhausted” is originally a post-face to a French publication of Quad³ and Other Television Plays by Beckett. According to Deleuze, what makes these plays interesting are Beckett’s different ways of exhausting the possible: meaningful sentences are exhausted by words, which are exhausted by voices, which are exhausted by space, which is exhausted by the image (which is the final exhaustion of the possible). This is not about tiredness, but exhaustion: here, it is clear that Deleuze traces a difference of nature between both concepts. Exhausted is not a comparative or superlative of tiredness, but something different. The exhausted does not rest, because he cannot rest. And the reason of this restlessness is the structural lack of rest (reserve) of exhaustion.

Deleuze does not use the word “exhausted”, but “épuisé”, which comes from “puits”: a well; “épuiser” literally means “dry up.” In Spanish, “exhausted” is “agotado”, which comes from “gota” (drop): someone who is “agotado” has no drop left, no water reserve. “Exhausto” is a synonym of “agotado”: “exhausto” and “exhausted” are built with “ex” and “haurire,” which means “collect, draw water (haurire) outside (ex).” As has been indicated before, “stremata,” the adjective used by Agamben to describe the figure of Bartleby as the last scribe, points at a limit that has been pushed to the extreme, exceeded. These linguistics facts put us on the way to understanding the radical difference between tiredness and exhaustion: admittedly, both states tend toward inactivity. But, first, after tiredness comes always rest, and rest is possible only because there is already some rest: not everything has been buried in the activity, something remains, and this remainder is the starting point for a new activity. But the exhausted does not rest: indeed, the exhausted does not lie in a bed but sits, like Dürer’s melancholic angel, like the studier, like Bartleby. Second, someone gets tired after having done something, whereas the exhausted is exhausted “already before his birth” of nothing. Third, you get tired because of a choice; you get exhausted when you don’t choose, when there is no preference (we could perhaps say that exhaustion is an existential skepticism).

In “M comme Maladie,” again, there is an interesting development and celebration of the old age. To be old is to be; Being, full stop. When you are young, you have to be(come) this or that, you are tied to projects. On the contrary, to be old is to be free of projects, careless about the actualization of possibilities. To be old is to be exhausted, someone “who has no other need than to be without need.” Bartleby has no age either, but we have the feeling that he is old: not that he has become old, but that he is (already old, already exhausted). And yet, isn’t education about building and following projects, be(com)ing this or that? Are we claiming, as with Bartleby, that students who are already old are already exhausted?

3 Quad illustrates (and probably inspires) the difference which Deleuze traces between “tiredness” and “exhaustion”. : “There’s no doubt that the protagonists tire themselves out and will drag themselves more and more. But tiredness is a minor aspect of the enterprise […]. The protagonists realize and tire at the four corners of the square, along the sides, and the diagonals. But they accomplish and exhaust at the center of the square[...]. The center is precisely that place where they might come together; and their meeting, their collision, is not an event among others, but the only possibility of event -the potentiality of the corresponding space. (Deleuze, 1995, 13).
Bartleby has no reserve, and he produces nothing. He does not tire himself, he is exhausted. But Bartleby is not only a character who has been fictionalized by Melville: we are Bartleby when we study, when we do research. To research is to re-search, to search repeatedly, and to search and search and keep searching means to have nothing to report, no conclusions to offer up. As studiers we are confronted not with meaningless materials or with meaningful results but rather with the exhaustion of an unfulfilled potentiality of meaning. This is the moment when we hold all possibilities as a combinatorial, all possibilities are equally open, and thus resist evaluation, measurement, and thus submission to the knowledge economy. In this sense, it would be a mistake to read Bartleby as merely a symptom of the fatigue society. His exhaustion as a “preferring not to” opens up a radically different possibility, one that has profound implications for research. Of course, the irony of this move is not lost on us: the character who appears to do nothing, research nothing, and fade away into nihilism does not seem a very efficacious paradigm for research, especially now in the day and age of “publish or perish.” Certainly, Bartleby perished, his rhythm of study slid into nihilism. As such, if he represents—as we argue, drawing on Agamben and Deleuze—a point of suspension where the logic of fatigue is interrupted precisely through the logic of fatigue, this point of suspension must be further examined. How can the exhausted neither perish nor become yet another functionary of the knowledge economy?

**Tiredness and Exhaustion in a Concrete Educational Situation: Academic Advising and Research**

The exhausted departs from nothing and does/goes to nothing; the researcher lets idle everything she has learned before in order to study; she prefers not. The research is exhausted and the research exhausts her: beyond the possibilities of supporting this or that theory. All that is left is the potentiality to be and not to be, to do and not to do held together in the combinatorial that haunts the researcher day and night, never allowing him or her to rest.

As a teacher, one of us has often seen the mix of fatigue and inspiration that haunt students when they suddenly open their mouths as if to say something profound only to fall quickly back into silence, when they retreat into stacks of books and articles that pile up on desks, when they doodle endless outlines and permutations of possible relationships between concepts, and when they postpone deadlines. In all cases, the students, heads bent down, back’s hunched over with bags full of books, are not lazy or tired but rather caught in the interminable rhythms of research, the trace of which is written on the body through various signs of exhaustion.

But as teachers and advisors to future researchers, we have a role to play in bearing the burdens of exhaustion. Exhausation should not be brushed off as merely an unsavory and thankfully temporary phase that will be eventually overcome through the completion of specific projects. This attitude again views exhaustion as a kind of deficit, but teachers cannot afford to be like the employer in Bartleby’s office who is impatient, frustrated, and constantly agitated by this strange, interminable figure who is not productive or responsive to either commands or care.

Yet, sooner or later, the exhaustion of research will be pushed to resolution by publishing, giving conference papers, and, in the case of students, becoming doctors. They will have to finish, one day, their dissertations—otherwise the result is infinite delay in the aporetic space of study, if not nihilistic dissolve as witnessed in the case of Bartleby. These goals are tiring, so it seems that the exhaustion of research is forced to live with the tiring pace of the fatigue university, but how? Tiredness and exhaustion are mutually exclusive: tiredness comes after realizing a possibility, to exhaust possibilities is to prevent them from applying to actualization; tiredness comes after having done something, the exhausted is exhausted of
nothing; tiredness is a consequence of choice, exhaustion is the state of non-choice, a permanent existential skepticism.

Like Alice, we are tired of this research race. Then, we would like to share a few questions that seem relevant to the concrete educational situation of research, and which it would be useful to think from and for academic advising. These questions will not resolve the issues outlined here, yet we hope that they will break the taboo of the fatigue university, and thus enable us to question how exhaustion and tiredness shape the biopolitics of research.

- Is it desirable to be Bartleby-studier-exhausted forever? We are inclined to think that although we don’t escape from actualization, these exhausting experience are “healthy” in the sense that they renew the potentiality for choices. Indeed, Agamben argues that when Bartleby puts down his pen and ceases to produce “evidence” of his potentiality, he opens us a space beyond action—a space of “inspiration” (1995, 65) that is also a space of nothing in particular (only potentiality). But how do we turn to exhaustion from mere tiredness, how do we pass from mere fatigue to the fatigue of the fatigue? If Agamben is correct, then it is precisely this passage that leads toward a new notion of human freedom (or, could we say, educational freedom to be otherwise than).

- But also, and more importantly: How to hold onto inspiration without sliding into nihilism… how to rest somewhere in the paradoxical space between publish or perish (a space that offers no rest)? How can one exist in the tautology of neither publishing nor perishing? How do we pass from the absolute absence of reserves in order to say something? How do we go from exhaustion to expression (which implies an inside that goes outside)? (This problem repeats the philosophical issue of the passage from potentiality to act.) To do research is, of course, to end up saying certain things (instead of other things, at least not at the same time), but in order to end up saying certain things, we have to re-search, that is, to come back to the ambiguous, the inclusive disjunctions, combinatorials. This means saying things about the potentiality for saying things—saying certain things about that which remains uncertain (our potentiality). A new kind of research is thus made possible here, one modeled less on quantifiable and measurable outcomes and more on the aporetic practices of Beckett’s plays or the novels of Walser and Kafka.

- If, as Deleuze suggests, it is easier to think being tired (and thus, without waiting for the new reserves), is this way of using tiredness not a way to call on exhaustion? Is not the exact point where tiredness and exhaustion meet (but also separate) when we make the most out of being tired and thus return to a kind of original tiredness (as Nietzsche would argue)? In other words: could we not make the most of the “publish or perish” period by using these spaces and times to exhaust them? Then, as Deleuze suggested (1987) and performed, our academic writing would become completely different: … or..., … and ... and ... and..., it could be ... or/and..., the ...-...-...-...-

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Recognition as education in "recognition of responsibility"

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Abstract
A human being looks for recognition. Being recognized is the condition through which one recognizes oneself. It is one of the human fundamental paradox: “at the very moment of realizing our own independence, we are dependent upon another to recognize it” (Benjamin, 1988).

Mankind has access to three models of recognition. They are love, right and social esteem. Family, state and society are socio-relational contexts where those models take form.

In this work the first among these models is analyzed - love - as well as the place in which it manifests - family. The latter forms through primary relationships based on “giving” between people otherwise not related to each other. The first gift-event between subjects forming the family unit - a gift transforming the extraneous into familiar - is the gift of reciprocal recognition. To the reciprocal recognition in the couple, there will follow the one with the child. The parental recognition gives to the newborn the chance of the recognition of himself and as independent actor on the stage of the world: "I am, I can". The relationship based on mutual recognition between parents and child brings other gifts: language, action and memory, each being central in order to recognize oneself as agent.

The parental recognition towards the child is the recognition of responsibility towards the fragile, the one who has to be protected and accompanied on the path of his development. Such a responsibility manifests in the ability to respond to the call of the fragile. Being parent includes the response amounting to the promise of care allowing the child to become person. The responsibility lying inside the family is the responsibility of bonds, the responsibility for the future (Jonas, 2002) and being parents is absolute responsibility, it requires being able to be mature reflecting on the acts according to educational modules. The presence of adult figures showing themselves reliable through their taking over the responsibility, and through being a model, allows the newborn to carry through in daily life the meaning of being in the world according to care and responsibility (Pati, 2014). Guiding a child toward the awareness that existing between the interlacing of freedom, choice and responsibility is a crucial element in parental education since the objective is making the newborn become a person.

By doing so, "shaping the minds", promoting a habitus, the parent solicits in the child the taking on himself of responsibility towards the alterity and the common world. Recognizing oneself as being free and having the choice of answering to this freedom, promotes the recognition of responsibility, meaning, the ethical use of one’s own freedom.

1. Recognition
A constitutive lack of being drives men to relationships: the need for the other is a need to belong, to be a part/take part, to be acknowledged. Relationships always arise from our need for others, which derives from an absence accompanying us since birth, an incompleteness implying our being and that can be expressed as the need for alterity to establish our own existence. The longing, sign of void, «is like the breathing of the soul. It requires a void to be filled» (Zambrano, 2000, 70).

Recognition is what human beings continuously search for, because to be recognized is the condition for being able to recognize oneself. To walk along this path that goes through all human events/history, the search for self, and to conquer one’s own autonomy, the presence of others - the other from self, another acknowledging us - is required. We can conquer our
uniqueness and irreplaceableness only through alterity. To occur, self recognition cannot avoid the recognition of others. So every subject has in his gaze «the intrinsic claim (...) to be acknowledged as what it is within the context of all beings» (Tillich 1994, 71).
Recognition allows the subject to become a person, to gain access to his own power, the power to be himself - an individual capable of speaking and acting, to be aition, that is an agentic and responsible subject.

Recognition is a precondition of agency (Honneth, 1995). In other words,

"in a nutshell, the central idea is that the agentic competencies that comprise autonomy require that one be able to sustain certain attitudes toward oneself (in particular, self-trust, self-respect, and self-esteem) and that these affectively laden self-conceptions - or to use the Hegelian language, ‘practical relations to self’ - are dependent, in turn, on the sustaining attitudes of others" (Anderson & Honneth, 2005, 131).

But such recognition, which

“allows the self to realize its agency and authorship in a tangible way (...) can only come from an other whom we, in turn, recognize as a person in his or her own right” (Benjamin, 1988, pos. 172).

2. Forms of recognition: love, right, social esteem
Mutual recognition, in which identity blooms, inhabits three places of the being-in-common. Family, state and civil society are the three social spheres (Honneth, 2002; Scheler, 1996) that expand the space for human inter-action, offering thus to the individual three different forms of recognition: love, respect and esteem (Liebe, Achtung/Respekt, Wertschätzung). Each one of them increases one’s autonomy and capability to act.

2.1. Love
The term love is used to describe that particular bond composed of strong affective attachments - in common between few people - typical of all primary relationships.

Love bond is an interactive relationship «that forms the basis for a particular pattern of reciprocal recognition» (Honneth, 2002, 118) and is founded upon affective approval as well as support, in which the physical presence of the other is essential.

For Hegel love represents the first stage of reciprocal recognition, because in it «subjects mutually confirm each other with regard to their concrete nature of needy creatures» (Honneth, 2002, 118). In the reciprocal experience of loving care - while recognizing themselves/each other as loving beings - both subjects know themselves to be united in their dependence on each other and in their neediness.

The relationship between mother and child represents the perfect form of this model of recognition. The primary intersubjectivity that the child experiences in the interaction with his mother (or the caregiver) is the relational background through which he learns how to differentiate himself and how to recognize himself as an autonomous entity (Winnicott, 1985; Trevarthen, 1979).

By virtue of the experience of this intersubjective relationship and the trust in the continuity of his mother’s loving care, the newborn baby starts that process of development which will allow him to leave the phase of “absolute dependency”, and, passing through the stage of “relative dependency” (Winnicott, 1985, 108), to establish increasingly definite and strong boundaries between the self and the other-from-self. As the intersubjective bond is still present, the newborn grows within himself, and due to the love and the trust of the mother he
comes to trust himself and the surrounding environment. The acknowledgment and the love that have been experienced induce in the newborn a form of individual relation-to-self rooted in his ability to be alone and unfold in him the “discovery of his own personal life” (Winnicott, 1985, 29).

Love relationships are essentially depending on a precarious balance between attachment and independence, on a continuous tension between symbiotic self-sacrifice and individual self-assertion, which allows the human being to be/for being oneself in another.

“The form of recognition found in love, which Hegel had described as ‘being oneself in another’, represents not an intersubjective state so much as a communicative arc suspended between the experience of being-able-to-be-alone and the experience to be merged” (Honneth, 2002, 129).

In the peculiar model of recognition that love is, the success and the maturity of affectional bonds depend on the capacity - acquired in early childhood - to strike a suitable balance between self-fusion and independence. Love feelings between adults can only happen if the experience of separation generated a disillusionment of the original desire for merging and a “structural” capacity to recognize the other as other-from-self.

2.2. Right

Law enters the heart of intimacy defining forms and modes of matrimonial unions as well as those of filiation/parent-child bonds. Thus, legal norms assign to every subject a position in the state order/structure since their birth and grant them the rights associated with that position, as well as the free circulation within the state system. The subject, recognized as a full member of that state order/structure, can access self-respect. “We can only come to understand ourselves as the bearers of rights when we know, in turn, what various normative obligations we must keep vis-à-vis others” (Honneth, 2002, 132). The recognition as bearers of rights, which is a consequence of being recognized as members of the state order/structure, gives access to a juridically defined freedom.

“In the state man is recognized and treated as a rational being, as free, as a person; and the individual, on his side, makes himself worthy of this recognition by overcoming the natural state of his self-consciousness and obeying a universal, the will that is in essence and actuality will, the law; he behaves, therefore, toward others in a manner that is universally valid, recognizing them - as he wishes others to recognize him - as free, as persons” (Hegel, 1970, 221).

As the individual sphere of rights widens on the juridical level, the capacities of the I-can increase in parallel. The entitlement/granting/possession of new rights entails new possibilities for individual action, from the forms of the “can-say” to those of the “can-do”, because it leads to new possibilities for creating new worlds, either private worlds or public ones, using words or actions.

If the civil rights protect a person’s life, liberty, and property from unauthorized state interference, on the other hand the political and social rights refer to the discretion/option to act and concern men as ‘agents subjects’. Political rights guarantee a person the opportunity to participate in processes of public will-formation, while social rights ensure a fair share in the distribution of basic goods within non-egalitarian societies, characterized by an equal distribution of rights and an unequal distribution of goods. “Having rights enables us to “stand up like men”, to look others in the eye, and to feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone” (Feinberg, 1980, 143).

The protection of those rights, those “individual claims” which legal norms provide legitimation for, proves to the individual his own right to perceive himself as a full member of
the community which he lives in and as a person. This protection plays a significant part in one’s process of identity-formation as ‘agents subject’. Being recognized as a rightful member of a community grants to anyone the recognition of his own rights and can convince oneself of their value for the society: “the experience of recognition corresponds to a mode of practical relation-to-self in which one can be sure of the social value of one’s identity” (Honneth, 2002, 98). The lack of such a protection conveys/spreads the exclusion of the subject from the community he belongs to/is part of (Benhabib, 2002). This exclusion takes different forms and undermines one’s self-respect.

2.3. Social esteem

If within the family self-confidence arises, if holding rights promotes self-respect, (in a similar way) self-esteem materializes in the broader social context. What is it that makes an individual worthy of esteem? In this context the axiological dimension plays a role as well as those social mediations, both symbolic (representations) and practical (organizations), which interpret it.

“Self and other can mutually esteem each other as individualized persons only on the condition that they share an orientation to those values and goals that indicate to each other the significance or contribution of their qualities for the life of the other” (Honneth, 2002, 147).

In the absence of a universally valid frame of reference, social representations become the medium - historically defined - within the context where goals and values are shaped. Therefore interpretive practices are needed to detail those personality ideals believed to be noticeable and also to judge one’s capacities as valuable. Within a dynamic value-horizon as the contemporary context is, different social groups act in order to raise the importance of the capacities which each recognizes as valuable. When others recognize a subject’s capacities, then he can nurture his self-confidence, esteem himself as a capable being – bearer of worthy qualities –, and act his own freedom of being. In other words, capacities not only must be possessed but also recognized. It’s the public context which, through the recognition of the right to certain capabilities, allows the subject to enable his own capacities, which are expression of his agency freedom (Sen, 1982).

This form of recognition grants everyone the opportunity to feel as a valuable individual, because they hold capacities and performances that they do not share in an undifferentiated manner with others.

While legal recognition is based on the principle that every human being is valuable as an end in itself, the social level emphasizes the worth that a subject can have according to his peculiar gifts. This concerns with the acknowledgement of individual performances on the basis of their socially defined importance. Esteem, as suggested by the very term, requires an estimation of an individual’s qualities and capacities, and this appraisal occurs within a socially shared system of reference (Darwall, 1977) which ascribes to each personality trait a given value depending on whether it is judged to be desirable or not. Such social claims meet the individual’s need to be recognized as a unique subject according to his own differences - what distinguishes him from others (Mead, 1934).

3. The family and the gifts of recognition

Family is the place for mutual recognition. Fundament of the family is the gift of oneself between extraneous, the care given to the relationships, both elements assuring the “continuity of the world” (Arendt, 1999, 243). Gift between extraneous is what gives (that means, gives it as a present) the origin to bonds characterized by closeness, to what generates familiarity, to what inhabits the places in which one feels safe, at home. “Transmutation from extraneous to familiar is the basic phenomenon of the gift” according to Godbout (1992, 42) referring to bonds grounding society through family origination.
Family constitutes itself "around the *matris-munus* (life-death) and the *patris-munus* (order-disorder) symbolic cornerstone" (Scabini, Cigoli, 2000, 12).

The gift from the mother is the relational ability, symbolic weaving, the ability to love restoring the authentic sense of being (Muraro, 1991, 26-27). The mother offers the child the possibility to take part in the biological and in the symbolic order, provided that she does not take possession of the child given also the presence of the father (Kristeva, 2006). The maternal gift is the gift of that love, that affection that promptness needed for life to blossom. It is not only a matter of biological life, but also of a psychic dimension, a space in the mind suitable to welcome the other, to recognize him/her, to protect him/her.

The paternal figure, however, bears sense of limit and sense of law, of justice and of equity. This figure incarnates the rule that contains, gives certainty, that rule expressed in the recognition of the value of the other and the rights belonging to him/her. The gift of the father is the offer of normative contexts crossed by affection, by the certainty of reference points to look up to in order to take decisions about one’s acting (Pati, 1981). Paternity, furthermore, is the mediator of socially defined belonging. A paternal gift has a public significance, historically conferred - the recognition of the son through giving the name, appointment/conferment allowing the enrolling of the newborn into a double record of the progeny (of the stock) and of the affiliation (to society) (Dusi, 2008).

In the mutual recognition between parents and children, the gift of life transforms into the gift of becoming person. A gift has multiple familiar relationship forming appearances, starting from the gift of life to the gift of law, from the gift of love to the one of independence. Each of these forms seems to find recognition of one fundamental aspect in the gift.

It’s in the family, in the pre-law relationship of maternal and paternal love that the possibility is given of “being or knowing oneself in one’s other” in its most radical and intense form, according to Hegel formula . The word recognition here defines the twofold process through which the newborn

"acquires his/her own freedom and at the same time solidifies an emotional bond; as to say, talking of recognition is intended as a constitutive element of love and does not mean a cognitive respect, it means instead an affirmation of accompanied independence, actually supported by love" (Honneth, 2002, 131).

In fact, the one-that-gives-care knows that to the child the essential experience

"is the easiest of all, the one activating a contact involving no action, in which one can feel to be a unicum between two people being as a matter of fact two and not one. These things give the child a chance to be, and starting from here the following matters having to do with action, doing, being done for origin. This is the basis to what will gradually be for the child the experience of oneself" (Winnicott, 1988, 4-5).

The unconditional care by parent provides the baby with the feeling of security and of being loved, and, above all, to be worthy of love. This affective dimension is the basis for all subsequent forms of recognition (Honneth, 2011, C.III.1; Iser, 2013). Maternity and paternity (Lévinas, 1961) are the contexts within which one internally opens up to the foreigner, welcomes him/her with radical availability, the same availability bringing the mother to make space within herself for the other, both physically and psychologically, offering her body to

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1 The distinction between the gift of the mother and the gift of the father is a simbolic one not a phenomenological one.
the life of the other. The mental space of the mother towards the son (Winnicott, 1971) allows the latter to feel recognized just as he is and to be able to grow. In the recognition the first symbolic act takes place, the one that crosses the encounter with the son in order to enroll him in the belonging context both in a relational and cultural meaning (Scabini, Cigoli, 2000). Such a recognition demands avoiding both identification processes and projective dynamics denying to the other the chance to reveal oneself, to uncover, to become oneself.

The family is the place where the three dimensions giving structure to the capable man – being the speech, the action and the narration (as in talking man, acting man and narrating man) (Ricoeur, 2005) - are offered to the newborn and begin to take form thanks to the gift of having a place inside the genealogy and to the being recognized.

a. The gift of the language - the talking man
Self-designation is generated by denomination: in motherly care relationships one’s own name is learned, the language, home of the being, is learned (Heidegger, 1962). It’s in the relationship to the other that the human being learns to be an I, learns to designate himself: "I am".

“The self-designation of the speaking subject is produced in interlocutory situations where the reflexivity is combined with otherness. The speech pronounced by someone is a speech act addressed to someone else. What more, it often is a response to a call from others“ (Ricoeur, 2005, 96).

In self-designation the subject inhabits a self-recognition which is reflective: self recognizes itself as able “to do things with words” (Austin, 1962).

b. The gift of the memory/narration - the narrating man
The gift of a place in the genealogy at the same time brings the participation to a story, the story of the family one belongs to, in which narration of the existence of an individual weaves inside the story of others and finds its origins. Personal identity builds up starting from the parental narration recalling our own first words, our own first gestures. A narration constituting an unicum together with our own early memories, sometimes merging with them. The narration “installs diversity at the very heart if every plot of life” (Ricoeur, 2005, 122) is one forming part inside the human identity (Bruner, 1996). Man recognizes himself through the memory of himself, being it at the same time memory of the origins, of the interlaced relationships and of the actions done, stories entwined.

c. The gift of action - the acting man
Repeated and satisfactory experiences of recognition, of respect and approval encourage the child to continue the action of development of his abilities suitable to influence the outer world. By doing so, he discovers himself as "independent actor on the stage of familiar relationships" (Dunn, 1990, 163). The child becomes "capable" of answering to the familiar community by saying and doing, thus capable of modifying the parental attitude.

Evolution of personality actually takes place by facing the human context being the reality: only in the field of such a comparison one becomes a self, "an I that can do things" (Karljen, 1979, 98). His own abilities identify the self. This aspect will be the focus of this present work.

4. To be recognized and recognize oneself as agent: "I am, I can"
In the family alongside "recognition-identification" in bonds of love carried out by the adult, we have "recognition-confirmation" of the ability of the newborn, who will have to interiorise it until he can assert "I believe that I can!" (Ricoeur, 2005, 91).
The recognition in which the newborn is subject-object allows the latter to reflect upon himself in terms of what is acknowledged by others. Through parental recognition given to his talking, to his acting the newborn recognizes himself as capable, acquires self-esteem as a distinct and unique subject in the love bond with the one who is other than himself.

Trust in oneself is just self-recognition as a capable subject, able to influence the surrounding world made of people and things; it is a matter of recognizing a power to oneself: the power of being and of acting in the context formed by a group of relationships crossed also by ambivalence and conflict. Self-recognition thus finds its own significant dimension "in the disclosure of the "I can" figures, those figures that "give life to the portrait of the capable man". The affirmation - indicating an ability ("I am, I can, I do") is based on the recognition of the others ("You are, you can, you have done") giving establishment to the one (Benjamin, 1988, 26). Independent self is characterized by the ability of self-designation. Autonomy, means recognition of self as a subject and an agent is to be able to say "I am, I can!".

Discovering one’s own power to successfully modify the surrounding world (Stern, 2002) happens in the relationship to the other confirming us in our power to be (dynamis) and to do (energeia), an other recognizing our actions and the value they have. Alterity inhabits the core of self-recognition as capable subject:

"it is the consideration given by others that will create our self-representation, that is image, self-esteem and it is the latter permitting to the young man to develop (or not develop) his projects and expectations" (Pourtois, Desmet, 2007, 154-155).

The family is the place where the power of being of the newborn comes to play, protected from the power of the world (Arendt, 1999). As parents recognize the newborn through love, they introduce him to the discovery of self and of the power of his being. The child with increasing awareness becomes upholder of intentional actions intended to change the human context he belongs to. Through such actions he tries to participate more and more actively to the power games inherent to the domestic relationships. Comprehension and acquisition of skills in these aspects of the social relationships are central to happily enable the newborn to his role of recognized member inside his own family. In fact, children already at three years of age are active members in power relationships even though "are just beginners in handling power politics inside the family" (Dunn, 1990, 75).

If an infant is not respected by others and thereby being included into the normative networks constitutive of our life-form of person as an active member with an authority-status corresponding to its (actual and/or potential) capacities of exercising authority, these capacities are unlikely to develop or actualize ideally (Ikänemo, 2010, 350).

Furthermore, "the essence of man is the effort that man makes persisting in his own being" (Spinoza, 1972, IV), tending to the blossoming of one's self, the disclosure of one's energy and possibilities. Being is the power to be. The word "power" origins from the Latin pŏsse, pŏtis ēsse, being able, the ability to form one's own possibilities, the possibility of self-affirmation. The action is the place of the affermation of the being, of his actualization, a step on the way to the self realization that happens through the education.

5. **Educating to the power of being by taking on responsibility**

   Responsibility is the ability to respond to the other, to a commitment taken towards the other. The object of responsibility par excellence is the transient by definition: subject-object

   "way distant from perfection, all-in-all contingent ipso facto, perceived just in his transience, destitution and insecurity, must have the strength to induce me to give my
person at disposal, free from any desire of possession, through the simple fact that he 
exists and with his own special qualities" (Jonas, 2002, 111).

Family is the place where responsibility is at its origin, the one taken toward the newborn, 
the weak one par-excellence. In this way, parenting means taking on responsibilities 
radically, a guarantee of educational care.

Parentality is radical change of one’s way of thinking of oneself and of being, since 
responsibility taken towards the other conditions every thought, every decision, and every 
action: one has to answer for somebody, about somebody, to somebody other than himself. 
This responsibility is irrevocable because one is a parent for ever.

One’s own freedom is put at disposal of the fragile one the responsibility of which has been 
taken over. The adult who takes over the responsibility for his own generative ability 
dedicates himself to the other, pre-occupied about the realization of his can-be:

"Love is a will to advancement. The loving “I” wants, first of all, the existence of the 
“You”, and furthermore, wants the independent development of this You" (Nèdoncelle, 
1959, 13).

The family responsibility is the one of the bonds, is the responsibility for the future (Jonas 
2002) and the parenting is absolute responsibility, it requires a capability in terms of maturity 
reflecting itself in the acting according to educational modalities (Noddings, 1986). Parental 
educational care is an expression of the adult’s reliability, of his capability to answer to the 
commitment assumed towards the newborn - the one who is fragile and entrusted to my care 
- since the moment when he is recognized as son. Reliability, testified by continuous 
attentive parental presence, is the heart of parental educational responsibility.

Parental responsibility means listening to the child with attention and it implies an educational 
planning which invests on the present (daily life) just as much as in the future (the child 
becoming independent). The love of one’s child pushes towards sacrificing, toward hard work 
and firmness in order to carry out responsibility. It means being committed to acquire the 
ability to answer questions of “being” of the other, having the joy of accompanying the child 
toward the discovery of one’s self and the world while the child learns to become responsible 
for both.

Educating a child means promoting autonomy, independence in thought and action. In a few 
words, educating means promoting the child’s power to be. This power needs to be put into 
practice in the sense of self-realization, that is, to give an answer to the promise of being a 
person, implicit in everyone, to learn to answer to oneself and for oneself.

The parents’ authoritative guide aims to make the child’s full humanity to “be born 
continuously” (Pati, 2014, 64), an humanity that manifests itself in the ethical use of his 
power of being, his capacity of acting. Educating does not only mean promoting the child’s 
autonomy but also the ability to put into practice implicit freedom in the power of being and 
acting. Acting implies a choice, a deliberation, which in turn means knowledge of norms in 
which we recognize ourselves. Educating means proposing/imposing norms socially 
mediated and expressed of those values the parents refer to and relate to, whether aware or 
not. Educating means educating towards responsibility, towards the ability of answering to a 
promise, to a “moral” commitment. What changes, what is subject to erosion of time and 
cultural and familiar differences, and parental choices, are the subject-object of responsibility 
educating to be responsible towards whom/what) and motivation (why be responsible).

How does family educate to be responsible?
Education is a kind of acting finding instance in his main form of intervention; the newborn learns by observing and experimenting (Dewey, 1991). Through living certain situations he interiorizes precise patterns, in behavior, in thoughts and actions.

“The particular medium in which an individual exists leads him to see and feel one thing rather than another; it leads him to have certain plans in order that he may act successfully with others; it strengthens some beliefs and weakens others as a condition of winning the approval of others” (Dewey, 2008, 15).

Since the observation plays a central role in the educational processes, the presence of adult figures who have shown to be reliable thanks to their assumption of responsibility and their ability to serve as model, allows the newborn to fulfill, in everyday life, what means being in the world according to care (Mortari, 2006) and responsibility. By doing so, by promoting a habitus, “forming the minds”, the parent demands to the child an assumption of responsibility towards otherness and common world.

“The Virtues then come to be in us neither by nature, nor in despite of nature, but we are furnished by nature with a capacity for receiving them and are perfected in them through custom” (Aristotle, II, 1, 20-25).

Examples met in the early years of life are those who leave the strongest traces in man (Seneca, 2008).

In the relationship between parent and child, in daily life, the newborn carries out those values and those rules in which the parents recognize themselves and, through love, he interiorises the axiological horizon lived in the family. The latter becomes part of his horizon of values.

But, educating also and mostly means thinking, questioning oneself about what sense to give to existence, what values to follow, what norms to respect. Only in this way is family education also education toward responsibility.

6. The free man: acknowledges oneself as responsible
The process of formation convened by birth - the responsibility of which is taken over by the family in the early years of life of the human being - is a path directed to the acquisition of the ability to act as decisional core, as a free man.

Freedom in the ancient world was a status connected with belonging to a descent, to a family. The gift of a place in the genealogy - to be recognized as a member of the family - gave access to the status of free man.

"In Latin and Greek, the free man, *(e)leudheros, positively defines himself by being part of a “family”, a "descent"; as proven by the Latin designation of "children" (from a good family) as free: to be born well and be free, it's the same" (Benveniste, 2001, 247).

The word defining the children, free, is the plural of the adjective liber. It originates in a very ancient formula - both Latin and Greek - that used to accompany the celebration of the wedding in which the goal defined was: to generate "legitimate children" (liber [or]um quaesundum causa o [gratia]; epi paiòdn gnèsìon sporâi) (Beveniste, 2001, 249).

The legitimate child was the one that, on the contrary to slaves and foreigners, as a fully entitled member of a family, and so of the society, had the power to act freely. That is why he could be defined as "free". Thanks to having been recognized as belonging to a precise familiar genealogy he had the gift of full freedom and therefore responsibility. This gift could
be used because some values were interiorized. These values allowed him to choose, to act, to practice his own freedom.

Man as Aition is required to take decisions "here and now", to act wilfully (hekon); to take preferential choices (proairesis).

«Man is the originator of his actions; and Deliberation has for its object whatever may be done through one’s own instrumentality" (Aristotle, 1112b 31-33).

To promote the educational process of an individual means to promote the ability to be āuctor of his own existence. The āuctor, the author, is generative subject, he who creates, he who uses his power to increase, make increase, cultivate an idea, a life, a world.

Self-recognition as "decisional cores" (Williams, 1993), as agents, as aition - “words that as something to do with the idea of a cause” (Ricoeur, 2005, 71) - brings to the recognition of responsibility. The action done is consequent to a decision (proairesis or preferential choice) that the man, being "free", has the discretion to take. Decision is either principle (archē) or causes (aitia) of the action done and the choice distinguishes itself according to good from evil (Aristotle, 1112a). The action done following to a choice is intentional, in fact “the originating of the motion of his limbs in such actions rests with himself; and where the origination is in himself, it rest with himself to do or not to do” (Aristotle, 1110a). Recognizing oneself, therefore, as agents ‘capable of certain accomplishment’ (Ricoeur, 2005, 70), means also to recognize oneself as responsible for the entailed consequences of realizations acted following to a deliberate act.

However, acknowledging responsibility is, in turn, the result of judging, evaluating, deciding. Exercising freedom means choosing also of not to be responsible. Therefore, what leads to acknowledging responsibility?

The recognition of responsibility - innermost action, “consisting of his evaluating his acts, particularly retrospectively” (Ricoeur, 2005, 77) - is expression of a reflective self, of a self-recognizing oneself as a free and independent man. Ability to take on oneself one's own acts implies not only recognizing oneself as author of the action, but also the ability to ascribe them to oneself, that means, recognizing oneself responsible of these same acts and of the consequences that they bring along. The free man is asked to choose who he wants to be every day, to answer to himself as a result of his choices and his actions in the context of a conditioned freedom.

A univocal and right solution to the ethical problem faced is not given here, it is a critical issue true to the nature of man, to his ontology.

In any case, to live in family contexts that encourage taking on responsibility, the presence of adults (in this case parents) that practice responsibility (as far as exercising their own power and answering to their own actions), represent the main way, even if imperfect, by which man learns to recognize himself responsible of his own actions and his own freedom. That is, to recognize himself and to be recognized as a person, “ethical” subject, capable of distinguishing good from evil, and to choose the first between these two poles.

References
Education, expectation and the unexpected

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Abstract
This paper considers the concept of expectation in Higher Education. I begin by sketching out examples of how this notion pervades a number of practices in the university, and how in particular, expectation drives the way that the university tutorial operates. In considering the marketization and consumerism of higher education, I draw on the distinction that Paul Standish identifies between an ‘economy of exchange’ and of ‘excess’, suggesting how expectation and responsibility figure in both. In thinking beyond narrow conceptions of expectation and responsibility, I turn to the work of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, and to their ideas of relationship, responsibility and the other. I consider how these might inform the educational encounter of the tutorial. I initially outline Buber’s central work on the distinction between I-It and I-Thou modes of relationship. I contrast this with Levinas’ work, and draw out the distinction between the mutuality at the heart of Buber’s work, and the relationship of asymmetry that marks Levinas’ conception of our responsibility to the other, (ethics). Having drawn the distinction, I then suggest lines of connection in their respective philosophical projects, specifically how speech or dialogue is central to the relationship with the other in both thinkers. In both Buber and Levinas, speech cannot be thought of solely as communication. This has significant implications for education: speech is not simply the communication of content between tutor and student; teaching is rather a space for encounter with the other through language. This has further implications for thinking about the tutorial in a university education, as a place not only for the meeting of expectations (in a closed economy of exchange), but as a space for encounter with the unexpected. To conclude, I consider the nature of the encounter in relation to an example from the film adaptation of Alan Bennett’s The History Boys. I argue that the tutorial opens up the possibility for a mutual encounter with otherness. This positions the tutorial as a space of educational otherness, - a Foucauldian heterotopia which rejects the expectation-bound economy of exchange, and which offers the possibility of an education marked instead by an economy of excess.

Introduction
While reading a thesis proposal recently, I came across a rather surprising section: the student laid out what he wanted from his supervisor. He wrote: ‘I expect respect, confidence, faith, honesty, encouragement, solidarity, and love’. On reflection, I have heard much talk in recent months of ‘expectation’, specifically in Higher Education. Perhaps this should not surprise us: young people embarking on a university education will clearly be interested in what the experience will be like and what will be expected of them. Prospective students and parents will want to know if such an education will be good value for money in terms of contact teaching hours, resources and campus facilities, and that gaining the degree will increase employability. Universities too will expect applicants to have a genuine interest in the subject and to possess certain skills and qualities (with the expectation that this will increase retention and achievement, and reduce drop-out rates). And students studying on a course have expectations of the quality of teaching, of access to academic and support staff, of resources, feedback and assessment.

An argument increasingly heard is that the marketisation the university sector in some countries, the introduction of league tables, world rankings and student satisfaction surveys, have all changed the level and nature of student expectation, and, in turn the expectation that universities have of their staff in meeting increasing student demands (Rolfe 2002; Longden 2006). These changes illustrate the shifting boundaries of education, and the
prevalence of new discourses suggested by talk of market share, cost benefit analyses and even ‘staying in business’ (Mason 2003). Let me try to illustrate my concerns here with reference to a number of practices and policies in universities. First, there is an increasing emphasis on collecting and analysing the opinions of the consumer – or in this case, the students. Students are asked give their views on modules that they study and they elect course representatives to raise issues through formal university meeting structures relating to academic expectations and how these have been met. Students from the UK complete the annual National Student Survey\(^1\) and in some universities, they input into the validation processes for new degrees, reporting on their expectations of planned courses. In one sense there is little difference between what is being asked of students, and the way that businesses uses review sites and consumer focus groups to as ways of marketing and targeting its products\(^2\). Second, some universities are adopting aspects of consumer practice in terms of having a charter of rights (in the way that consumers have such statutory rights under UK Sale of Goods Act). There is something here of the legal and contractual about the relationship: a student charter might lay out the rights and responsibilities of both the university and the student. Such charters can include service-level agreements laying out requirements in terms of the turnaround times for feedback to students, and the maximum time allowed for tutors to respond to student emails. The pressure of ‘consumerisation’ is not restricted to Higher Education. Schools are not exempt from this idea of a quasi-contractual relationship. Learning and behaviour contracts are common, and schools often issue documents, signed by the parents, the pupil and the school, agreeing for example, that parents will listen to children’s reading for so many nights a week, and that children will be listened to read on a one-to-one basis in school for a specified amount of time each week. A further controversial aspect of the education-business relationship has been the creation of academy schools, some of whom are sponsored by large companies. The Manchester Enterprise Academy, for example, sponsored by Manchester Airport, promises to enrich its curriculum by including the study of business, travel and tourism, and the academy’s teachers have attended the airport’s management development programme\(^3\).

So where does all this leave us? We must be aware that, however useful a trope ‘consumerisation’ might be in drawing attention to aspects of expectation in Higher Education, we should heed Stephen Ball’s warning against using it ‘promiscuously’ (2004: 23). It is not the case that student expectation is a taboo subject, nor is it the case that having appropriate expectations is not a right and proper approach. It is rather to draw attention to where the extent of this, and the incessant drive to meet student expectation, gets in the way of other kinds of thinking. Paul Standish, in writing about Higher Education, describes the way in which the kinds of practice to which I have been drawing attention, can be thought of in terms of economies of exchange (2005: 53). He writes that tutors, students and administrators are caught up in ‘forms of exchange in what we might think of as a closed economy, an economy that totalises the field of concern’ (p. 53). This is not a critique of the

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\(^1\) The NSS, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has gathered data annually since 2005 on the quality of undergraduate courses in UK universities. It measures student satisfaction – using a 6 item rating scale – on 7 core areas: teaching; assessment and feedback; academic support; organisation and management; learning resources; personal development; overall satisfaction.

\(^2\) In an interesting development TripAdvisor, one well known online travel review site, has begun to include reviews of education institutions. See, for example, the review of Tarrant County Junior College, where 13 reviewers rated it as ‘Excellent’ or Very Good’ for its college education.[ONLINE], Available at: <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g56015-d145362-Reviews-Tarrant_County_Junior_College-Hurst_Texas.html#REVIEWS>, Accessed January 3\(^{rd}\) 2014.

\(^3\) See [ONLINE], Available at: http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/manweb.nsf/Content/manchesterenterpriseacademy, Accessed January 3\(^{rd}\) 2014.
need to discharge our obligations on a daily basis as part of our everyday work, but it is to
draw attention to where the effects of this encroach onto other ways of thinking and acting.
This paper attempts to move beyond the tyranny of expectation seen solely in contractual
terms – or as a closed economy of exchange - and to consider instead how we might think of
expectation in our everyday meetings with one another.

At the outset, I want to give this discussion a particular focus. In the context of higher
education, there are many different ways in which individuals meet, each characterised by
different expectations and responsibilities. In this paper, I focus in particular on the
educational encounter, as experienced in the one-to-one meetings that a university tutor
might have with her student. Whilst responsibility and expectation form part of many aspects
of the everyday operation of higher education, this paper asks how these terms might be
understood specifically in the context of the educational encounter.

Setting, Managing and Meeting Expectations: Roles and Responsibilities
Outside a student’s formal lectures, workshops and seminars, the tutorial - or the one-to-one
meeting with her tutor - is a significant part of university life. A number of expectations tend
to surround the educational encounter of the tutorial: the tutor expects the student to come
prepared for the tutorial with ideas and questions and that she will discuss and participate in
the tutorial. The student, on her part, expects the tutor to keep the tutorial appointment, to
answer her questions, explain things that are unclear and provide specific feedback on her
work. Such expectations might be set out in university documentation or in an induction
programme, but they are also managed: a student should not expect more than her allocated
tutorial time, nor should a tutor demand excessive preparation for such meetings. The
effective operation of the tutorial system is predicated on certain responsibilities, but these
are mutually exclusive: the student must undertake the necessary preparation, but the tutor
is not responsible for monitoring or ensuring this. Equally, the tutor must take responsibility
for preparing her feedback for the student, without the latter’s need to enquire on this before
the tutorial itself. Of course this does not preclude the kind of everyday conversation between
tutors and students where the tutorial might be mentioned, and the student, in passing, might
say to her tutor: ‘See you on Thursday for my tutorial – I’m looking forward to the feedback
on my essay.’ What this tutorial relationship shows (and this may be true also for higher
education contexts beyond the educational encounter) is that while there are expectations of
the other, there seems only to be responsibility for the self.

Recent research on policy and management in higher education has addressed different
aspects of responsibility and expectation. This tends towards a focus on the university’s
responsibilities and accountability (Meyer 2012), students’ views on entitlement and
expectation (Chowning and Campbell 2009, or on culture and change management in higher
education (Radice 2013). Much of this work has a particular and somewhat narrow
conception of expectation and responsibility, namely that expectations and responsibilities in
education - and so in the educational encounter - are little different from those in those in
other legal, contractual, or business and retail scenarios. This paper attempts to look beyond
this to the work of two Jewish philosophers, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, both of
whom have given attention in a different, and richer way, to ideas of relationship,
responsible and the other.

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4 By ‘tutorial’, I mean the one-to-one meeting that a tutor has with her tutee to discuss course content,
concepts, or often, how the student should approach the course essay or assignment. This tutorial is
to be differentiated from the discussion that a student might have with a designated ‘personal tutor’ to
discuss broader issues such as achievement, progression or personal issues that might be affecting
study. The ‘tutorial’ as discussed in this paper should not be equated with the ‘Oxford tutorial’ that is
common in a small number of elite English universities (see Ashwin 2005), nor with group tutorials or
seminars that form part of the delivery of a course.
Martin Buber: I and Others

Martin Buber (1958, 1961) writes about how our human relationships are played out by way of our encounters with each other and with language through a ‘life of dialogue’ (1961: 37). His most influential philosophical work (1958) contrasted two modes of existence: dialogic intersubjectivity, characterised by an I – Thou relationship, and the ‘monological’ I – It mode, in which the other is an object that exists only as part of one’s own experience. Put succinctly, Annette Holba writes: ‘I-It moments are functional encounters that can help one to negotiate from point A to point B’ (2008: 491). To illustrate the objective nature of such a relationship, Buber provides this example:

I consider a tree.
I can look on it as a picture: stiff column in a shock of light, or splash of green shot with the delicate blue and silver of the background. I can perceive it as movement: flowing veins on clinging, pressing pith, suck of the roots, breathing of the leaves, ceaseless commerce with earth and air – and the obscure growth itself.
I can classify it in a species and study it as a type in its structure and mode of life.
I can subdue its actual presence and form so sternly that I recognize it only as an expression of law… I can dissipate it and perpetuate it in number, in pure numerical relation. In all this the tree remains my object, occupies space and time, and has its nature and constitution (1958: 14).

To experience the other monologically is a turning back on oneself (Rückbiegung). I – It is, as Buber explains, ‘technical dialogue prompted solely by the need of objective understanding’ (1961: 37) and constructs individuals as objects to be used to serve particular interests. If monologue is a turning back on oneself, it must be a turning away from the other. The I of I – It knows itself as subject and the other only as object and exists as a self without any need of reference to the other. Any conversation - and here I am thinking in particular of the tutorial conversation - in which the other is merely objectified (by my expectation but for whom I have no responsibility), is, as Buber defines it, technical dialogue only. What I am suggesting here is that where the object of a tutorial conversation is solely driven by such specific – and often narrow - expectations (of, say, giving or providing feedback or of asking / answering particular questions) the richer educative possibilities that can come from an encounter with, and a responsibility for, the other, are lost in the service of meeting those expectations. Moreover, this very narrow understanding of ‘expectation’ fails to take sufficient account of the meaning of the word itself as suggested by its etymology. The roots of ‘expectation’ in the Latin ex-spectare, (to look outside or beyond), suggests in this context a looking beyond ourselves to the other. I will say more of this later in relation to the work of Emmanuel Levinas, but for now, I consider further Buber’s life of dialogue as expressed in the I – Thou mode of existence.

In contrasting the life of dialogue with one of monologue, Buber claims that the ‘basic movement – or essential action of the former is the act of “turning to the other”’ (1961: 40). Indeed, it is only in relationship to the other through the life of dialogue that the I can be truly I. In writing about this difference in Buber between the I - It and the I – Thou, and the modes of existence and knowing, Levinas writes:

The statement that others do not appear to me as objects does not just mean that I do not take the other persons as a thing under my power, a “something”. It also asserts that the very relation originally established between myself and others, between myself and someone, cannot properly be said to reside in an act of knowledge, that, as such, is seizure and comprehension, the besiegement of objects...The dialogical relation, its fitness to constitute a meaningful order that is autonomous and as legitimate as the traditional and privileged subject-object
correlation ... remains the unforgettable contribution of Martin Buber's philosophical labors (Levinas 1993: 40-41).

For Buber, such an encounter is indicative of an I-Thou relationship, one characterised by mutuality and exchange. For Buber, the relationship between the I and the Thou is one of mutuality; as Buber puts it: 'Relation is mutual. My Thou affects me, as I affect it' (1958: 17). Buber is indicating here how our relationships with each other are reciprocal. For Levinas, Buber's life of dialogue can be summarised as 'relation with the other in reciprocity' (1993: 45). But this is not reciprocity understood crudely; rather he is signalling how we should live well together. It is in our living with each other, and our being in a reciprocal relationship that we encounter each other through dialogue. This goes beyond the kind of expectation in which the other is objectified, to a meeting of the other of which Buber writes: 'If I face a human being as my Thou, and say the primary word I-Thou to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things' (1958: 15). But mutuality here does not imply contentment, or the satisfaction that comes from having your expectations – in the commonly understood sense of the word – met. The mutuality of which Buber writes is one that comes from being exposed to the other in the encounter of dialogue.

From Buber to Levinas

Levinas, in acknowledging the ‘admirable analyses of I and Thou'(1993: 42), writes: ‘Nothing could limit the homage due to him [Buber]. Any reflection on the alterity of the other in his or her irreducibility to the objectivity of objects and the being of beings must recognise the new perspective Buber opened up’ (p. 42), However, Levinas does indicate some points of divergence in his own thinking from that of Buber. Levinas’ understanding of our relation to the Other is one characterised by asymmetry. Laura Barnett contrasts Levinas’ position with that of Buber, as follows:

Levinas’ ‘asymmetric’ I-You relation, in which the Other stands above me and commands me, crystallizes a fundamentally different position from Buber’s I-Thou. It stresses a view of otherness as radically other, transcendent; it expresses the contrast between Levinas’ vertical ethics, starting from the other and Buber’s horizontal ethics, starting from oneself (2009:215).

Levinas does not deny that our human relationships are often of the more contractual kind, such as those in which there is a mutual expectation between tutor and student. Indeed, these kind of quasi-contractual relations only make sense in the light of the infinite relation to the other in which they are in contrast.

In describing the asymmetry of the relationship, Levinas writes that the other comes to me from a dimension of height – ‘from on high’ (1969: 174). It is in the other’s approach, in his proximity, that my response is demanded. But this proximity is not just physical closeness or intimacy; it is rather a sense of immediacy or weight that compels me, such that it is like the self is hostage to the other. Levinas therefore proposes a new subjectivity, one rooted in the self’s primary projection to the other through responsibility for the other. Levinas writes: ‘The tie with the other is knotted only as responsibility’ (1969: 97). So Levinasian ethics disrupts the notion of reciprocal expectation: I do not expect of the other, because my relationship to the other is one only of responsibility through proximity and substitution. This marks a key difference between Buber and Levinas, which we might also put in terms of their respective emphasis on reciprocity and responsibility. For Buber, the I reaching out to the Thou in

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5 Levinas often uses the capitalised ‘Other’ to translate the French l’autrui, indicating an absolute relationship to another person; he uses ‘other’ for l’autre, though both usages are not entirely consistent.

6 Levinas used the term ‘substitution’ to describe how the self is hostage to the other (1981: 127).
dialogue, is already heard by the Thou who appeals to the I. In Levinas, the idea of ‘a reciprocity, an equality or equity’ (1993: 43) is the wrong starting point. Levinas points to this difference when he writes: ‘The approach to others is not originally in my speaking out to the other, but in my responsibility for him or her. That is the original ethical relation’ (pp. 43-44).

This raises two important questions: first, how are we to understand the nature of this responsibility to the other? Clearly it would be wrong to see it in quasi-contractual terms, as if my responsibility to the other were limited to the performance of particular tasks to fulfil my part of the bargain. That would diminish responsibility to the level of mere expectation. Rather, it is in the other’s facing me that makes me responsible. We might also ask a second question: if I have a responsibility in the face of the other, what are the limits of such responsibility, how far does it extend? Levinas writes of the:

unlimited nature of the responsibility for the neighbour: I am never absolved with respect to others. Responsibility for the other person, a responsibility neither conditioned nor measured by any free acts of which it would be the consequence. Gratuitous responsibility resembling that of a hostage, and going as far as taking the other’s place, without requiring reciprocity (1993: 44).

For Levinas, my responsibility to the other is infinite; it deepens the more I answer (réponse in French) to it. To illustrate Levinas’ claim, Paul Standish considers a number of examples: the parent who fulfils all his obligations in rearing his child or the citizen who abides by the law, pays her taxes, votes and contributes to her community (Standish 2005). These are the things of everyday life, but how would it be to think of these kinds of relationships in terms of the closed economy of exchange? He imagines that these might become ‘moral grotesques, whose characteristic vice is perhaps hubris?’ And he goes on to ask: ‘is there not something virtuous about the parent (the parent, the citizen, the teacher, the lover …) who feels that she had never done enough, who has some sense of the infinite possibilities of her relation to the other’ (2005: 59).

**Teaching as Speech: Encounter with the Other**

Perhaps a word of explanation is needed here before moving on. This paper opened by drawing attention to the contemporary issue of student expectation in Higher Education. In thinking about the issues that this raises (such as a relationship to the other and responsibility) the paper has turned to the writings of Buber and Levinas in moving beyond the stultifying discourses of student expectation to find a richer conceptualisation of a university education, and within this, the place of the educational encounter of the tutorial in particular. It might seem an unusual choice to have pursued this specific issue from an educational context through the rich, though often enigmatic, writings of these particular thinkers. Walter Kaufmann’s prologue to the 1970 translation of I-Thou, points to how Buber’s delight in language gets in-between him and his readers; he draws attention to the obscurity of Buber’s phrases and the lack of clarity in his meaning. In a similar way, Anna Strhan, in her introduction to issues of teaching, subjectivity and language in Levinas’ Totality and Infinity writes: ‘To say that [Levinas’s] discussion is ‘clear’ is misleading, however. The language of Totality and Infinity is strange, enigmatic, attempting to draw attention to the impossibility of capturing the relation with the Other in language’ (2012: 19).

While the direct links to educational practice may not be immediately evident in the richly articulated vision of our human relationships, ideas that are central to the philosophical projects of both Buber and Levinas, their interest in education, and how this has influenced their thinking and writing, should not be underestimated. In 1949 Buber founded the Beth Midrash l’Morei Am (the School for the Education of Teachers of the People) to train teachers, and he directed this until 1953 (Friedman 1981). Levinas also spent a significant amount of his professional life as a school administrator and teacher. After earning his doctorate, Levinas taught at a Jewish high school in Paris (the École Normale Israélite...
Orientale) which he also went on to direct from 1945 until 1979 (Strhan 2012). But it is not simply the fact that they have links with formal education through their past professional backgrounds and responsibilities that makes Buber and Levinas relevant for investigations into contemporary educational practice. It is rather that one theme is like a common thread within their different discussions of our human relationships.

As has been outlined above, Buber’s dialogic relations are characterised by reciprocity. Levinas, on the other hand, emphasises a relationship of asymmetry with the other. It is not as if these are in some way options that we choose for how we deal with each other on a day-to-day basis, but rather that they emphasise differently the understanding of our ethical responsibility or intersubjectivity. What is a common emphasis, however - indeed what is central in Buber and Levinas' philosophical projects - is the place of speaking or dialogue in our relationships with each other, and how this is both the context for education, and is educational in itself. To illustrate this, let us consider two quotations. Buber, writing in Between Man and Man (1961), states: ‘The relation in education is one of pure dialogue’ (p. 98). In Totality and Infinity (1969: 39), Levinas writes: ‘The relation between the same and the other – upon which we seem to impose such extraordinary conditions – is language’, and later: ‘Speech is teaching’ (p. 98). What these quotations all seem to point to is a kind of triadic relationship between teaching, speaking and our relation to another. But this is not simply the learning of curricular content, or the learning of a subject that is at stake here. Levinas in particular is indicating how we are taught through a specific orientation to the Other; to be taught is to encounter the Other. So speaking is in this sense does not merely operate to communicate ideas – or as Levinas puts it, “to simply transmit an abstract and general content already common to me and the other … The “communication” of ideas, the reciprocity of language, already hide the profound essence of language’ (1969: 98). If we accept Levinas’ idea of teaching as a space for encounter with the Other through language, then we must understand the practices of teaching other than in terms of closed economies of exchange, that is, in terms merely of content communicated and received, of questions asked and answered. Language understood as communication in Higher Education, and particularly in the context of the tutorial, would fail to acknowledge the alterity of the Other whose foundation is language. To encounter the Other is to be addressed by, or called by the Other in discourse, such that I respond – I am taught. Levinas writes: ‘To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression … it is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation … is a teaching’ (1969: 51).

It is clear, then, that in Levinas there is an ineluctable link between what is communicated in our speaking, and the Other. Anna Strhan summarises it like this: ‘For Levinas, if we are to talk about communication at all, then this notion of what is communicated must be seen as inextricably bound up with what cannot be communicated: the Other’ (2012: 26). But this is not entirely removed from Buber’s thought; Buber’s dialogic relations do not suggest the kind of ‘speaking-as-communication’ from which Levinas distances himself. Buber’s ‘life of dialogue’ cannot be reduced to the kind of speaking that illustrates closed economies of exchange. In Between Man and Man (1961), Buber writes concerning dialogue: ‘In its highest moments, [communication] reaches out beyond even this boundary. It is completed outside contents … which are communicated’ (pp. 20-21). This notion of reaching out or reaching beyond is then developed into an idea of turning to the other; he writes: ‘Two men bound together in dialogue must obviously be turned to one another’ (p. 25). Whilst for Buber there is a mutuality in our turning to the other in dialogue which runs contrary to the asymmetry

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7 Levinas’ view here stands in opposition to Socratic maieutics which he claims in Totality and Infinity suggests that I am ‘To receive nothing of the Other but what is in me’ (p. 43). For a fuller discussion of this point, see Strhan (2012), pp. 20-25.
found in Levinas’ account, dialogue itself as a space for the founding of our experience of the world - and as itself a ‘teaching’ - is found in both accounts. But there are further connections of thought between the two writers: For Levinas, I am addressed or called by the Other in discourse such that I must respond; in Buber, the mere fact of living means that I am addressed, and in each instance of that address, ‘a word demanding an answer has happened to me’ (p. 27). If we take Levinas’ central notion of a relation of responsibility to the other as ethics, then we can again see lines of connection with Buber. He writes: ‘The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an “ought” that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding’ (1961: 33-34).

Spaces for Encounter with the Unexpected

To dispense with the idea of meeting expectations in education would be unworkable, and frankly absurd. The student to whom I referred in the opening of the paper, and who articulated his expectations of his supervisor, was not doing so out some misguided pomposity, he was simply being honest in communicating his heartfelt expectation. Higher Education would not operate without mutual expectation from institutions, staff and students alike. That such expectations are often codified in quasi-contractual terms in charters and agreements is perhaps to be expected in the regime of the neo-liberal university. But this also raises the question of whether expectation (mutual or otherwise) is the end of the story. We might ask what kind of education is on offer under a system so driven by expectation. Moreover, what is missing within such a culture that has become so obsessed by measures of student satisfaction, by websites worldwide that allow you to ‘rate your lecturer’,” and by league tables of universities and review sites that claim to give potential ‘customers’ the details of what they can expect from their campus and their course? Is to experience only the expected in our education, an impoverishing of it?

What would seem to be missing from this discussion is the place not of expectation, but of the unexpected. I am not thinking here of abandoning the university prospectus, and having freshers arrive at university unprepared either practically or academically for their university education; far from it. I am however proposing that within a university education (but also within other sectors, in our schooling for example), the moments of the unexpected are ones especially where learning takes place. What I want to suggest here is a re-thinking of the way that tutorials have increasingly been used in the university, and to consider them instead as pedagogical spaces for an encounter with the unexpected. In suggesting this, I am also drawing attention to the significance for this idea of the work of Levinas and Buber. To encounter the Other through dialogue is, for both writers, a moment of interruption, of the unexpected, and it is unsettling. The other is a stranger to me and comes to me from beyond or on high. The ‘Other’ here may be interpreted as another person, and so it is in that meeting, in the address of the one by the Other, that the unexpected is experienced. But the Other addresses us in different ways and not only as straightforwardly through another person. The address of the Other might come from an encounter with ideas, which unsettle the traditional ways of conducting the tutorial and meeting expectations. And such ideas might come from texts, films, poems, or even art that are not on the indicative reading list for the course.

This has very practical implications for the way in which tutorials tend to operate, in particular the starting point. In my experience, the focus of the tutorial tends to be on matters of assessment and in particular the work that students are presenting for assessment and this tends to narrow and to settle the discussion. In opening up a space for encounter with the Other, what if the starting point for the tutorial were not constrained by the focus on

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8 http://rateyourlecturer.co.uk/ and http://mylecturer.net.au/
9 For a fuller discussion, see Fulford 2013.
assessment? Such an approach is richly illustrated in the film adaptation of Alan Bennett’s *The History Boys*\(^\text{10}\) where Hector, the teacher of General Studies, defies the Headmaster’s insistence on a curriculum and an approach tied ineluctably to the objective of ensuring passes for the boys in the Oxbridge entrance exams. Take, for example, Hector’s approach of teaching poetry; rather than seeing this as a closed object of study, he is providing a space for encounter with the Other (with the poem). The students seem not to understand the significance of the poetry to which they have been introduced, and in that moment they question its ‘usefulness’ (to the passing of the exam *and* to life). But in discussing this scene from the film, Ian Munday points to the significance of such encounters: ‘Consternation and anxiety can be important features of rich educational experiences; such journeys create the space for students to make their own uncomfortable journeys’ (2012: 56).

But we should not only think here of the students alone as being called by the Other in examples such as this. Perhaps here we should be reminded of the mutuality that is at the heart of Buber’s life of dialogue. In Hector’s discussions with the boys, and with Irwin (the history teacher brought in by the school to give the boys, in the Headmaster’s words ‘polish, class’), there are moments where he himself also encounters the call of the Other. Is not then the university tutorial a similar space: one where there are rich possibilities for a mutual encounter with the Other that go far beyond the expectations of a closed economy of exchange. This would make the tutorial into a space of educational otherness, - a Foucauldian heterotopia\(^\text{11}\) which rejects the expectation-bound economy of exchange, and which offers instead the possibility of an education marked instead by an economy of excess.

**References**


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\(^{10}\) The film’s action is set in the fictional Cutlers’ Grammar School in Sheffield in the early 1980s. A group of high achieving boys are completing an additional year to prepare for the Oxford or Cambridge entrance examinations and interview. Under the supervision of the ambitious Headmaster, the boys are taught by Hector for General Studies and Irwin, a contract teacher, who works alongside Dorothy Linott, the Deputy Head, to prepare them in History.


A few insights for education and child-rearing from a better understanding of Darwin and contemporary neuro-psychological research

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Abstract
At the same time that countless articles, experimental studies, and discussions inform the public about the negative physical, psychological, and social effects of abuse, mistreatment, and neglect on children, a punitive educational reform movement is being implemented in the USA. Under the fallacy that American schools are failing, powerful corporations are trying to profit handsomely by selling a curriculum that exhausts, bores, and otherwise mistreats children by forcing developmentally ill-suited materials on them. This reform prevents creative teachers by imposing strongly scripted lessons (in New York) and by tying teacher evaluations’ results to students’ grades on standardized tests. This reform movement fails to restore fair funding and to bring more equity to an American education system that has one of the highest poverty rates among children of developed countries.

In this paper I present a large sample of the current research about the long-term effects of punitive methods applied both in childrearing and through educational systems. I return to the basic philosophical and anthropological understandings of human nature and remark on the crucial role that our social way of being has had in the evolution of our species. Through the re-interpretation of Darwin’s writings by David Loye and the neuro-physiological teachings of other researchers, I will show that all acts of violence, be they physical or psychological, have disastrous effects in the lives of individuals as well as in society as a whole. I believe that the popular “tough love” pedagogy used both in childrearing and in school to redirect the wrong instincts of our originally damaged nature, is misguided and obtains the opposite results it pursues. I claim that our parenting styles and education systems need to eradicate punitive measures and realize that only through loving and supporting behaviors homes, schools and countries will be able to develop educational systems that serve the true well-being and moral enrichment of their citizens. In the conclusion of the paper, I remind educators of the transcendent responsibility that they have as mentors and role models to become true pedagogues in its original meaning as “those who guide the youth” toward a fulfilling life.

Our hyper-social nature.
Although most other animal species become independent within a relatively brief time after birth and own at an instinctual level the wisdom that is required for them to survive and have the best life each animal may have, humans require the assistance of others for a very long time. In truth, if we dutifully analyze human nature, we can say that we really can’t stop having the assistance of others without seriously hampering progress toward a successful/satisfactory life.

Renowned anthropologist Sarah Hrdy1 presented at Arizona University an explanation for humans’ hyper-sociability. She compared the ways that different apes’ learning behavior occurs and the varying amounts of time that different kinds of apes hold their attention on their elders and stay in close watch with them. Human babies share the same neuro-

1 Sarah Hrdy is Professor Emeriti at the University of California-Davis, a former Guggenheim fellow and member of many prestigious Academies. She is the author of many books and has received very important awards.
cognitive machine as many apes, but they stay interested in what people around them are thinking and feeling for a much longer period of time and are also the best ones at social readings. Hrdy mentions the well-accepted theory that human social skills are explained by bigger brains and that social bonding and altruism arose as a response to hostility from outsiders. However, this world picture of socially organized aggression works for the last 15,000 years, but does not appear in the new archeological research that we are getting from studies of the Pleistocene era. She claims that there is little evidence of warfare for band-level hunter/gatherers living at low population densities and also none in the Pleistocene. These discoveries also show that the main challenge for these ancestral groups was not the threat of invaders, but the risk of extinction given the difficulties of rearing young that survived. (Hrdy, 2009). Paleontologist Owen Lovejoy had also identified this as a demographic dilemma. According to the research that Hrdy presents, cooperative breeding is broadly represented in all species, from insects to highly social carnivores, and it would have been absolutely essential for our human ancestors.

Riane Eisler, a cultural transformation theorist, has supported with ample archeological evidence Hrdy’s claim that humans’ “not-so-violent past” was crucial to the survival of the species. In her book The Chalice and the Blade, Eisler reviews new archeological discoveries and reinterpretations of older excavations that reveal a society that does not fit the pattern of violence and destruction that we have had time and again throughout much of recorded history. She reports on the excavations in Catal Huyuk (the largest Neolithic site ever found) to show that the “signs” that are left describe a very egalitarian social structure where women occupied respected roles such as priestesses and where the main universal power used to be a goddess instead of a god.

Eisler defends a “partnership” model as the characteristic way of living of the so-called pre-historical societies (since they have not been acknowledged in history until very recently). These archeological remains present societies that worshiped the life-generating and nurturing powers of the universe and where social relationships were based on the principle of linking, not of ranking. Riane Eisler calls them “partnership models” because, in these Neolithic communities, diversity was not equated with either inferiority or superiority. (Eisler, xvii). Her claim that diversity does not necessarily or always equate to highly stratified societies –where social groups are confined by artificial social statuses– is strengthened persuasively by her distinctions between what she calls “domination” and “actualization” hierarchies. Domination hierarchies involve the use of threats to maintain the current social system, while actualization hierarchies exist in the natural progressions that come from lower to higher orders of functioning, such as within an organism. While a dominant power would limit the development of any organism by artificial/consensual boundaries, an actualization hierarchy would have the effect to maximize the organism’s potential. The need for some structure and boundaries is obvious to people free from poisoning ideologies. Actualization hierarchies are a brilliant understanding of needed, organized social systems that are nurturing, and foster health and growth. The consequences of this concept are much greater than what this paper can encompass and should cause a scientific and ideological revolution of the size of the Columbus’ discovery of a new world. (Eisler, xv).²

Assumptions behind child-rearing and education. Scientific advances lacking a place in ordinary life.

More and more of the scientific world is acknowledging the profound consequences of our socially dependent human nature. And it is encouraging to learn that loving and cooperative approaches toward childrearing and education have been the real cause behind our chances to survive and flourish as a species. Since the publication of Hrdy’s “Mother Nature” the benefits of living in extended families have been broadly reported. This research has opened

² To those further interested, I recommend her book, The Chalice and the Blade and her other insightful publications.
a very important door for the consideration that *emotionally modern humans were* (...) *questing for inter-subjective engagement, perhaps as long ago as the beginning of the Pleistocene.* (Hrdy, 2009). Academic publications from broad areas of the social sciences are inviting us to question the common assumption that our lives are a constant struggle intended to have only “the fittest survive,” and to recognize that our survival chances may rest instead on kinship cooperation and mutual help. Today, in many of the so-called *developed* countries, people may consider themselves fortunate to live at a time when childhood may be recognized as *special and* where an accomplished and happy life is possible and does not require walking through a *valley of tears* to receive validation or to be saved from oneself. In her article, “The Roots of Violence,” the German psychiatrist, Alice Miller, describes what well-treated children are like when they become adults and the ways in which the benefits of a protected, valued and respected childhood ramify personally and socially: These children “will take pleasure in life and will not feel any need to kill or even hurt others or themselves. (...) (And) since it will not be their unconscious drive in life to ward off intimidation experienced at a very early age, they will be able to deal with attempts at intimidation in their adult life more rationally and more creatively.”

As I indicated, however, that “way of living and understanding life” and the situations described above are still unusual today, at the start of the 21st Century. In spite of the apparent abundance of resources to learn about the physical and psychological effects of violence on people and, especially, on children, it is surprising to realize the pervasiveness of abuse in countries labeled *modern* and *developed.* However, it helps us to recognize that the *knowledge* that we possess remains at the *intellectual or cognitive levels* and does not reach our *emotions.* For as long as *information* is not integrated at the level of human emotion, these problems will continue to occur in a circular fate as much at the personal level as at the group one. (Later I will address in much more detail this claim about the central role of emotions.)

**Social violence, original sin and neo-Darwinian theories.**

Alice Miller claimed that as long as society remains ignorant of the crucial role of a loving approach toward childrearing and education and of the urgent need to eliminate all ways of violence toward children, people will *continue to produce severe pain and destruction - in all "good will", in every generation.* (Miller, Child Abuse). Throughout her books she explains that the cycle of violence continues because people are socially trained to ignore and mask their true feelings instead of confronting them and going through the heart-rending but healing process of living “in the true story” of each person’s life. (Miller, Resolving).

Child abuse and maltreatment have been the norm throughout most of recorded history. And some claim that the Darwinian theses of *natural selection* and *survival of the fittest* (or rather our the common interpretation of what Darwin wrote), provided a strong “scientific” justification for harsh treatment among humans. According to those inadequately understood theses (as I will explain later), we have to make our place in this Earth by fighting or competing with our equals, since only the few “better suited” shall make it. Others blame old religions that support and dogmatize the belief that man’s nature is damaged (sinful) from its start. And this justifies the need for firm discipline and control of our misguided instincts. “Corrective” punishment and accepting that pain have “restorative” and “healing” roles in our lives. Although it is both important and interesting to consider the negative influences of certain religious dogmas on individual and group behavior, limited space forces attention to an explication of physical evolution with only a peripheral consideration of cultural evolution.

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3 (...) Almost all small children are smacked during the first three years of life when they begin to walk and to touch objects which may not be touched. This happens at exactly the time when the human brain builds up its structure and should thus learn kindness, truthfulness, and love but never, never cruelty and lies. (Miller, Child Abuse).
Let’s review the Darwinian heritage by remembering that *survival of the fittest* was not an original Darwinian term, but rather belonged to the British economist Herbert Spencer. (Scoville, H. About.com). And although Darwin used the term with its correct interpretation, it is still quite commonly misapplied today as a replacement for natural selection.⁴

Scoville indicates that to a person unfamiliar with what natural selection, “fittest” refers to the best physical specimen of the species, meaning only those in the best shape and health will survive in nature. However, this is not always the case. The individuals that survive are not always the strongest, fastest, or smartest. Therefore, "survival of the fittest" may not be the best way to describe what natural selection really is as it applies to natural selection. Darwin himself did not mean it in these terms when he used it in his book after Spencer first published the phrase. Darwin meant "fittest" to mean the one best suited for the immediate environment and he is not referring to individuals here, but to species.

**Emotions and its role in animal and human evolution.**

In the case of humans, being “well-suited” to the environment requires integrating our physical, psychological and emotional needs. We are complex beings and none of those areas can be overlooked or underestimated when we devote serious consideration to investigating the ways that promote true human fulfillment. In *Descent of Man* indicates that when it comes to humans, other forces (agencies in Darwin’s words) become crucial - in particular “the moral qualities”, which are “advanced, either directly or indirectly, much more through the effects of habit, by our reasoning powers, by instruction, by religion, etc., than through natural selection”: Darwin, however, remarks that “this latter agency (natural selection) maybe safely attributed to the social instincts, which afforded the basis for the development of the moral sense” (Darwin, 3155). And he adds that all the great human achievements show in our bodily frame, the indelible mark of our lowly origin. (Darwin, 3159) Darwin’s beautiful narratives mirror very well the profound interconnections highlighted in today’s research between our physical body as enabler and foundation of all the other-than-physical human traits.

With few exceptions, scientific evidence of human evolution from earlier, simpler forms of life has been accepted. Animals need emotions to survive and, in humans, emotions are maintained by our animal past and its blueprint in our brain. We rely onto emotions to make complex decisions and they are crucial when it comes to directing attention, enhancing memories and organizing our behavior. They drive and direct our social approach and avoidance and help us develop our moral and ethical development. When emotions work well, we develop a good adaptive system. When they are deregulated or out of control, we could experience from anxiety to suicide attempts.

Physiologically, humans have 42 facial muscles that control the expression of emotions, existing universal consensus across cultures when it comes to recognizing them. Emotions constitute for us a huge source of information that, in the human brain, needs to integrate with other cognitive functions to give us the guidance that we need for our behavior. The integration of the knowledge that humans collect is integrated in the frontal lobe and people who have any lesion in their frontal lobe experience impaired emotional awareness, social reasoning and decision making. Healthy humans are highly sensitive to people’s facial expressions and any other kind of social feedback. Brain scans studies show how the limbic area of our brain gets stimulated when we get social feedback that says “People don’t like you” and when we entertain negative self-beliefs such as “something is wrong with me”.

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⁴ In fact, Darwin himself states: in the earlier editions of my ‘Origin of Species’ I perhaps attributed too much to the action of natural selection or survival of the fittest (Darwin, Descent, 329).
A large and growing number of physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists and neuroscientists understand our intellectual powers as fully dependent and mutually influenced by our emotions. The newly discovery of “mirror neurons” has shown that observation (visual input) of other people or animals, triggers automatically simulation of that action. (Goldin) This discovery also has helped humans to understand that the neural basis for imitation is the physical condition for empathy and the realization that in the Dalai Lama’s words, “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity can not survive.” (Lama)

**Hardwired to love.**

David Loye claims that we have misunderstood Darwin and that re-studying his writings may thwart the “survival of the fittest” thesis as much as it “justifies” the natural way for humans to evolve, and allow us to see new ways to **reclaim the high road for human evolution**. (Loye, Loye’s Page). According to his and other studies, it seems that instead of being “doomed” (as humans) to violent and/or oppositional behavior to guarantee our survival chances, it would be caring, protecting and guiding (or educating) others what may give us the true chances to not only survive but fully realize our human potential.

In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin reflects on our physical, intellectual and moral development through endless comparisons with the behavior of animals. With multiple examples brought from his own field studies and from those of other scientists of his time, Darwin explains in great detail the process that animals go through as the different species get “more developed” and as close to humans as the more evolved ones do. In Chapter 3 of Descent, taking one step at a time, he tries to challenge the common belief that assigns many exclusive powers to men, such as mental and moral qualities, of which he claims to have evidence of clear signs in the higher level animals. He identifies numerous instincts that humans and lower-order species share. They include emotions curiosity, imitation, attention, memory, imagination, reason, the use of tools, the possibility of abstract thought, self-consciousness, language and even religious beliefs. And not satisfied enough with crossing this very controversial boundary during his time of attributing intellectual powers -although in different degrees- to animals, he insinuates that this “evolving” may even cross into the territory of moral development. (Darwin, 352).

Although the world was not ready during Darwin’s time to see the profound interconnection between our emotions and our cognitive faculties, it is remarkable to realize that he arrives at the same consequences as today’s clinical and social sciences. Darwin notes steady progress toward the development of the “moral sense” in the evolution of higher faculties. His statements are brave and daring for his contemporaries and a welcomed surprise for 21st century unbiased researchers.

Our animal brain developed the limbic area first, which is where emotions rest. Then, it developed the basic memory, which permits recall and supplying of criteria with respect to future actions, helps discriminate among them and requires to make a choice. Then, something reflects in the overall system and it is able to learn if its “choice of move” was efficient and, if so, it will be encouraged to repeat it. However, if the choice does not bring the satisfaction that was intended or desired by the actor, the brain will instinctually stop itself from redoing it. (Darwin, 533). Darwin demonstrates this through various profound descriptions of lower-order animals’ incipient ability to both intellectually reflect and develop habits. The concept is central to Darwin’s understanding of human evolution which takes into account a very interesting combination of “given materials” and “environmental input”. It is as if the raw materials of every organic being, were intimately oriented to “play” with its surroundings and let them participate in the decision of what it may become.

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5 Daniel Siegel, Stephen Porges, Howard Gardner, Sue Carter, Stephanie Brown, Gabor Mate, Allan Shore, Chilton Pierce, David Loye, Sarah Hendy and others.
Nature and nurture’s dance.

According to David Loye, upon digging deeply into Darwin’s writings, one finds two constants that seem to constitute the basic reality for evolution. **The first constant is an organism seeking fulfillment.** (...) We are all of us, possibly without exception, mainly driven by a desire to find this niche of fulfillment— that is, a situation within life that allows us to feel that what is most unique about ourselves, or the best within ourselves, has a chance for being attained. (...) **The other fundamental constant is the emergence out of the interaction of all that composes life on this planet** (...) of the port, or stopping place, or way station that constitutes the niche of fulfillment into which the searching organism may or may not fit. Sometimes this niche is there because of something within ourselves that fits what comes up (...). Sometimes it is there because of a favoring event. (Loye, Telling the New Story).

I find a very powerful resemblance between these Darwinian observations and various contemporary studies that defend the profound implication of nature and nurture or genes and the environment in humans’ maturation and development. The connection of the two realms in the making of the human being is acknowledged in the scientific community today with the expression “hardwired for relationships”. Many of the studies that have focused on the importance of this partnership between nature and nurture are the studies on attachment theory. Attachment theory was introduced by John Bowlby, who separated himself from some of the tenets of the psychoanalytic community at his time. He defended that children come to the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others because this will help them to survive. In spite of broad and wide criticism in the first few years after the presentation of Bowlby’s theory, attachment theory is today "the dominant approach to understanding early social development, and has given rise to a great surge of empirical research into the formation of children's close relationships". (Schaffer, 83-121)

The neuropsychologist and psychotherapist from UCLA Allan Schore, who has worked extensively on attachment theory, alerts scientists about the fallacy that traps them when they believe that everything before birth is genetic and everything after is learned. Schore claims that this is incorrect based, among other data, on how much more genetic material appears in the cerebral cortex at 10 months than at birth and the latest research on brain studies.

The human brain is supported by neurons and their supportive structures: single cells that connect over one billion sites. Brain genes are programming and re-programming well into the first year of the baby’s life. Brain cells get organized, then disorganized and then reorganized again. Circuits which find no use, no synapses with which to connect, die off. Human neurons respond to sensory stimuli and, in the case of humans, these connections can only come from interactions with other humans.

Neurobiologists added the term “mirror neurons” in 1994, when they observed that the same areas of the brain that get fired when individuals perform an action, respond by getting equally fired when they see somebody perform it and even when they imagine themselves or other people performing it. A similar proposal for this profound integration between us and our kin appears in Howard Gardner’s book Multiple Intelligences, where he distinguishes between the interpersonal intelligence as the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of others and the intrapersonal intelligence as the capacity to understand yourself and to appreciate one’s feelings, fears and motivations. This profound understanding of ourselves and of others is accepted today as the most basic guarantor of mental health.

Without human stimulation our brains can not develop appropriately: maturation of the human brain is experience-dependent. Cells that fire together wire together and those that do not, die off together: this is the neurological basis for the popular say “use or lose it”.

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Neuronal loops are now thought to form the physical basis of human consciousness and personality. As a consequence, the richer the emotional stimulation a baby has in the first few years, the bigger and better neurological development takes place.

The genetic systems that encode the connections of the parts of the brain that have to do with socio-emotional functions are the hierarchical apex of the limbic system. When a child is 10 to 12 months, they are spinning out. Those genes are being affected by the hormones that are stimulated by the relationship between the mother (caregiver) and the infant. The mother’s and the infant’s systems when exposed to each other co-regulate each other. Their opiate and endorphin systems are mutually regulating each other and, today, we know for a fact that one of the functions of endorphins is to regulate genes. We also know that cortisol, which is the stress hormone, directly regulates genes as well. In consequence, the so-called attachment relationship is directly regulating the genome: the ways in which the genes are going to encode the proteins, etc.

These are the current scientific bases that show the ways in which nature and nurture come together and that prove that both are indispensable for each other. Attachment researchers say that the first environment-gene interactions are found in the psycho-biological interaction between the mother and the infant. And, based on that, the attachment relationship is defined as a combination of the psycho-biological predisposition of an infant, which is genetically encoded, and the interactive experiences with the caregiver. (Schore, Neurobiology).

**Healing through empowering, sympathetic social relationships.**

The bases for the neurobiological information presented above should be very relevant to parents and educators. The consequences of underestimating the transcendence of human sociability can seriously harm children. In the case of humans, the role of others becomes so determinant that children who are kept from being held and/or from meaningful relationships either die or enter a status of progressive degradation of their physical and intellectual potential.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is today a very important source of biopsychological research. Its statistics show the scary consequences for children who suffer abuse at the hands of their caregivers, be it verbal, physical or sexual, and the effects in their physical health as adults as well as their propensity to addictions and other dangerous social and personal situations (drugs, prostitution, imprisonment...). The original results of the ACE Study revealed that an unexpectedly high number of adults, who went to the Department of Preventive Medicine for comprehensive medical screening, had experienced significant abuse or household dysfunction during their childhoods. (ACE Reporter). The ACE study developed a scale that gave people one point per each abusive situation experienced during their childhood. The findings showed that the higher the ACE score a person got in this scale, the more it increased the chances of being a user of street drugs, tobacco or alcohol. This one and posterior studies revealed that ACEs were not only unexpectedly common, but

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7 The ACE Study resulted from collaboration between Kaiser Permanente’s Department of Preventive Medicine in San Diego and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Although the study originated in 1985 by Dr. Felitti, a specialist in Preventive Medicine, who initially set out to help obese people lose weight through the Positive Choice programs. To his amazement, those people most likely to drop out of the weight loss program were those who were successfully losing weight! ACE REPORTER, April 2003, Volume 1, Number 1. http://acestudy.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/ARV1N1.127150541.pdf

8 In the ACE Study, adverse childhood experiences were defined as emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, emotional or physical neglect, and growing up in a household where someone was an alcoholic, a drug user, mentally ill, suicidal, where the mother was treated violently, or where a household member had been imprisoned during the patient’s childhood. Additionally, they included contact sexual abuse and serious physical and emotional abuse. ACE REPORTER, April 2003, Volume 1, Number 1. http://acestudy.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/ARV1N1.127150541.pdf
that their effects were found to be cumulative. Among the more notable findings were that compared to persons with an ACE score of 0, people with an ACE score of 4 or more were twice as likely to be smokers, 12 times more likely to have attempted suicide, 7 times more likely to be alcoholic, and 10 times more likely to have injected street drugs. (ACE Reporter) The ACE Study also showed that the ACE score also increased the number of risk factors for leading causes of death. People who have suffered abuse during their early years, usually make very risky choices when it comes to find remedies for their pain. Alcohol, cuts, drugs and risky sexual behaviors are for them fast ways to cope with their pain for a short period of time. However there are dire long-term consequences from this “remedies” that manifest in serious chronic health issues and social problems. (ACE Reporter)

Many of these situations are not detected easily in children or in adults: people feel a strong shame that takes them to secrecy when it comes to these parts of their lives because it is a social taboo to talk about such things. And, unfortunately, it is also a social taboo for physicians and social workers who evade important questions that could radically help and improve the lives of many.

Gabor Maté, a physician who has worked for many years with highly addicted people, has written many books where he condemns many of the corrective measures taken by North American governments, because they are directed to punish wrong and damaging behaviors without analyzing or trying to understand the true causes of those behaviors and by avoiding to invest in truly effective solutions.

Echoing Darwin’s and contemporary calls to remember the transcendence of our social nature, Maté describes in his book Scattered Minds the deep human need of others with very simple words that are understood by anybody, without needing any particular background in medical or psychological sciences: “The need to be needed at all costs comes from one’s earliest experiences. If the child does not feel accepted unconditionally, she learns to work for acceptance and attention. When she is not doing this work she feels anxious, due to an unconscious fear of being cut off from the parent. Later –as an adult– when not doing something specific, she has a vague unease, the feeling that she should somehow be working. (…) Being wanted becomes one’s drug. What one does and what others think of it take precedence over who one is.” (Maté, Scattered9).

Maté explores the mind-body link on illness and health and the role that stress and one’s individual emotional makeup play in an array of common diseases. Maté rejects the assumption that most of our diseases have a genetic origin. He observes, for instance, that the number of autistic kids has exploded in the last few years and reminds the medical community that genes don’t change in 30-40 years…: not even in 400 years. The autism epidemic is not genetic and we should not treat it as such. (Maté, Empathy).

Maté’s observations bring lots of common sense when understanding the consequences of today’s lifestyle in young kids. Our modern world’s demands have brought lots of disruption to the normal environment expected naturally in a family. Children spend most of their days away from their parents. Breastfeeding is basically impossible for women in North America due to the lack of support in labor contracts. Economical demands require both parents working full-time, so they delegate the nurturing of their kids to institutions that struggle to attend individual needs. Gabor Maté claims that the psycho-biological effects of stress in children and adults come from the way in which we have imperil our human relationships. “Our immune system does not exist in isolation from daily experience. (…). Many of us live (…) in emotionally inadequate relationships that do not recognize or honor our deepest needs.” (Maté, When the Body Says No). Maté warns that most physical problems come

9 I am taking this quotes from the Maté’s website excerpts.
back to experiences during childhood and points to how pervasive it is the belief in the contradictory pedagogy of “tough love”: since, if it is love, it can’t be tough; and if it is tough, it is something other than love.

"Unlike many other disciplines, medicine has yet to assimilate an important lesson of Einstein’s theory of relativity: that the position of an observer will influence the phenomenon being observed and affect the results of the observation. (…) The more specialized doctors become, the more they know about a body part or organ and the less they tend to understand the human being in whom that part or organ resides." (Maté, When the Body Says No).

Conclusion: The live-saving potential of educators (parents, teachers, journalists, counselors... neighbors).

Philosophy has had and still has an illuminating and inspiring role when it comes to clarifying the background, motives, goals, etc. that affect nature in general and human nature and affairs in particular. Philosophy of Education has the special responsibility to provide guidance with respect to why and how human progress in a holistic way depends on our interactions with others. I can’t address the many definitions of education that have been defended through history nor the many disagreements about its nature, purpose and methods that come along with each of these various theories. But for the less academically-restrained, ordinary citizens, it is very safe to accept that education is indispensable and that it describes the numerous ways in which we receive guidance from others, especially with respect to understanding ourselves, our society and achieving our personal goals.

It becomes more complicated when we try to add the role of emotions to the intellectual and objective (safe) content that most prefer to prioritize in education. I am however optimistic with respect to the influence that the scientific (objectively measured and safe “at a distance”) studies that I have referred to in this paper may have in many parents and educators when it comes to allowing a more important role to emotions in our lives and their profound effect when it comes to the task of educating our children. It is also a very important mission for me to be able to bring this wisdom to American parents who are fighting the harmful Common Core education reform, and help them articulate in an objective discourse their naturally protective and instinctive reaction against something that is hurting their children by destroying their self-esteem, discouraging them from learning and making many of them think that “school is not their thing”.

Many researchers claim that the damage that one experiences from childhood is not irreparable. Independently of identifying the damage inflicted to a child as intentional or unintentional on the part of the caregiver/educator, since there is no gain through just blame, the recognition and confrontation of those hurtful situations is indispensable. The difficulties of acknowledging that damage from those who are supposed to act better have been acknowledged through this paper’s references. The profound fear that one experiences upon discovering shameful and destructive behaviors performed by loved ones at a time when one is too vulnerable, too dependent and too innocent can become overwhelming.

10 A presentation of the so-called Common Core Educational Reform in the United States would require a lengthy paper by itself. The American Constitution gives States and local governments the control of education. However, the Federal government has intruded into this task by taking advantage of the serious economic crisis of 2008 and is transforming public education into privatized charter schools owned by for-profit corporations. Huge numbers of parents throughout the United States have complained and sabotaged this federal takeover of education by refusing to have their children do the annual standardized tests. Parents point to the empty value of worthless standardized tests that are costing public schools millions while making publishers millionaires. This emphasis on standardized testing is also promoting a culture of “teaching to the test” and a transformation of schools into training factories. Parents claim that American education is unfairly compared to other countries’ curricula and, as a consequence, is narrowing and disempowering its own curriculum by trying to compete in an international arena that fails to compare apples with apples. This parents’ guided movement has also been seen as an interesting political situation, since it has supporters from the right, the left and the whole spectrum of American political choices.
People who stand up against the status quo and expose the real problems or unfair situations that a group or an entire society may be undergoing, have never been received with open arms. Alice Miller’s unpopular research introduced the concept of “poisonous pedagogy”, with which she described and condemned many child-rearing practices very prevalent in Europe, especially before the Second World War. But loyal to her findings, she had the strength to defend and teach that pain inflicted on children – “for their own good” – was unconsciously the parent re-enacting the trauma suffered as children. The cycle of trauma continued down the generations. (Cowan-Jensen).

It feels dangerous to question our origins and our ways of life. Such is the dependence that we have from our social condition. However, like the popular Gospel saying that claims that truth will make us free, it is only by valiantly facing those facts and more importantly, by acknowledging and respecting the feelings that those situations caused, where true hope lays for personal and societal healing. It is the safest and fastest, though not easiest road to take in order to make sense of the present through the past and to be able to redirect our future. It is also the best way to do parenting from a safe place, where we don’t need to justify our parents/caregivers any more by hurting our children through misguided ways forced on us “for our own good”. It is also a way to honor our evolving nature: by allowing our bodies, with all their intellectual and emotional faculties, to be integrated in a way that gives us chances to fully develop ourselves.

As school and college educators, we receive a strong social recognition and people deposit lots of faith in us. Both in our role as educators and as members of our respective communities, we should carefully reflect on the very opportunities of service that derive from our social status. It is upon this consideration of social service that Alice Miller’s description of the enlightened witness becomes very inspiring and hopeful to me and to many others. Miller’s research shows that the difference between abused children who become abusers and abused children who don’t, is the presence of “a person who loved them, (even if he or she) was unable to protect them. (…)Through his or her presence, this person gave them a notion of trust, and of love.” (Miller, Essential Role). By contrast, when people lacks the aid of an enlightened witness, old and hurtful “memories fail to break through to consciousness, (and) they often compel the person to violent acts that reproduce the abuse suffered in childhood, which was repressed in order to survive.” (Miller, Essential Role).

The adaptability of our human body and spirit and the great work that many people have been able to do, even in difficult circumstances, should also be a strong source of optimism for our task as educators and a revamp to our responsibility to be brave and actively democratic (actively human) when it comes to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

I also consider powerful and refreshing to realize that our Darwinian assumptions of a human nature destined to constant fight and competition were misguided and that a closer look at the heritage of such an influential thinker brings very different expectations about how true human survival comes about and it is solidly supported by an exorbitant amount of contemporary scientific discoveries (a small part of which has been presented here).

References


Authority as pedagogical relationality: An exploration between human and horse

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**Abstract**

Her horse is not a means, but a friend. He follows her, but not anyone. She follows him, but not all the time. Sometimes, his choice of path is even better, for instance when he turns away from a marsh or from a cloud of mosquitoes. His sensibility is stronger than hers. Thanks to his sensibility she removed the bridle from his mouth, the reins from her hands and she started to ride only with a rope around his brisket. It hangs there like a collar. She can push the rope under his neck, but he can easily change direction or run as fast as he would like.

The overarching purpose of this paper is to explore authority. In the light of a human-horse relation, and drawing mainly on Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray, authority is explored as pedagogical relationality. This is carried through by a phenomenological exploration of a relation where the horse emerges as subject. The exploration takes place between the human and the horse – in the spacing. Withing this framework, I critically explore the significance of authority, in relation to power, violence, resistance and trust. Drawing on Arendt, the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, Muraro, and to some extent Bingham, I discuss the relational structure of authority. Authority is interrelated to power, therefore I reflect upon power in human-horse relations. The aspects of violence, resistance and trust in the human-horse relation open for ethical possibilities when being called into question by the face of the other. The reading of this relation as reciprocal, points on towards a circuitry of authority. I am suggesting an understanding of authority as circulating tact.

Drawing on Irigaray, I explore the *space for wonder* where I suggest the tact takes place in. By relating to the horse departing from difference, a specifically relational perspective opens for a shift from obedience and control to reciprocity and entrustment. A key point in such a relational perspective is the critical approach towards anthropocentrism. Thos starting point encompasses an openness to the other as subject, rather than object, which is crucial for rendering visible the spacing and its aspects. The question is raised if it is not just a matter of a docile and submissive horse. I maintain that those words are spoken from a language of domination.

In conclusion, I open for a discussion of the pedagogical situation as space for freedom, in which the discussion evolves around the situation of transformative relationality as precisely pedagogical. It is not about subjectification induced by an intervention of another person. Instead, it is a pedagogical situation in which the authority is released in terms of circulating tact. A space for freedom opens, signified by the transformative relationality of the relation.

**Introduction**

*Her horse is not a means, but a friend. He follows her, but not anyone. She follows him, but not all the time. Sometimes, his choice of path is even better, for instance when he turns away from a marsh or from a cloud of mosquitoes. His sensibility is stronger than hers. Thanks to his sensibility she removed the bridle from his mouth, the reins from her hands and she started to ride only with a rope around his brisket. It hangs there like a collar. She can push the rope under his neck, but he can easily change direction or run as fast as he would like.*

The overarching purpose of this paper is to explore authority. I do so by exploring reciprocity,
and by suggesting an understanding of authority as circulating tact. This is carried through by a phenomenological exploration of a relation where the horse emerges as subject. In the light of this human-horse relation, authority is explored as pedagogical relationality. The exploration takes place between the human and the horse—in the spacing between them. This is the background from which I discuss authority—as an aspect of the spacing. The apparent and salient difference between human and horse puts the exploration in the centre of education, because it touches upon what it means to exist and how it is signified. The difference renders visible a spacing, which, when open, is a pedagogical place. To speak of such a spacing, another language than of power and dominance is requested, and this language is the relation with the horse apt to show. The aspects of the spacing can’t be described within a framework of control, obedience or submission—of managing with sugar and whip, to yield into a position, to submit to one’s place in society and world. By relating to the horse departing from difference, a specifically relational perspective opens for a shift from obedience and control to reciprocity and entrustment. A key point in such a relational perspective is the critical approach towards anthropocentrism. The starting point encompasses an openness to the other as subject, rather than object, which is crucial for rendering visible the spacing and its aspects.


The disposition of the paper runs as follows: I start out with a reflection on the relational structure of authority. Authority is interrelated to power, therefore I continue reflect upon power in human-horse relations and discuss different relations between human and horse, such as power relations and domination relations. This leads on to a discussion of resistance and trust. With no place for resistance, there is no place for trust. Then, I turn to an exploration of circulating trust, which open for an exploration of the space for wonder. Next section concerns authority as circulating tact. I also touch upon the question of a language to speak of relational dimensions. In the last section, I discuss transformative relationality and, in consequence, open for a discussion of the pedagogical situation as space for freedom.

**The relational structure of authority**

The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective has taken on and developed Arendt’s thought on the difference between authority and power and also the relational structure of authority. According to Hanna Arendt (2006), the relational structure lies in the significance of transmitting practices on between generations. The crisis that Arendt speaks of, do the aforementioned Italian women interpretate as the patriarchal structures they look forward to seeing crumble and fall. Authority can be practised, starting out from oneself, by free relations between women. Thereby the women legitimised each other, by making each other sources of authority (The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, 1990). Does this mean that authority comes from power, that it has to be given from someone who has it to someone who has not?
According to Muraro, there is a difference from power; "this confusion is a reality, the reality of mixing the power to give orders and to decide for others, with the ability to bring order, to understand, to decide for oneself, assert and discriminate" (Hernández & Goodson, 2006, p. 86). In the recently released Autorità (2013), Muraro discusses authority as, not an effect or possession, but a dimension that opens between ends of a disparity entering a mutual relation. It is a value that can be transmitted within the relationship.

The relational structure of authority is also brought to the fore by contemporary educationalists (Bingham, 2008). According to Bingham, educational relationality is more often seen as monologic rather than dialogic. But two (at least) are involved in the relation of authority, which has a circuitry to it. Thus, circuitry is an emergent aspect according to Bingham, as well as according to the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective in regards of the circulating authorisation. Such a circuitry also emerges in the relation to the horse. It is about a fluctuating, circulating authorisation - connected to the relational phenomenon of tact. But before the exploration of tact, I will discuss power in human-horse relations.

**Power in human-horse relationships**

As Arendt, the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective and Muraro have pointed out, authority is confused with power. Although both may be interrelated aspects of the same situation, they are not the same aspect.

Power might be seen as constituting the relationship. Palmer (2001) has a foucaultian starting point when calling into question if humans and animals at all can form a power relationship. Her answer is that they can, because the animal is able to react and to express resistance. But the possibility of falling into a relationship of domination often presents itself, when the animal isn’t disciplined according to the human’s purposes. The crucial points characterising general power relations are, firstly, the possibility of resistance - even if the space for resistance might be small, and secondly, the possibility of such resistance leading to overturn the power. When the animal is not disciplined in line with the human’s wishes, the human tends to turn to the other side of the power spectra and change the possible general relation of power into a relationship of domination. Relationships of domination are hierarchical, stable over time, suffused by violence, empty of possibilities of resistence and of overturning of power. The human relates to the animal as a thing.

The horse is a powerful animal. Netz (2004) describes the crisis of the horse, when the human jumped up on the horse’s back, and the horse, instead of continuing to eat grass, started to run. This opened opportunities to get hold of power and speed human could only dream of. By using straps, whips and spurs, human controlled the power of the horse. This description also illustrates what anthropocentrism means, and the implications for the horse and the relation to human. The crisis of the horse is still acute for the horse in many places.

The horse is not only powerful, but also social. The horse’s social dimensions open for relations based in mutual trust (Andersson, 2010). The relational dimension of being that they share is a precondition for the human and horse to be and become in the relation. This possibility is not less ethically complex, but less suffused by dominance and violence. Power is still an aspect of human-horse relations based in trust, for instance in terms of owning and exploitation. According to Bornemark and Ekström von Essen (2010) human has to exert paternalistic power, which they also recognise as problematic and as having to be exercised carefully. The paternalistic power could be compared with Palmers (2001) discussion of the foucaultian notion governmentality, which is the power the state exerts on its subjects. It is quite stable over time, but resistance and shift of power is possible (For an educational discussion of governmentality, see Masschelein, Simons, Bröckling, & Pongratz, 2007).

The aspects of violence, resistance and trust in the human-horse relation open for ethical possibilities when being called into question by the face of the other. This exploration of
power in human-horse relations leads to a discussion of authority as pedagogical relationality in the human-horse relationship, and also, for the later discussion of the search for a language to speak of relational dimensions (Hagström, forthcoming). I will now turn to the specific human-horse relationship to further explore resistance and trust.

Resistence and trust
He is silent, yet he speaks all the time. Just like her. She is not aware of everything she says to him, or everything he says to her, but some things she has got used to notice.

His flight-oriented responsiveness challenges her. She sees the flickering of his ears, how his body gets tense. A deer at dusk, rustling in the bush, builders in a garden, a motorcycle, an open lid of a bin. Something is not like it used to be, or presumably not. Lots of reasons for flight linger in their environment. He freezes on the spot, wants to turn around, get out of there.

How does authority come into play in relationship to the horse? It does, because it is a relation of entrustment and reciprocity, which also harbours resistance. It concerns as much trusting the horse, as trusting the relation to that relationship, as trusting oneself and one’s place in the world.

Violence and pain may emerge; when being open to a space of play with a 500 kilo powerful fast being with teeth, hooves and a very spontaneous approach to life in general. On the edge of getting into an accident, misunderstanding or communicative crash, the meaning of a relation based in difference becomes very acute.

They become vulnerable in manifold dimensions. In a sense, it is a price they pay for not staying at home alone, or being sheltered in a one-horse-only paddock. They get out in the world, it influences them, as we influence it – and each other. Developing a relation between human and horse is a process of transformation, which asks the horse to become more human-like and the human to become more horse-like. Both transcend their existence when they open a spacing where no one knows what will happen and everything is possible.

Legally, she owns him. In that meaning, she is responsible to care for and to protect him. He has got no legal commitments to her. Legal is one thing, ethical another. The horse has not chosen her to be his owner. Children have not chosen their parents, or pupils (usually) have not chosen their teacher. Nor do parents (usually) choose their children, nor do teachers (usually) choose their pupils. Despite the fact that it is she who has chosen him and the time for their practice, he can show if he enters their relation here and now, or if he prefers to stay with the other four-legged in the field. He can avoid in various ways to join her to the stable.

He is fast. The possibility of resistance in the relation, if it is left open and not falls into dominance - is also an aspect of the spacing. If there is no space for resistance, there is neither space for trust.

Circulating trust
She perceives, touches, experiences him. She does not end where her skin ends, and she does not begin in the middle. She begins and ends between them, in the spacing. She transcends her being. She becomes susceptible to other things. The habit of moving together with his being becomes a perceptual habit of how she perceives the world. She perceives the softness of the grass and the firmness of the rock through the hooves. A walk on two legs is one thing, riding is something completely different. Then, a piece of fluttering plastic on the ground, a sudden sound in distance, a smell in the wind, become exciting or sometimes scary phenomena.

Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, they incorporate each other in each others’ life-worlds. The theory of the lived body forms the basis for understanding he corporeal communication with the body and the corporeality as preconditions for communication. The lived body
accomodates its own anchorage in nature and transformation of culture. We are who we are, and becomes who we becomes, in relation to each other and the world. It is a dynamic relation between the immanent body in its facticity and the transcendence of nature through the project of reaching towards the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). The thought of Merleau-Ponty brings to the fore mutuality, embodiment and the openness to follow the phenomenon. This is helpful for exploring the relationship based in corporeal communication (See also Bornemark, 2010). Corporeality is not an aspect exclusive for the non-human animal, but are aspects that both non-human and human animals share. This is why corporeality is an important aspect for understanding the spacing between the human and the horse. Merleau-Ponty (1945) has a famous example of the blind man who incorporates the stick with his body. By using the stick his motor habit is extended. Through the perceptual habit of using this artifact, the stick lets him perceive the world in a way he wouldn't perceive the world without it. The lived body can be extended by incorporating artifacts and through motility and perceptual habit acquire other dimensions of the world. So, is the horse another artifact? Of course not, if the starting point is a critical perspective on anthropocentrism. But in combination with reciprocity, and with acknowledging the other as other, the example is with the blind man and his stick is helpful. To walk on two legs is one thing, a walk on four legs means to perceive, and to be susceptible to, other dimensions of the world. About his life-world, she knows nothing more that he is a part of her life-world. Words are not necessary.

Body and corporeality are fundamental to circulating tact. It is based in embodied motion, in directions that open and close. Not about knowing, but about acknowledging, about letting trust circulate.

**Space for wonder**

Irigaray maintains in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*: "Language, however formal it may be, feeds on blood, on flesh, on material elements" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 127). She writes further, in the beginning of the chapter *Love of the Other*: "the net of a language which he believes he controls but which controls him, imprisons him in a bodiless body, in a fleshless other, in laws whose cause, source, and physical, living reason he has lost" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 133). Irigaray highlights the intertwining between language and body, departing from the experience of the body. The sexuated perspective implies embodiment. As Merleau-Ponty (1945), she maintains that we relate spatially through our bodies, but adds that we inhabit space differently. Rachel Jones quotes Irigaray in a clarifying way on being other, in comparison to de Beauvoir: "Rather than refusing, as Simone de Beauvoir does, to be the other gender, the other sex, I am asking to be recognized as really an other, irreducible to the masculine subject" (Jones, 2011, p. 29). I believe that Irigaray would say that woman, again, turns herself into an object, when she is identifying herself as a masculine subject. What Jones refers to as a transformative openness to the other as other, opens for spaces of freedom. Irigaray elaborates within the patriarchal framework where our imaginary language is a product of a male economy and re-thinks a sexual difference that *is yet to come*. The sexuate perspectives of masculine and feminine are not static, fixed positions, they are always in relation fundamentally linked together. This opens spaces to discuss the critique of essentialism. The sexual difference is a relation and Irigaray finds ways to symbolise the difference. When it comes to the concept of desire it also needs to be re-imagined through sexual difference, instead of being thought in the male economy as moments of tension, it ought to be re-imagined as a changing dynamic, never definitely predicted (Irigaray & Green, 2008; Irigaray & Whitford, 1991; Irigaray, 1985, 2000, 2002; Jones, 2011).

Irigaray (2000) expresses in *To be two* the following, which I find interesting in the exploration of the dimensions of the spacing in-between, in regards of otherness and freedom:

> The other of sexual difference forces me to an elaboration, to a transformation of my inclinations, leading me to open my desire to a transcendental dimension in my relationship with the other as other. My freedom remains freedom only if the other
remains transcendent to me, and if I respect his freedom. [...] To become free is, at this point, tantamount to a new duty which we must fulfil. (Irigaray, 2000, p. 93)

This *locus* between man and woman has, according to Irigaray (1993) been taken over with possession and consummation, and sexual difference that is *yet to come* is the way to symbolise the difference that is needed to open up the space in which surprise, astonishment and wonder reside in the face of the unknowable other. According to Irigaray, the *space for wonder* resides in the difference between woman and man. I am lending this relational concept for the spacing between human and horse, a locus for wonders, for wondering. In the openness for the other who is different, not as an object to possess, to consummate, but to encounter as subject, a spacing may open. The human and the horse don’t share the world in words, but they share the world. In difference and in listening, a spacing can open, in which authority as pedagogical relationality can circulate. In a spacing the human doesn’t have an exceptional sovereignty. It is a place where authority isn’t about static tension but dynamic tact. It is a place for transformative relationality to the anthropocentric and patriarchal order. It is a place for wonder, wonders, wondering.

She has to stretch towards the other as radically other, through the difference that constitutes the precondition for transcendence and transformation. Letting the difference be the condition for transcending, becoming, breathing and letting be, to enter the moment. The miracle is the possibility of the human and the horse to transcend which allows them to play together – it is the space for wonder.

**Authority as circulating tact**

*She offers him the pace of walk, four-time. She opens up for a new direction, changing the weight softly. Sometimes she doesn’t know, who is offering the pace, the direction. The authority arises in the relation, in the situation. When she is attuned to the relation, such an authority emerges. Authorisation, for briefer or longer moments. She embodies a collected two-time and he turns into a collected trot. Tact is tactile, tangible, embodied. She lets the two-time flow, then collects it and allows three-time. He canters fast, no reins. Tact arises when they share the motion and catch it together. Either she offers or is offered the tact, which can be collected, shared, shattered or lost. Responsiveness determines if she or he follows or leads. Tact springs from the beat of the heart. To breathe the rhythm, to feel the heartbeat.*

She has to be trustworthy, to gain confidence, if she wishes to lead, to be followed, to play with the tact. There are no static or fixed positions, this relation is always under test and negotiation. The other will follow her, only if she follows him, only if she transcends her being. Letting go of the linear idea of time, come into presence and see what is given to them. Letting her sight thread softly in nature. Letting the time, space and motion dissolve and reappear through the rhythm of the breathing.

Is it possible for the asymmetry to shift? To follow and, perhaps, suggest another tact? The reciprocity, then, is not one-sided, but fluxes back and forth. The reading of this relation as reciprocal between the leading and the following, points on and on towards a possible dissolution of the asymmetry in the relation. The vibrating possibility of dissolution opens for a deepening of the spacing in the relation and thereby for pedagogical situations to arise.

She and the other are limitated, separated, yet connected. The relation is both immanent and transcendent. They transcend subject and object, nature and culture. It is animated, powerful. Space and time become lateral, not linear, concepts when interpreting them together with the horse. They detach from the predicted, enter the moment. In the wonder, dwelling in the presence, in the openness of what this moment will bring to them. In the reinvention, in the awakening to presence becomes a listening for all the subtleties of mind, body, other, world.
When she transcends her being, arises the possibility for the authorising spacing between her and the horse. The space arises in the specific relation and the specific situation and there are dimensions of being, becoming, transformation, authority – of varying qualities. The space can be more or less open, more or less transparent and permeable, soft or inert, volatile or thick, giving and taking place. The space is corporeality transcending from the immanent body, but leaving a corporeal trace behind. It suggests the boundaries of the relators, the boundaries of the relation and the circulating tact between them.

One might wish to pose the question, if it is not just about a docile, adaptable, submissive horse? A horse that is managed and handled, like one is handling other things that need to be handled with. That is a language which speaks of obedience and dominance.

In a spacing, where the asymmetry is vibrating on the verge of dissolution, the language is not ordered with dominance, obedience, submission. To follow and lead, to let be and become – to take place, keep open and share the tact – that is something else. It is play, it is gravity – transcending one’s being is a transformative process.

**Transformative relationality**

Critically exploring authority between human and horse, has led to a discussion of transformative relationality. This discussion evolves around the situation of transformative relationality as pedagogical. It is precisely pedagogical, because it brings forth a space for freedom.

Before her and the horse there have been, and around them there are, many different human and horse relationships. Relationships between human and animal are constituted within anthropocentrism (See for example Acampora, 2006; Calarco, 2008). Also acknowledging the patriarchal order we live within (Lerner, 1986; Miles, 1988; The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, 1990), it is easy to associate anthropocentrism with the patriarchal order. Subordination is a practical solution to handle difference. Anthropocentrism and patriarchy are interlocked, by both having in common the idea of the monosexual order with ‘Man’ as assumed neutral cathegory.

The horse is a domesticated animal with social status as property and commodity, whose sexuality and reproduction is controlled. Is it not outrageous to signify this described relationship as a friendship, when it unfolds within this historical and cultural context?

Shouldn’t she avoid entering a relation, and thereby being safe from contributing to the anthropocentric order? Such an alternative is not possible to assume, in order to affect anthropocentrism. We are all already implicated in relations of domination to animals. But they are beyond our immediate field of vision, often in great suffering, or already dead, in our fridge or on our body. The animal is silent and silenced. To being called into question, to ask, to listen is a possible and potential way of being and becoming in a transformative relation to the anthropocentric order (see also Hagström, forthcoming).

How does she know if the horse is interacting, playing together, and not just submitting? She can’t know, is the answer. She can ask, she can be called into question by the face of the unknowable other. Not possessing, not consummating. Staying open for the space for wonder, in attunement to the beginnings she and the other bring to the situation. This is the ethical possibility of the relation. There are numerous structures of power and dominance in human-animal relations. By exploring the spacing between human and animal, the gaze is turned to where the transformative potential lies.

Thereby the relation to the patriarchal and anthropocentric order can be transformed. This does not mean that oppressive orders vanish, only that one’s relation to the oppressive order is changed. In these situations of transformative relationality, other possibilities arise.
Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Irigaray, and to some extent Arendt, Muraro, The Milan Women’s Bookstore’s Collective and Bingham, and by turning to the relation with the horse, I have critically explored authority as pedagogical relationality. This exploration has taken place between human and horse and has been signified in terms of circulating tact.

Further, authority based in difference is important for understanding this relation, not as submission within an anthropocentric, patriarchal and monosexual order, but as a potent signifier for opening the exploration of spaces for wonder, within a complex framework of freedom within dependence, of trust within resistance. In such a space, both the human and the horse brings their beginnings to each new situation, and authority is co-constituted in the situation. In such a space, first and foremost, there is also an openness to the other’s emergence as subject, and an attunement to the other’s beginnings to the situation.

The situation of transformative relationality is precisely pedagogical. It is not about subjectification induced by an intervention of another person. Instead, it is a pedagogical situation in which the authority is released in terms of circulating tact, where a space for freedom opens, signified by the transformative relationality of the relation.

References


Voices from the past: on representations of violence in education

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This paper discusses how testimonies, as representations of violence, can be understood in education, and more so, what kind of potentials testimonies can have for political change. Drawing on Klaus Mollenhauer and Susan Sontag the paper discusses how the representational thought of selection in education has the potential to renew and change pupils’ lives, as a way to open up another realm, other understandings, to other lives, and professions as it can point towards other ways of living. However, the paper argues for the problem of seeing educational representation as selection or as a pointing towards events and happenings in history, as it is easier to opt out that which is difficult to face. Instead, the paper draws on Giorgio Agamben’s theory of the testimony and the witness as voice and as remnants from the past, that urge us to open up for something new within our own language. The testimony is not an archive, but rather stands between that which is said and the saying, between the inside and outside of language, between what is possible to say and what is impossible to say, in any language. The paper also draws on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s theory of a representation based on literary reading, hacking and how to suture the wounds that exist, in history as well as today. To suture the wounds and scars after on-going oppression and violence is a pedagogical method from below, a subaltern pedagogy, according to Spivak. In the paper I argue for a different image of representation, a representation that can not be associated with the talking for another group, as a category that someone has decided is in need of a certain voice but instead urges us to listen to different voices from the past, to make room for new and other voices within our own language. It is a representational thought that speaks of something different than pointing out phenomena or problems. In relations to Spivak and Agamben the paper discusses how the idea of representations in education can be looked upon in an other way where it is not as easy to opt out that which is difficult and hard to face, but rather how voices from the past, as remnants, can lead to disruptions and interruptions and to political change.

Introduction

In 1997 I was in ninth grade and it was the year in which school children in Sweden were assigned the book ... om detta må ni berätta... En bok om Förintelsen i Europa 1933-1945.¹ I remember sitting deeply immersed in it. I studied the pictures carefully, stared into the faces that were in them. Captivated by images that represented the reports and lists of prisoners, of billboards, posters, maps of the camps, mass graves with corpses, of thin faces, empty eyes and captured scenes. The beautiful pictures. Yes, as Susan Sontag writes, in Regarding the Pain of Others, images of the treacherous can be beautiful, even if the event is not.² What I ask, in this paper, is how these kinds of testimonies, that are representations of violence, can be understood in education. And more so: what kind of potential can these stories have for political change?

Seeing the book, and the pictures in it, as testimonies from the Holocaust makes me ask the questions: what is the witnesses testifying about? What is being represented? What does it mean to listen to such stories of violence? What does it mean pedagogically? As I approach these issues from how a pupil in school, but also as a teacher, confront testimonies, it is in the form of testimony as material and as an archive: of books, movies, pictures, or of people

¹ Stéphane Bruchfeld and Paul A. Levine, ... om detta må ni berätta ... En bok om Förintelsen i Europa 1933-1945 (Tell Ye Your Children... A Book about the Holocaust in Europe 1933-1945) (Regeringskansliet, Stockholm, 1998).
² Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (New York: Picador, 2004).
coming to schools and speaking of what they have been through. As a teacher I have entered the classroom with the question of what material to teach about – that is, what can represent the thing I want to say? – and the school archives, the library and the internet have been the places for me to search. The teacher is here the selector of material, of that which is being represented.

In education and in philosophy, the question of presentation and representation is thoroughly examined. I will not give a comprehensive view of what these phenomena mean: neither educationally, philosophically nor politically. I will in the paper discuss images like the ones that I confronted as a teenager, of the Holocaust, through a series of concepts. I will begin by discussing it in relation to the idea of a representation as pointing and as selection from an archive – an understanding which open up understandings of representations of violence in education but at the same time is problematic. I will therefore instead argue for another understanding, and see what happens if testimonies of violence are not related to the idea of representation but rather as remnants and voices, based on Giorgio Agamben’s theory, and later relate this understanding of testimony in relation to a pedagogy of the subaltern, literary reading and listening, based on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s theory.

I assume that institutions involved in teaching, as schools, are no neutral places, sprung from nowhere, but politically and ideologically constituted. Based on that, my point of departure for the paper is that education should have as a starting point to work for transformation and social justice. The political and the pedagogical is interlinked but not the same. If a pedagogical transformation can be related to how one can be able to change ones life, the political is linked to the will; i.e. wanting a change. In the paper I see political transformation in the sense of a disruption or an interruption and not in the sense of a consensus. However, the will to political change does not, by itself, lead to it, or even, lead to a pedagogical transformation – but they are interrelated and connected to each other.

**Presentation and representation: a selection from the archive?**
Klaus Mollenhauer takes in Vergessene Zusammenhänge: Über Kultur und Erziehung a grasp of both the phenomena of presentation and of representation in relation to education. For Mollenhauer upbringing involves presentation. The human being is a social being and thus also the product of a society, she can not pretend to be partial or indifferent to the context she is a part of - something that might be considered given - but, as he writes, simultaneously leads to the fact that we can not understand education beyond this understanding. Presentation is as a phenomenon close to language and he writes that presentation is thus a kind of mediation, an intentionality between the thin (the world) and language (the word). In this there is no Kantian "thing in itself " (the world as it is in itself, different from how humans perceive it) that Mollenhauer is departing from. He begins instead with Augustine’s Confessions as an experience description of how an I, a child, addresses the world. The world is here presented through words, but also by the way that the body, the voice moves and relate in the world. Here Mollenhauer is near a phenomenological understanding of the human being in the world, in her life-world.

From this understanding, Mollenhauer writes that the first elementary step in upbringing is “the presentation of ways of life” – which is different from a pedagogy based on

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5 I have in the study of Mollenhauer’s book primarily based on a script translation into English made by the first three chapters of the book. Klaus Mollenhauer, Vergessene Zusammenhänge: Über Kultur und Erziehung (Weinheim und München: Juventa Verlag, 2008); Klaus Mollenhauer, Forgotten Connections, On Culture and Upbringing (Draft), translated by Norm Friesen and Tone Saevi.
representation. Upbringing and pedagogics is based on samples of life, and above all, a selection of those who live nearest the child, of the parents. Everything is not presented to the child. Violence and sex are common themes that are deemed unsuitable for children to be exposed to. Mollenhauer also talks about how the process "is slowed down" for the child and thus of a delayed presentation.\(^6\)

Representation, in turn, enters rather at a later stage than the phenomenon of presentation and specifically in relation to school. Education as representation is here understood as a large montage of images and representations that are not the things themselves but are "pointing out things and phenomena", and for Mollenhauer this directedness has a democratic function in education because it opens up different ways of living. Through the ways in which schools represent and show other ways of living than the child’s immediate family it is possible to change the pattern: the child does not have to make the choices that the father, mother or aunt have done. You may become something completely different, Mollenhauer writes. Education as the opening to another realm, other understandings, to other lives, professions other than the immediate family is an important part of educational purpose and my thoughts are with the students fighting for their right to live their lives, free from oppression and a stifling home environment. The school may offer opportunities to be taught to read, to write and to create an own view of how one’s life could be lived. Herein lies not only the democratic possibility, but also the idea of a dignified life.

This idea of representation, as Mollenhauer describes as "choose what is to be communicated", is just as the presentation phenomenon, based on the idea of selection. In between the actual incident, event or thing is the teacher – a subject – who makes the selection of what is to be passed on. With this idea of representation in mind, it is difficult to distinguish between the subject who chooses and what later on stands as a representation of it. The subject, who makes the selection, and what later on is represented are closely linked with each other.

Let us go back to the example with which I started this paper. The book … om detta må ni berätta… that I first read as a teenager in school and that has followed me during the years had in that edition a larger format than the one that came in 2010. Maybe they did it in that format because there was an idea that the image had the ability to convey what should be told. The image can convey what cannot be said with words. This is more than an event. Susan Sontag writes in Regarding the pain of Others how the image, the photographed image, from war and events of suffering has exploded during the 1900s and that the photograph itself has been given a status of a witness who is authentic and genuine – which she, however, criticizes through out the whole book. Sontag notes briefly that ever since the camera was invented in 1839 the photograph has been involved with death.\(^7\) Images of savagery has and still today evokes disgust, as in a general revulsion against war and violence. But simply taking note of such fact, to dismiss war as such, says Sontag, is to escape from the political. Violence occurs in a context. In a situation, as a result of oppression or exploitation. Therefore, testimonies that are used in education, such as … om detta må ni berätta… is at the same time a question of the political. It does not escape the political.

Sontag shows through her book how pictures, war photos, montages want to tell you something specific. Images can be used to foment hatred against the enemy or in support of a political opinion. There are examples where the same image is used by the two warring sides, but with different captions. Photos and missions have also been ordered to advance a particular political view, but also, as Sontag writes, there are stories that are censored and

\(^6\)Mollenhauer, Forgotten Connections, On Culture and Upbringing (Draft), 20ff.
\(^7\)Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others.
banned, thus one should ask the question: the pity and disgust brought by such images should not distract one from asking themselves what pictures, whose cruelties and whose death is not shown up?8 I ask myself the rhetorical questions, which bodies are made visible? Which bodies disappear into oblivion? Which bodies are used – and for what purpose?

With Sontag and Mollenhauer, images are representations of something and a representation given based on the idea of selection. The camera lens has captured something: some of it is in the foreground, other things are in the background. What is happening outside the picture is not visible at all. The same can be said about ... om detta må ni berätta ... The edition that I got in my hand in 1997 did not contain any section on Sweden’s role during the Holocaust (which was subsequently criticized why they 2010 inserted a new section on Sweden’s role during the war). Not only so, the edition that I received in 1997 contained phrases about Sweden which posed that it was a good country I lived in. Sweden was the good who saved Jews from death. Phrases that said that Sweden used "byråkratiskt motstånd" ("bureaucratic resistance") and "Diplomaterna insåg att om de kunde rädda judar från deportation så hade dessa människor en mycket större chans att få leva" ("The diplomats realized that if they could save Jews from deportation these people had a much greater chance to live"), or that "judar undgick att arresteras och lyckades fly till Sverige" ("Jews escaped being arrested and succeeded escaping to Sweden.").9

Again, I can see how the choice not to tell how Sweden was a part of fascism shows how representation is linked to the political, but also how this kind of representation, as a selection, leads to an education that does not need to be aware of its own history. It is easy to opt out of what is difficult; hard to describe, hard to understand or difficult to face. It is easier to describe an event in a more beautiful manner and skip that which is not so beautiful, and which therefor does not need to be a part of our own, awkward, self-image.

This selection theory can therefore be questioned. The subject, the lens, the school, the curriculum, select and deselect. Yes, we can even talk about how voices are silenced. Repressed. Both historical and contemporary voices. An education based on selection, as Mollenhauer’s, has nevertheless its intention an oppressive function, which is normative and that tells that you will work and be exactly what your parents and ancestors do/did and thus maintains and sustains class system, gender roles and identities. It tells of a school that can accentuate the good in itself – as in ... om detta må ni berätta... where Sweden as a nation in 1997 was, to me as a pupil, a good nation, which simply stood on the good side during World War II. The example of ...om detta må ni berätta... shows how education is a politically and ideologically constituted institution and that voices – as an archived selection – that are able to come forward are packaged, recorded, archived and made into knowledge. What I ask is if it is possible to get away from this idea and practise of selection. How can we formulate another pedagogy? What would that look like instead?

The voice of the witness
Let us take a few steps back. From what angle do I in this paper see testimony? One understanding of testimony is seeing it as one large, incomplete archive, which I find in Paul Ricoeur’s theory. He speaks of an "archived memory" in Memory, History, Forgetting. He follows testimony in one of its forms, namely those testimonies that have been provided with a seal through archiving. He writes that with testimony an epistemological process is opened, starting from memory affidavit, passes through the records and documents, and is completed when the document is examinated. Ricoeur argues that the archive is written, documented,

8 ibid.
9 Stéphane Bruchfeld och Paul A. Levine, ... om detta må ni berätta ... En bok om Förintelsen i Europa 1933-1945, 32, 69. My translation.
while witnessing is oral, and should be listened to.\(^{10}\) As I will argue in this paper, there is a problem seeing testimonies from the past as a big archive which has been provided with a seal.

Ricoeur’s view of testimony as an archive equipped with a seal is different from Giorgio Agamben’s view on it. According to Agamben testimonies, even if they are securely stored in the archives, do not guarantee an actual truth, but rather is pointing to the testimony’s non-possibility to be filed. In Agamben’s book *Remnants of Auschwitz*, which is an ethical and political analysis over the phenomena of the witness and the "archive" from the Holocaust. He re-reads the understanding of testimony as an archive and puts forward the idea of testimony as remnants. Remnants which can enter into the present. Or rather, remain in the present.

A testimony as a remnant is something other than an archive. An archive can be picked up, put back and reused. Agamben chooses in his book to speak of this remnant in terms of voice or enunciation, and mentions it in terms of a non-language, where the language, as such, must leave room for a non-language in order to show the impossibility to testify:

This means that testimony is the disjunction between two impossibilities of bearing witness; it means that language, in order to bear witness, must give way to a non-language in order to show the impossibility of bearing witness.\(^ {11}\)

In the introduction to *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben writes that the purpose of the book, is to listen to what is unsaid, which can be interpreted in terms of leaving some words behind and open up for other words to be understood in other (new?) ways.\(^ {12}\) The understanding of the testimony as to leave room for a non-language in order to show the impossibility of witnessing not only leads to other (bodily) expressions but also to an understanding of language as such, an understanding of silence, to speech and to the written word. Agamben turns to Beneviste and Foucault to understand how the testimony is not an archive, but rather stands between that which is said and the saying, between the inside and outside of language, between what is possible to say and what is impossible to say, in any language.\(^ {13}\) It is this part of the philosophy that leads to the subsequent understanding of a non-language.

For Agamben a testimony stands between two impossibilities of bearing a testimony. In his writing he refers to Primo Levi’s book *If this is man* and Levi’s writing on the men that later on would be called muselmänner. The term as such is problematic and racist, and is considered a slang word from the Arabic word for Muslim and refers to a person who has given up his will and totally fallen into the hands of God, and thus understood as a person who lost her dignity, and no longer cares if she is alive or not. The Muselmann has rather hit the bottom, crossed the border, and seen some of the Gorgon sisters, who in Greek literature have hair made of snakes and who can kill with a look of their eyes. They are bodies described as figures: they are no longer living people but dolls. For Levi, it is this man, who died of starvation, beatings, disease or other (un)imaginable events that are the true witnesses and who own the story of the event, but can through their own deaths not tell what happened.\(^ {14}\) Instead, it is the survivors, as Levi himself, who speak instead of all the many millions of


\(^{12}\) Ibid., 14.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 145.

murdered people. But they do not have the true story, they do not own it, and they speak therefore as pseudo-witnesses. This means that neither of the two witnesses, she who went under or she who speaks in its stead, can tell the truth about what happened. What we are left with are two impossible testimonies. None of them can tell you what happened.

Instead, it is that which lies between the two witnesses that will be significant, as a gap (or lacuna) between what has happened and what later can be told. It is precisely this gap between the two witnesses that can be understood as a relic, as a remnant between the two witnesses. As I understand this, this remnant, is more based on how we come to listen, or read, or interpret testimonies that we come to encounter. As Agamben writes, to testify (as a pseudo-witness) means leaving room for a non-language within the language itself, in order to show the impossibility of witnessing.

It is in this movement that extends beyond the idea of representation based on selection that I earlier discussed in relation to Mollenhauer and Sontag. This view on testimony of Agamben is also different from Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in Testimony, Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History. They write how the testimony implies: "the power of significance and impact of a true event of language – an event that can unwittingly resemble a poetic, or a literary, act." Felman and Laub argue that the testimony by its discursive practice has the possibility to represent what have happened. There is a threshold between the event and what was later told – but through the encounter that occurs between the word and the voice, between the words, voice, rhythm, melody, pictures, writing, and silence there is a possibility. In Felman’s and Laub’s understanding there is a subject that makes herself a medium for the event and who subsequently passes it on. Their view on the witness as a medium between what is presented and what later on can be represented is, as I see it, close to the idea of representation as selection.

Agamben criticizes Felman and Laub and writes that they build a potentiality on an initially impossible thing. Agamben’s view is therefore different when he chooses not to see it as a discursive practice or an on-going process. However, although Agamben’s view differs, I would still argue that it is precisely in the ethical and political potential of the testimony that Agamben ends up in. In my reading of the last chapter "Testimony and Archive" Agamben writes: "testimony is a potential that becomes actual through an impotential of speech; it is moreover, an impossibility that gives existence through a possibility of speaking." It is an important turn in Agamben’s theory; despite the impossibility of testimony there is power in the witness and its testimony, which means that testimony as remnants in the present will not be static but performative. That testimonies in the present have a presence and force. This force is different from that of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. The possibility is rather placed in between the to witnesses and not, as I read it, in the idea of a selection or as a medium – but instead of leaving room for something new in within our own language. The possibility we land in, as in the possibility of impossibility, in the voice (and not in the language), is in the space between the past and now, between the voices from the past and our own language and of leaving room for other voices within our own language. It is when the pseudo-witness enters, acts and testifies, instead of those, or because of those who have

15 Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive.
17 Ibid., 277f.
18 Ibid., 24.
19 Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive, 146.
become de-subjectified (as in the case of the muselmänner) that the possibility exist.\textsuperscript{20} But only in the sense that the pseudo-witness give voice to that which can not be said but that which must be said, in the way he or she alters itself, twists and renewes the language. In the way she or he leaves room for something new, within her own language. The impossibility of testimony implies, as I interpret it, a hope and a possibility of becoming human, especially when Agamben writes that: "human beings are human insofar as they bear witness to the inhuman."\textsuperscript{21} Bringing that into teaching, and simultaneously considering education as a place where such actions may take place would be a comforting thing.

### Representation as hacking and as to suture

The issue of representation is not one big issue but many small ones. I will here discuss Spivak’s idea of representation. If we understand testimony as a representation of something, from a place or situation where someone speaks, we must ask ourselves: what is it the testimony represents? Just as Sontag asked the question – what stories or images are not shown? – there must be an interwoven-criticism when we meet and read testimonies. Spivak writes in *Outside in the teaching machine* and in the chapter "Marginality in the teaching machine" of how marginalized groups are obtained and represented in teaching, and how teaching, that Spivak has seen and experienced, has brought forth the image of a long cultural identity which is often determined by name, but also by the color of the skin. The stories from certain marginalized groups are being exploited in an instrumental way, and people will be representatives for their “own group” and are supposed to stand up for some special stories of marginality.

This is, as I read it, a critique of the education system and not whether or not people who experience marginality restrictions have the right to talk about the situation they are in and therefore speak as a representative of a group. Rather, I can relate it to the teaching in religious studies (a subject I myself am a trained teacher in) in secondary schools in Sweden, where religious groups are presented in the easiest way, in a format of two to three weeks, and through the most available schoolbooks. As Spivak writes, marginality has become one substance and packaged under the theme of knowledge:

> Marginality, as it is becoming part of the disciplinary-cultural parlance, is in fact the name of a certain constantly changing set of representation that is the condition and effect of it. It is coded in the currency of the equivalencies of knowledge.\textsuperscript{22}

She uses the term 'subaltern studies' and how its theme has its own arenas and courses, and is coded as knowledge, as in ‘if I know who you are, I can also determine how to meet and treat you’, which goes under the type of representation that 'speaks for' another group, and leads to epistemic violence.\textsuperscript{23} The force comes here not from below. It is forced from above. The created image, of the people or the event is not only used but also abused. Stories, people's bodies, are packaged and already related to the historical narrative. This form of representation will not lead to any change. The same stories, the same preconceptions are put forward, and no translation takes place.

According to Spivak, in the now classic essay, “Can the subaltern speak?” from 1988, we must distinguish between two different ways of looking at representation. First, we have a

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 121.
representation in politics, as in a speaking for (as in speaking for a group of people, for workers, for women, for an ethnicity, etc.). The second view on representation is for her closer to art and philosophy which she chooses to term as re-presentation. The difference between these may seem small - and besides, what is to say that politics makes it one way and philosophy in the other? The difference that she makes, however, is about categorization and in relation to whether the representative work can influence the subject or not. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she writes that the two representation ideas are related, but also 'irreducibly discontinuous'. The word representation can be related to the mind and the subject and how re-presentation, in turn, can act as a transformation of this consciousness and therefore speak to the subject’s conscience.

It is through this connection that I see an educational idea. It is the human relational capability, the pedagogical relation, that allows images, stories, testimonies to be interwoven with our own bodies, our own minds. We are through that receptive and responsive. Recipients of representations is therefore not passive subjects, but involved, and it is here that testimonies as voices from the past can be related to consciousness – but also then to the human conscience.

However, this relational receptiveness is not enough. In Spivak’s essay "Righting Wrongs" another answer is offered. She talks in that text about human rights, about the exploitation of an underclass in history, of historical wounds and scars that testify to inequality and oppression in history. The discussion she comes down to is whether education may be, or lead to social justice. As an answer to that problem she developed a pedagogy that she calls subaltern. The subaltern pedagogy is from below, and wherein the arts and social subjects play an important role. Or even more specifically, where literature and literary reading plays an important role. What is interesting with this subaltern pedagogy in relation to representation and testimony is her understanding of literary reading as poiesis or rather, teleo-poiesis: to create, or to advance (to make or to bring forth). An exercise in literary reading is according to Spivak to learn from the singular and of that which can not be verified. Although literature can not speak, there is in reading a patience and slowness as in an attempt to get the text to respond.

Facing a testimony would through this lens not imply meeting a preconceived representation of a fixed narrative, but rather how this meeting also implies that something happens with the subject. Something that affects one. Literary reading, as Spivak talks about it, as teleo-poiesis without guarantees, would mean that facing testimonies has the possibility to change you into something that you can not anticipate. It is in relation to this understanding I see a political transformation, in the sense of a disruption or an interruption – and not in the sense of a consensus. Spivak calls this teaching method for suturing, as in a healing, or in a weaving:

To suture thus the torn and weak responsibility-based system into a conception of human dignity as the enjoyment of rights one enters ritual practice transgressively, alas, as a hacker enters software. The description of ritual-hacking below may seem silly, perhaps. But insofar as this hacking is like a weaving, this, too, is an exercise in texere, textil-ity, text-ing, textuality. I must continue to repeat that my emphasis is on the difficulties of this texting, the practical pedagogy of it, not in devising the most foolproof theory of it for you, my peers. Without the iterative text of doing and devising in silence, the description seems either murky.

24 Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?", 70.
25 Ibid., 70.
26 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Righting Wrongs", The South Atlantic Quarterly 1 2004. num 103:2/3, Spring/Summer (2004): 531. With the Subaltern she means those who have been deprived of the possibility of social mobility. It is a relative concept taken from Gramsci that can be best understood through the verb "subalternization". It thus aims not at any specific, static group, but the actual process of being exploited, diminished and belittled.
27 Ibid., 532.
or banal.\textsuperscript{28} To understand the metaphor about suturing it must also become clear that there are wounds and scars after on-going oppression and violence. Here I can see a different image of representation, a representation that can not be associated with talking for another group, a category that someone has decided is in need of a certain voice. It is a representation that speaks of something different than pointing out phenomena or problems. With Spivak politics is interconnected with education, or rather, education becomes the solution of a political problem. Spivak and her theory of pedagogy that is suturing I interpret rather in terms of \textit{listening}. As she has said in an interview: to understand what it means to speak means first and mainly trying to understand what it means to listen. The speech presupposes listening.\textsuperscript{29}

**Conclusion**

What I asked, in this paper, is how testimonies that tell of violence can be understood in education, and what kind of potentials these stories can have for political change. Throughout the paper I have argued for the problem of an education that works with representations from the archive that are provided with a seal, but, which has been stated, the human relational capability, the pedagogical relation, allows images, stories, testimonies to be interwoven with our own bodies, with our feelings and with our minds. Therefore we do not face testimonies all the same. We are receptive and responsive. Recipients of representations are therefore not passive subjects, but involved. In this, there is a possibility to critically examine representations of violence – listening and asking: what else? Who is missing? What more? And by doing also leaving room for other voices within our own language.

The shift from representation in education as selection towards the impossibility of testimony, towards leaving room for something new in your own language, towards a hacking into history and a iterative reading and listening do not make it easy – for how can that imperative that is stated by Spivak of listening carefully, or reading as a hacker enters software, be done in an educational setting? The answer is that there is no easy way out, and I emphasise Spivak’s words on the difficulties of this texting, the practical pedagogy of it. But as I have interpreted it, the impossibility of testimony implies hope and a possibility for disruptions and interruptions – as a potential for political change. It makes the political potential that exist in testimonies into an educational issue. Bringing voices from the past, as remnants, into our own teaching and into our own language would open up a place where different voices could find a place. Considering education as a place where such actions can take place would be a comforting thing, which is not anywhere near a foolproof theory of social justice, but a mere work in process that never ends.

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\textsuperscript{28} Spivak, “Righting Wrongs”, 559.

\textsuperscript{29} de Leon Kock, “An Interview with Spivak, “ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature 23, no. 3 (January 7, 1992); See Todd’s chapter in Learning from the Other on listening as an pedagogical possibility: Todd, Learning from the Other.
Epistemic empathy in childrearing and education

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Abstract
The question, What is it like to be a child?, is one that most of us, in our capacity as parents and/or educators, have probably asked ourselves already at some point. Perhaps one might go further and suggest that it is a question we ought to ask (or have asked) ourselves, insofar as the attempt to provide a meaningful response has a significant bearing on childrearing and education. It is a question that presumably frames the processes of cognitive and moral education – i.e. showing respect for the child’s point of view and inducting the child into respecting the points of view of others. After briefly discussing the idea of empathy and relating it to ideas like sympathy or compassion, this paper focuses on epistemic empathy in particular. The relevant characteristics in this regard are knowledge of another’s internal state, including her thoughts and feelings; understanding how another is thinking and feeling; and imagining how one would think and feel in the other’s place. Regarding childrearing and education, the two central questions that concern us here are: What is the role of epistemic empathy in our dealings with our children, learners and students? And how can we ensure that they become empathic individuals themselves? In other words, (how) can empathy be taught and learned? After examining several recommendations regarding the nurturing and development of epistemic empathy (exemplification, modelling, acquisition of poetic and general aesthetic skills and sensitivity, induction, imitation, etc.), I pay closer attention to the idea of modelling epistemic empathy. I conclude the paper with a few thoughts about limits to epistemic empathy.

What is it like to be a child?
What is it like to be a child? This is a question most of us, in our capacity as parents and/or educators, have probably asked ourselves already at some point. Perhaps one might go further and suggest that it is a question we ought to ask (or have asked) ourselves, insofar as the attempt to provide a meaningful response has a significant bearing on childrearing and education. As I will argue below, it is a question that presumably frames the processes of cognitive and moral education – i.e. showing respect for the child’s point of view and inducting the child into respecting the points of view of others.

The point of Thomas Nagel’s question, ‘What is it like to be a bat?’ (Nagel 1979: 165-180), is to draw our attention to the fact of the existence of a particular subjective point of view which necessarily always remains beyond the scope of our inquiry, an inquiry which – being objective – cannot, necessarily, assimilate the subjective point of view. One might argue that we can know what it is ‘like’ for a bat to be hungry, thirsty, to be afraid, to be in pain, to experience sexual desire, etc. One might appeal to knowledge by analogy (likeness due to function) as well as to knowledge by homology (likeness due to kinship), given facts about our biological constitution and kinship with animals in general and mammals in particular, and how their needs, habits, and motives interact holistically. This, however, will – clearly – not do. As Nagel contends, ‘we cannot expect ever to accommodate in our language a detailed description of ... bat phenomenology’ (Nagel 1979: 170). The point is that, although we can know what it is like for a bat to be afraid (even though our fears might be modified by our possession of language), we cannot know what it is like for a bat to be afraid. We may be able to know what it is like to be Dracula the man but not what it is like to be Dracula the vampire bat. ‘What is it like to be ...’ necessarily implies that there is a particular (set of) factor(s) beyond the grasp of the one who asks this question. The essential aspect always
remains beyond\(^1\), as it does when I ask: ‘What is it like to be a woman?’, or more specifically, ‘What is it like to be pregnant/ to suffer from pre-menstrual tension?’ or when a Caucasian asks: ‘What is it like to be black?’ The difference is that whereas the latter kinds of questions could be answered by women and by blacks (although I doubt that their answers could really be understood by men and by whites), the question ‘What is it like to be a bat?’ could only be ‘answered’ by bats. It is not only a matter of linguistic competence, but also a matter of the capacity to detect the meaning and relevance of such questions.

Our attempt at an empathic understanding of children is crucially different from the attempts of humans to understand bats, of whites to understand blacks, and of men to understand women. The difference is that we were all once children. This, of course, introduces the problem of memory, or at least of its reliability. Although it is an important source of justification and indeed knowledge, our memory notoriously misleads or deceives us. It also tends to be selective, depending on what we (do not) want to remember. There are additional considerations. Thus, while I can claim greater authority to speak of the subjective point of view of a child (because I was once a child) than to speak of the subjective point of view of a woman (because I was never a woman), the following questions necessarily arise: what kind of child? belonging to which demographic group? what about geographic, cultural context etc.? There are arguably important differences in response to the questions, ‘What is it like to be my son?’ and ‘What is it like to be Mowgli?’ (see MacLean 1977).

Is it perhaps a matter of empathy gaining a stronger foothold in the former than in the latter case? But what exactly is empathy, and how is it different from related ideas like sympathy or compassion?

**Empathy (Einfühlung) and sympathy (Mitgefühl)**

The notion of empathy (from the Greek word *empathēia* – ‘affection’, ‘passion’; also related to *pathos* – ‘suffering’) refers to the ability to recognise and understand the experiences, thoughts, emotions, intentions and personal characteristics of another being. The intellectual history of this idea is arguably best traced via 19th century German philosopher/psychologist Theodor Lipps (1913), whose notions of *Einfühlung* and aesthetic sympathy were equally influenced by David Hume and the father-son team Friedrich Theodor Vischer and Robert Vischer, and to the work of Max Scheler (1954): ‘In [Scheler’s] projective empathy, one imaginatively projects oneself into the situation of another and envisions what one’s own reaction would be in the other’s situation’ (Bein 2013: 11). Lipps and Scheler established a circle of the ‘Munich phenomenologists’ shortly after the latter’s arrival in Munich in 1906. Inspired by their work, Edward Titchener (1909) developed the notion of empathy as an English conceptual translation of *Einfühlung* (‘feeling one’s way into another’, ‘taking up another’s perspective, feeling another’s emotions, or feeling into another’s emotion and perceptions’; see Oxley 2011: 4, 5). Back in Germany, too, Edith Stein (Stein 1917/1989; Matzker 1991) deepened the conception of *Einfühlung*, as involving objective listening, followed by a deeper subjective connection, a tuning-into or ‘feeling-into’ another’s subjective experience, rendered possible by our shared humanity. Stein’s conception clearly rules out empathising with non-human animals, but does it also rule out *sympathy* across the species barrier? Is sympathy *possible* without empathy?

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\(^1\) On the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of knowing an other, and the dangers of imposing one’s self on an other (especially with reference to Emmanuel Levinas), see Sharon Todd (Todd 2001). ‘The Other, for Levinas’, writes Todd, is a concrete manifestation of absolute difference. ... His Other is ... an unassimilable and unknowable alterity. (Todd 2001: 69)

Instead of ‘knowledge about the Other’, it is ‘the self’s susceptibility [‘openness’ or ‘exposure’] to the Other ... to which education must address itself if it is not to inflict violence’ (Todd 2001: 68; see also pp. 71, 73).
Although there is a significant etymological connection between empathy and sympathy (or compassion), ‘feeling-in(to)’ (Einfühlung) is conceptually distinct from ‘feeling-with’ or ‘feeling-for’ (Mitgefühl). According to Steve Bein, ‘Empathy [but not necessarily sympathy, or compassion] is something we want out of, say, our psychoanalysts’ (2013: 1). Nonetheless, … something like empathy is indeed required in order to have compassion. In order to be compassionate one must have some means of detecting the suffering and satisfaction of others. If empathy serves this role, then empathy – or something functionally similar to it – is a necessary part of the cultivation and expression of compassion. Whether it is part of compassion itself or a complementary trait will be left for now as an open question, but any account of compassion that seeks to make the experiences of suffering and satisfaction in others available to the one who feels compassion must have some feature that serves the function of empathy. (Bein 2013: 4)

It seems to me that, contra Stein and others, it is easier for me to empathise with (and care more deeply for) my dingo than Rosemary’s baby, Fritz the cat than Josef Fritzl, an escaped budgerigar than an escaped burglar. Part of the reason for this is that empathy is often biased. ‘People’, after all, ‘tend to empathize to a greater extent with family members, members of their primary group, close friends, and people whose personal needs and concerns are similar to their own’ (Oxley 2011: 3). I believe nonetheless that empathy has a significant function in normative ethics – but, in terms of defining normative moral obligations and principles (even in care ethics), this is an instrumental rather than a constitutive role (see also Oxley 2011: 6, 12; Slote 2013: 593). This instrumental role is explained chiefly by the consideration that, unlike sympathy, ‘empathy’s most important functions are epistemic’ (Oxley 2011: 63): ‘empathy can be used to acquire justified beliefs about others’ mental and emotional states’ (Oxley 2011: 12). It performs a number of epistemic functions that enable us to reflect on our beliefs about others in a new way. … Empathy enables people to understand how others see the world, helps them to appreciate others’ perspectives and connect with them emotionally, eliminates the perception of conflict between oneself and others, and makes possible the perception of similarity between oneself and others. Focusing on empathy’s epistemic dimension is an approach that has the resources for explaining how empathy and empathic thinking are relevant to ethical reflection, deliberation, and justification. (Oxley 2011: 5-6)

Perhaps the case might be made that, with regard to empathy in particular, the cognitive and the affective, reason and emotion, are indivisible (see also Slote 2013: 50, 54, 90/91: fn. 7). The relevant characteristics in this regard are knowledge of another’s internal state, including her thoughts and feelings; understanding how another is thinking and feeling; and imagining how one would think and feel in the other’s place (see Oxley 2011: 7, 8).

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2 Slote states that ‘empathy is necessary to the fulfilment of both intellectual and moral ideals or objectives’ (Slote 2013: 59). It is clearly not sufficient for such fulfilment: empathy is not a substitute for but, rather, defines and motivates both in-depth scientific knowledge and normative moral principles and obligations.

3 See also Clark: ‘Empathy, at its most basic level, is epistemic’ (Clark 2010).

4 In Slote’s view, there are no strictly intellectual opinions. All genuine opinions involve a relevantly favorable attitude, and perhaps this emotional aspect of the opinions facilitates the osmotic transmission of opinions (e.g., from parents to children) and makes it more plausible to accept the commonsense view that they can be transmitted or soaked up in this way. (Slote 2013: 91, fn. 7)
The idea of epistemic empathy – and related notions like mindfulness

The idea of epistemic empathy is a fairly recent addition to discourses within social, moral and virtue epistemology. It has been employed in a wide variety of discourses. Thus, from a feminist perspective, Rosemary Tong (1997) explores empathy as an epistemic skill in professional health care provision and practice. Susan Gair (2011) is concerned with the cognitive and experiential role empathy can play in social work contexts. She draws on Stein’s work on ‘deep listening’ and establishes links with the concept and process of mindfulness: ‘deeper listening facilitated through mindfulness approaches, in a way that incorporated deep learning models, may prove successful in cultivating greater empathy’ (Gair 2011: 338, 339). W.W. Meissner (2010) focuses on the epistemology of empathy in psychoanalytic research. Antti Keskinen (n.d.) argues from a Quinean perspective that the use and the ostensive learning of observation sentences depend on empathy, i.e. the ability to understand what another individual is perceiving. Fred Clark (2010) and Rick Perlstein (2013) discuss epistemic empathy (or rather the lack of it) with particular reference to American conservatives (Clark) or right-wingers (Perlstein). Clark maintains:

Empathy is a way of seeing, and therefore a way of knowing. To avoid empathy is to limit one’s own perspective to only one’s own perspective – to choose not to see and therefore to choose not to know. Worse than that – it is to choose not to be able to know. (Clark 2010)

Clark identifies a trend that he calls ‘epistemic closure’ among American conservatives: ‘To choose not to see what empathy shows us is to choose stupidity’ (Clark 2010). Considerably less prepared to attribute their attitude to some kind of voluntarism, Perlstein argues that a ‘genuine right-winger will be so lacking in intellectual imagination – in cognitive empathy – that imagining how anyone could sincerely reason differently from them is virtually impossible’, and that this is something ‘beyond his poor powers of epistemological empathy to comprehend’ (Perlstein 2013).

From the perspective of philosophy of history, Karsten Stueber explores the epistemic contribution of empathy (or what he calls ‘reenactive empathy’; Stueber 2008: 34) to the explanation of action, in terms of a general endeavour to understand historical events and processes. Julinna Oxley devotes a whole chapter in her book to the epistemic functions of empathy (Oxley 2011: 35-58), namely gathering information about the other person (42-46), as well as understanding others (46-48). She analyses the psychological experience of empathy and shows that it makes unique epistemic contributions to our understanding of other people. Since empathy brings information to our attention in a personal way, it has the potential to enrich moral deliberation. Nevertheless, it is not intrinsically moral and does not always lead to moral action. Given its role in helping us understand others, empathy is

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5 The less-than-startling presumption here is that empathic affective attunement is manifest between analyst and analysand. Owing to Sigmund Freud’s admiration of Lipps, *Einfühlung* became a useful and indeed important tool in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, developed further by Carl Rogers in the 1950s and 1960s (see Oxley 2011: 10; Gair 2011: 331) and Heinz Kohut in the 1960s and 1970s (Gair 2011: 329, 330).

6 Slote mentions, as examples, the lack of empathy and open-mindedness not only of the Spanish Inquisitors but also of many Muslims and Westerners towards one another (Slote 2013: 56).

7 According to Stueber, ‘in order to be able to grasp agents’ thoughts as reasons for their actions we have to reenact their thoughts, beliefs, and desires in our own mind while being simultaneously appropriately sensitive to relevant differences between ourselves and the people whose actions we want to understand’ (Stueber 2008: 36). In order to achieve this, ‘[o]ur only option is to use our cognitive capacities and to put ourselves imaginatively in their shoes in order to grasp their thoughts as their reasons’ (Stueber 2008: 36).
relevant also to Kantian ethics and contractual ethics, not just to ethical theories that emphasize care and altruism. Citing empirical evidence, Oxley shows that the cultivation of empathy must begin early in life in order for people to be inclined to feel empathy for others in a way that informs their moral decisions. Michael Slote (2013) is concerned with the role that epistemic empathy (‘empathy with another person’s state of belief or knowledge or their intellectual/scientific/cognitive “point of view”; Slote 2013: 52) can play in the reconciliation of moral caring with the admission or recognition that there is such a thing as greater or lesser creativity (or intelligence or talent). He also introduces ‘the epistemological ideals and intellectual/epistemic virtues of open-mindedness and fair-mindedness’ as ‘(desirable) forms of epistemic empathy and epistemic respect’ (Slote 2013: 50, 51). In what follows, I will assume—without additional argument—that open-mindedness and fair-mindedness are part and parcel of ‘mindfulness’.

The present paper owes a substantial debt of inspiration to the various works cited above, but it seeks to explore a particular, novel territory. My particular focus will be on the role (and also the limitations) of epistemic empathy in childrearing and education (teaching as well as learning).

Epistemic empathy in childrearing and education
The two central questions that concern us here are: What is the role of epistemic empathy in our dealings with our children, learners and students? And how can we ensure that they become empathic individuals themselves? In other words, (how) can empathy be taught and learned? These questions, and the responses that might be given to them, are not unconnected. If the function of epistemic empathy is to gain some kind of insight into the beliefs, ideas, thoughts, views, desires, aspirations, ambitions and experiences of those in our charge, then demonstrating such empathy and mindfulness is often likely to have a generative impact on the recipients of, say, our open-minded and fair-minded engagement. In other words, the epistemic respect that children, learners and students have experienced or received will often be likely to make them relevantly respectful persons themselves.

I think I have said enough above to indicate what counts as epistemic empathy in childrearing and education. Perhaps it will be instructive to examine examples of lack of epistemic empathy. One such example is what has become known as the ‘substitute success syndrome’, where ‘parents try to live through their children and to impose their own needs, desires, aspirations on their child (or children) without taking the child’s point of view into account in any significant way’ (Slote 2013: 61). Similarly, the tough parenting methods employed by ‘Tiger Mother’ Amy Chua seem to be characterised by a lack of epistemic empathy. These methods have included calling her daughter Louisa ‘garbage’ in order to motivate her, rejecting a birthday card on the grounds that ‘I deserve better than this’, and turning her house into a ‘war zone’ in order to coerce Louisa into learning a difficult piano piece, despite protestations from her husband Jed that she was insulting her daughter by calling ‘lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic’ (Chua 2011a; see also Chua 2011b). Chua asserts that

Western parents try to respect their children’s individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions, supporting their choices, and providing positive reinforcement and a nurturing environment. By contrast, the Chinese believe that the best way to protect their children is by preparing them for the future, letting them see what they are capable of, and arming them with skills, work habits and inner confidence that no one can ever take away. (Chua 2011a)

Chua is clearly concerned for the welfare of her daughters Louisa and Sophia, and sincere and articulate in her views. Yet, her maternal (matriarchal?) bluster, confidence and claims to superiority, all based on the questionable assumption that child achievement is all-important, invite the suspicion that she is concerned as much about her own status in light of her
daughters’ success or failure as with their health and happiness. While one may agree with certain aspects of her objection to recent, approval-obsessed ‘Western’ styles of childrearing and education (which have led many children to narcissism or self-destructive anxiety), it is difficult to perceive any empathy (moral or epistemic) in her style of parenting—which appears to be anything but respectful. ‘Letting them see what they are capable of’ may appear to involve epistemic empathy but in the present context it is much closer to coercive bullying.

Before Dewey, says Slote, ‘subject matter and various “values” were in most instances simply imposed on school children “for their own good”, and the children had little say in what and how they learned’ (Slote 2013: 61). Dewey was of the opinion that teachers ought not to ‘impose educational subject matter on an essentially passive child, but were to take the child’s interests and points of view deeply into account throughout the teaching process’ (Slote 2013: 61). There have been a range of suggestions by theorists as to how empathy is or can be taught—some of which are more useful than others. Thus, Dewey believed that ‘open-mindedness and fair-mindedness should be exemplified, taught, and/or encouraged in schools’ (Slote 2013: 60). Taking his cue from Dewey’s emphasis on the importance of children learning to think for themselves, Slote contends that

> If teachers listen to children’s voices, the children will learn to respect their own voices much more than if everything were imposed on them. But at the same time those children will also be learning a lesson in open-mindedness (or fair-mindedness). If teachers listen to and are willing to be influenced by what students think and want, then they themselves exemplify open-mindedness. If parents are concerned with others (and are normally loving toward their child), that attitude will tend to seep into their child. And something quite similar to the empathic osmosis of parental attitudes can occur when teachers show respect for the ideas, aspirations and attitudes of their students. (Slote 2013: 62)

Parents show respect for their children when they take their point of view into account, and this ‘very attitude is likely (in part via empathic osmosis) to translate into the children’s eventual ability, as adults, to think and decide for themselves’ (Slote 2013: 63). Similarly, if teachers model respect for the opinions and thinking of students, and ‘if we add epistemic versions of inductive discipline into the mix, we end up with a student who balances the capacity and disposition to think for him- or herself with a capacity and tendency to tolerate, respect, and be open-minded about what others think’ (Slote 2013: 64).

In a comprehensive chapter in her book, Oxley discusses ‘the different kinds of empathy that can be taught, the methods of teaching empathy (rationally, through induction, through interaction with a baby), and the purposes for which empathy can be taught (for the purposes of generating care, for cultivating understanding and diversity, or for developing the skill of reading others’ emotions)’ (Oxley 2011: 13). Since ‘the moral context of empathy varies from one program to another, … teachers of empathy, including parents, need awareness of what they are asking students to do when they “empathize” with others’ (Oxley 2011: 13-14). Oxley concludes that ‘the cultivation of empathy must begin early in life in order for people to be inclined to use empathy in making a moral decision’ (Oxley 2011: 14).

Having identified a dearth in the pertinent literature in this regard, Gair makes a few suggestions regarding the cultivation, teaching and learning of empathy. She considers ‘empathy as a skill that can be taught alongside positive regard and a non-judgemental, [recipient]-centred approach’ and ‘poetry writing to cultivate … students’ empathy’ (Gair 2011: 331), and endorses ‘increased opportunities … for … students to explore empathy through narratives, shared personal stories, and vignettes’, and provision of ‘cognitive, experiential, and perspective-taking opportunities for students to explore how they might
empathically, mindfully, and compassionately engage with diverse [recipient] groups in practice’ (Gair 2011: 339).

Tong, too, considers the development of ‘aesthetic skills – that is, … capacities to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste’ so that we can become fully attentive to others. ‘By learning to focus on nuances of colour and sound; to describe their emotional responses to novels, paintings, and symphonies; to interpret what is going on in fictional characters’ minds and hearts; to write poetry, to keep a journal, to play a role in a play, to listen to an oral history, to sit through a Japanese tea ceremony – the possibilities are myriad – [parents and teachers] can develop precisely those skills they need to attend to their [children, learners and students] as individuals’ (Tong 1997: 161). According to Tong, ‘empathy is an epistemic skill, an aesthetic sensitivity that can be learned. Using teaching techniques similar to the ones used in art, literature, and music course, teachers can teach [others] how to understand and interpret [children’s, learners’ and students’] values’ (Tong 1997: 162). Tong later (165) all but endorses a process of ‘imitation’ (of the behaviour of a caring person) as a way of learning to become caring – but it is doubtful whether this can be applied to (epistemic) empathy.

Of all the recommendations regarding the nurturing and development of epistemic empathy (exemplification, modelling, acquisition of poetic and general aesthetic skills and sensitivity, induction, imitation, etc.), I want to pay closer attention to the idea of modelling epistemic empathy.

Epistemic empathy and modelling
Borrowing some ideas from Nel Noddings on modelling and caring (Noddings 1998: 46), one might say that while modelling is important in most processes of cognitive and moral education it is vital with regard to empathy. Here, we are not trying to teach children and students principles and ways of applying them to problems through chains of mathematical reasoning. Rather, we have to show how to empathize in our own relations with those we empathize with. So we do not tell our children and students to empathize; we show them how to empathize by creating empathic relations with them. Still following Noddings (while bearing in mind that she is speaking about ‘practicing caring’ rather than ‘practicing empathy’), an essential component of education is practice:

Attitudes and “mentalities” are shaped, at least in part, by experience. Most of us speak regularly of a “military mind”, a “police mentality”, “business thinking”, and the like. Although some of this talk is a product of stereotyping, it seems clear that it also captures some truth about human behaviour. All disciplines and institutional organizations have training programs designed not only to teach specific skills but also to “shape minds”, that is, to induce certain attitudes and ways of looking at the world. (Noddings 1998: 47)

So, if we want people to approach life prepared to empathize, we need to provide opportunities for them to gain empathic skills and, more important, to develop characteristic attitudes. ‘Some schools’, writes Noddings, ‘have instituted requirements for a form of community service’ which she considers to be ‘a move in the right direction’ (Noddings 1998: 48). Modelling empathy in education is not only a matter of modelling specific conduct or behaviour but also – to borrow from Noddings – of ‘shaping minds’ and ‘mentalities’, that is,
of inducing certain dispositions and ways of looking at the world. If we want our students to approach life prepared to empathize, to be open-minded, fair-minded and respectful, we need to provide opportunities for them to gain relevant practical knowledge and, more important, to develop characteristic dispositions. The practice provided must be with agents who can demonstrate open-mindedness, fair-mindedness and respect.

Nimrod Aloni, similarly, refers to the pedagogical significance of ‘personal example and the inculcation of habit’ (Aloni 2002: 162):

The pedagogical challenge is to find adequate and efficient ways to translate the philosophical and pedagogical insights into ... pedagogical practices. ... [E]ducators would have to take the responsibility to set a personal example in the art of living as well as to create at their schools a pedagogical atmosphere of care, trust, support, dialogue, respect, fairness, tolerance, inquiry, freedom, commitment, responsibility and reciprocity. (Aloni 2002: 218; emphasis added)

Both childrearing and education arguably require a ‘fit’ between disposition and conduct, at least as far as this is possible. Like parents, educators need to be aware of their potential impact on the behaviour of their students, in terms of what they themselves model or live-by-example, especially in the lower grades. On this note, teaching care, trust, support, dialogue, respect, fairness, tolerance, responsibility etc. (see Aloni 2002: 218) is not so much a matter of practicing what one preaches, but of practicing before one preaches – if it is necessary to ‘preach’ at all. In relation to what Noddings says about modelling caring in the classroom, we do not tell our children and students to be empathic, respectful, open-minded, fair-minded etc. We show them how to be so by creating empathic, trusting, supportive, dialogical, respectful, fair, tolerant and responsible relations with them.

**Limits to epistemic empathy**

If the preceding arguments and examples are compelling, then it may indeed turn out that epistemic empathy is a desirable disposition for us as parents and educators to have vis-à-vis our children, learners and students. Whether or not we also have practical and moral obligations (and, in the case of educators, professional obligations) in this regard is an issue I cannot go into in much detail here. It is at least conceivable that one can be a good teacher without being notably empathic. Yet, I would be considerably more hesitant to say the same about a (good) parent. While empathy does not constitute the whole of what makes someone a good person, it is nonetheless instrumental in defining and motivating normative principles and obligations. It is probably at its most generative if it is employed in conjunction with specific principles and directives. This is where respect for rights arguably fulfils a crucial function. Empathy and respect for rights are not identical, but they may well be coextensive. Rights-based moral action and respectful concern without empathy depicts an unlovely, normatively impoverished scenario. Similarly, empathy without emphasis on rights is conceivable, but equally incomplete. My considered intuition about an effective and compelling approach to moral and epistemic interaction sees respect for rights as its backbone, and empathy as its heart.

A discussion of empathic empathy would also be incomplete without consideration of possible limits. It appears that there is an indirect limit and also a more obviously direct set of

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9 As Oxley notes, empathy alone is insufficient and undesirable as a sole moral criterion; empathy is a psychological experience, not a normative principle. Thus, it cannot serve as a criterion of morally good action. (Oxley 2011: 6)

10 Like other ideas usually employed in normative discourses, the notion of rights has also acquired an epistemic significance. Having ‘the right to be sure’ has been used as synonymous with possession of adequate justification (see Scheffler 1965; Ayer, 1956).
limitations. The former consideration concerns the extent to which epistemic empathy and mindfulness will eventually entail consensus or agreement. Given that such empathy will embody a certain favourable attitude towards others’ beliefs, thoughts and ideas, one might ask whether such a pro-attitude will eventually lead to agreement. I do not think that it will – or that it should, for that matter. As an empathic parent, I may not wish to impose my desires, needs and ambitions on my child, to force my child to endure the violin, ballet and other lessons that may lead to the kind of success that has always eluded me, i.e. without taking the child’s point of view, ideas, desires and aspirations into account. But this point of view counts for considerably less when there are other parentalistic matters at issue, like a visit to the dentist or doctor, extra math classes and the like. Relatedly, if someone’s belief is mistaken, or someone’s point of view involves false assumptions, dodgy justification etc., then empathy would not lead to endorsement of such a belief or point of view – quite the opposite. My open-mindedness and fair-mindedness, for example, would not require me to adopt and/or endorse a view or train of thought that, for good reasons, I may disagree with. In fact, my empathic attitude and ‘objective listening’ may lead me to recognise and understand the kinds of perceptual and conceptual errors that have been committed here – just like it may lead me to change my own mind or outlook. It may – but it need not: epistemic empathy is not sufficient for eventual consensus. Furthermore, just as empathy, in ‘being instrumental to moral action, … must be employed in tandem with specific moral principles and directives to generate a moral response’ (Oxley 2011: 5), epistemic empathy is instrumental in the acquisition of knowledge and the recognition of truth – if used in tandem with specific epistemic principles and directives to generate an epistemic response.

The second set of limitations concerns empathy with those who are either unwilling or otherwise unprepared to be empathic, mindful etc. towards the positions, beliefs, thoughts and experiences of others. ‘There are limits to epistemic empathy’, Slote notes, just as there are limits to the empathy an empathic person will feel concerning other people’s welfare. If people betray you, your empathy for them will likely diminish to the vanishing point, in the wake of the anger you feel toward them, and, more generally, we will tend to have less empathy for those who are themselves lacking in empathic concern for others. In parallel fashion, one will be much less epistemically empathic and open-minded about the views of those who aren’t epistemically empathic and open-minded towards one’s own views or those of others, and such reactions of understandable epistemic intolerance and of what might therefore even be thought of as mild epistemic anger are as much a part of epistemic empathy and open-mindedness as reactions of anger and lesser empathic benevolence towards those who hurt us or others are built into empathic caring as a concept and phenomenon … (Slote 2013: 91, fn. 10)

There is, however, clearly no precise method for determining when a person’s empathy is no longer morally and epistemically appropriate. Some of us seem to have, especially with regard to those we love, sheer inexhaustible empathic resources. As a guide for teachers, albeit perhaps not for parents, one might argue that neither too little nor too much empathy is desirable.

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11 I prefer this gender-neutral term to ‘paternalistic’.
12 In ‘cases where one knows [or has good reason to suspect] that someone is defending a position that is absolutely beyond the pale of rational discussion, it seems … that open-mindedness and fair-mindedness don’t require one to (try to) see what s/he is saying in a favourable light.’ (Slote 2013: 91, fn. 10)
References
Barely shifting landscapes? Gender, autonomy and neuroscience

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Abstract
In this paper I argue that gender is a complex social phenomenon that is often conceptually confused with, and deterministically reduced to, biological sex. Rather than dispelling old fashioned ideas about gender and sex, advances in the frontiers of science such as neurology, cognitive science and genetics, are being used to ‘prove’ that sex differences exist, and that gender is a natural consequence of those biological differences. This is not to deny that neuro and cognitive science research may inform teaching and learning practices, if intelligently understood and applied, and if used as tools in advancing our understanding of learning. However, misapplied and misunderstood research, I argue, from these highly complex and little understood fields, may perpetuate neuro- and genetic-myths about what the sexes are naturally inclined to do and to be, so circumscribing their autonomy and agency. I suggest that we are less likely to question claims about irrefutable sex difference, than we are to question the claims of neuroeducation, so desirous are we to find what works in education.

A further substantial problem is the tendency to discuss the brain and its functions as if it were the human being. There is, consequently, a further tendency to ascribe psychological attributes, such as intention, volition and cogitative functions, to parts of the brain, bypassing concepts of embodied personhood and the unified autonomous being. This neurologically inspired form of Cartesian dualism conceptually dislocates mind from body in two ways. First, it underplays the powerful role of social and cultural factors on the formation of personhood: mind exists apart from, and above our social selves. Second, Cartesian dualism downplays the role of autonomy in a person’s choices, her beliefs, deliberations, decisions, and so on: the affective and the volitional are demoted to the determination by and control of firing neurones, genetic predisposition, and hormonal secretions. We thus, it seems, have limited capacity to escape our biological and gendered destinies.

I will argue that we are unified autonomous beings, moving around in a rich, diverse and complex social world; that we act on that world as much as the environment acts on us. Just as we are constituted by our values, family, friends, and the education we receive, so we are constituted by our beliefs about sex and gender, concerns related to gender and inequality, which need attention. Whilst raising attainment of all pupils across all areas of the curriculum remains an important matter, we must be careful not to be entirely seduced by the claims of neuroscience without further scrutiny to what those claims mean for autonomy and gender schema. And educators must not ignore the persistent role of gender in perpetuating inequalities and gendered patterns of subject choice and stereotyped career paths, particularly when these choices are deemed natural because of ‘hardwired’ sex/gendered traits. Sexing the brain cannot be the same as sexing genitals: it is simply too complex to be so reduced.

Introduction
Despite the work of many feminist philosophers, feminist scientists and gender theorists who have argued that gender is a complex social phenomenon affecting perception, cognition, behaviours, and human relations, beliefs about gender difference and gender capacity endure, regrouping in another field or another guise. Brain science and genetics, the modern frontiers of science, provide new territories in which to explore and find ‘evidence’ for or against hardwired gender differences. Although not yet well understood, the complex research emerging from these disciplines is being used to make claims that make gender
differences seem natural and inevitable (Kaplan and Rogers, 2003). As I shall indicate, these claims are precipitate, and any differences that do emerge are minuscule.

Neuroscience in education, sometimes called 'neuroeducation', may contribute to understanding neurophysiological disorders such as ADHD, teacher education, and children’s capacity for 'learning to learn' (Royal Society, 2011). I will discuss some of these possibilities later in the paper but, first, I will consider the social-psychological implications for education of neuro-and biological claims about gender and its correlate, sex. As Jordan-Young and Rumiati (2012) have observed, gender is frequently reduced to, or confused with, aspects of the physical body which can be described as either ‘male’ or ‘female’: the sex. In this paper I will refer to both gender and sex because the terms, despite their conceptual and descriptive differences, are practically inseparable. Although I will describe these terms, distinguishing between them is almost impractical because ‘sex is not a pure bodily and material fact’ but is deeply entwined with social and cultural constructions of gender (Kaiser et al., 2009:49).

The philosophical focus of the paper is on autonomy understood, for the moment, as self determination and the capacity to reason on important areas of one’s life. In the first part of my argument I claim autonomy should be a central aim of education. Moreover, autonomy may help us challenge the idea of a brain that reasons, guesses, believes, evaluates, or emotes separately from the person in whom it resides. I will argue that we are unified reasoning autonomous beings, moving around in a rich, diverse and complex social world and that we act on that world as much as the environment acts on us. On this view, autonomy is a potentially powerful concept by which to challenge claims about the ‘sexed’ brain. For the second part of the argument, I turn to the science, specifically neuroscience and neuroendocrinology, in order to explore how gender is being afforded apparent scientific certitude that lends potent support to dimorphic (gendered) schema. While it makes sense to sex the genitals, it should make no sense to sex the brain. As I shall argue, gender does not grow directly from neurological, genetic or hormonal soil, but from the soils of human cultures.

New reasons are sought to challenge arguments that the landscape shaping gender and sex should be altered to any great extent. Recent research (Ingalthalikar, et al., 2013) reports that males have greater within-hemisphere structural connectivity, while greater between-hemispheric connectivity predominates in females. The effects of these network differences are that ‘male brains are structured to facilitate connectivity between perception and coordinated action, whereas female brains are designed to facilitate communication’ (p.823). Not only do the authors fail to take into account the effect of brain size on wiring differences, they do not discuss experience-dependent brain plasticity or the norms of gender and sex which leave ‘neurological traces’ (Fine, 2014).

Frontier science is being used to continue the gendered status quo even in the face of suspect evidence (Kaplan and Rogers, 2003; Fine, 2010a, b; Eliot, 2011). If the brain is naturally sexed, and if our gendered behaviours are therefore natural, to what extent can we describe ourselves as autonomous and agentic beings? How, following Berlin (2002)

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1 But see Winch (2008) for a critique of this as a ‘vacuous’ notion.
2 Though not the focus of this paper, the ubiquitous male-female divide also tends to ignore the existence of transexual and transgender individuals.
3 See Fine’s (2014) criticisms of the research at https://theconversation.com/new-insights-into-gendered-brain-wiring-or-a-perfect-case-study-in-neurosexism-21083
are we to be a subject; not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, a does-deciding, not being decided for … that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realising them? (p.178)

In education, teachers are eager to embrace the findings of neuroscience (Pickering and Howard-Jones, 2007). However, in simplifying the results of highly complex research there is a danger that crudely applied or poorly understood science may limit the autonomy of the self-directed and reasoning subject, and perpetuate old-fashioned stereotypes. Proponents of neuroeducation may not ask about the relation of neurology to autonomy and neurology to gender. It is my view that these relations ought to be important areas of discussion but gender is not a curricular topic and is rarely discussed. The neural conditions that make perception, affective or cogitative functions possible are questions for empirical research: what these conditions are can be posited, described and possibly explained. It is doubtful, however, whether empirical study of neurones can, or should, guide our understanding of gender and beliefs about sex, or suggest reasons for promoting or demoting autonomy. Conceptual questions concerning the meaning and status of gender, sex, and autonomy, of thought, belief, imagination, or memory, or any logical relation between firing neurons and the child’s ability to solve a mathematical problem is the province of philosophy. Yet such conceptual questions are often confused with empirical ones (Bennett and Hacker, 2007), just as conceptual questions of gender are confused with empirical questions about sex. Human psychological powers, behaviours, attitudes, feelings, or personal goals, are discussed as if they were causal attributes of parts of the brain rather than attributes of the whole human being in her complex social web. This modern scientific variant of Cartesian dualism is, Bennett and Hacker (2007) claim, widespread among neuroscientists. Can we plausibly ask which part of the brain is responsible for autonomy? Can we plausibly, even ethically, accept that what neurologically is must therefore socially be? If acceptance of the formula “what is must be” perpetuates unequal power relations, or impacts on the choices boys and girls make with respect to their studies, subsequent careers and roles, the answer must be no.

I. Resisting the Cartesian Dualism: Autonomy and Agency

So why is autonomy germane to a discussion of gender and neuroscience? Following a long and powerful liberal tradition emphasising the importance of autonomy to the development and sustenance of the individual, I take autonomy to be a valuable aim of education and a valuable concept in understanding personhood. An enthusiastic embrace of neuroscience might, however, cast that view aside. Autonomy is the basic condition of being able to determine one’s own choices, judgements, goals, plans, commitments, experiences, and so on, in important areas of one’s life (Dearden, 1972). Autonomy is self-determination (Friedman, 2003:4), self-reflectively endorsed. If one aspect of autonomy is the capacity to judge and to be motivated by deliberative moral principles, then the ‘empirical realisation [of autonomy] is a function of well-formed values and evaluative skills’ (Herman, 2008:128). An agent who chooses or acts in ways that reflect her goals, plans and values, is expressing a distinctive self, an autonomous will (Kant, 1998, 4:446-448). Self-reflection, deep or shallow, extensive or narrow, conscious or unconscious, depending on how cultivated or habituated are the goals, plan or values of the agent, is part of autonomy because it partly determines behaviour (Friedman, 2003:5). If self-reflection is impeded in any way, through acceptance of hardwired beliefs, indoctrination or conditioning, for example, it becomes less effective and so, in turn, does autonomy.

The last major policy document in Scotland was in 2007, ‘Gender Equality: A Toolkit for Education Staff’. Certain gender differences are a given, such that boys and girls have different learning styles. Discussion of gender equality has been supplanted by extensive curricular reform in Scotland.
As autonomy is an expression of what matters deeply to the agent (Friedman, 2003:7), it is also important to agency. What matters, and to what degree, may change over time, fluctuating as new situations or moral concerns confront the agent. How she reacts to external circumstances, the capacities she has to judge and act, reflect and issue from her values, concerns and commitments, and the degree of autonomy she can exercise. Whatever these capacities and values, which develop as a result of socialisation processes, and her connections to her family, friends and community, they should, ideally, be self-reflectively chosen, valued, evaluated and re-evaluated. Friedman (2003:12) argues, reasonably, that perspective, orientation, attitude and outlook ground the agent’s autonomy, and are constitutive of the practical, self-reflective agent. Neuroscience, poorly understood or inappropriately applied in educational settings, may weaken the agent’s autonomy if the agent is defined by, welded to, and categorised by beliefs, practices and norms determined by her brain or society.

An obvious objection to advocating autonomy is to question how we can know what our values, wishes, commitments, goals and plans really are given that we are socialised beings. How can we meaningfully speak of autonomy if our actions, preferences and tastes are biologically or neurologically determined? A woman brought up to conform to her biological destiny of choosing subjects that suit her nature and natural intellectual capacities, to be a carer because more compassionate than men, cannot really be autonomous. Rather, she is heteronomous, a determined being acting at the behest of alien forces that are internal (her neurones and genes; her hardwired feminine brain) and external (her family, community, society). But what happens to women’s perspectives, orientations and attitudes when they are exposed to new ideas, presented with alternative interpretations to what is seemingly irrefutable? The general point I wish to make is that neither biological destiny nor social norms are fixed. We all have the capacity to do and to be in more diverse ways than we have been socialised to expect, and certainly more than the hardwired paradigm might encourage us to believe. We have access to, by means of our ability to reason, ‘possibilities for enlarged competences’ (Herman, 2008:80) enabling us to choose from an acceptable range of choices.

There are, of course, further objections to autonomy. The general view is that autonomy, as conceptualised by Kant and his successors, is an unattractive masculine ideal: it is too individualistic, rational, abstract and self-maximising (Noddings, 1981; Jagger, 1983). Autonomy is inimical to being a woman because autonomous agents are in danger of being too self-sufficient and removed from meaningful relationships and needs. Further, while women and minorities now use the language of autonomy, rights and justice, still they lack equality with men, perhaps because the liberal conception of human nature ‘cannot constitute the philosophical foundation for an adequate theory of women’s liberation’ (Jagger, 1983:58). Liberal conceptions of autonomy, and the related concepts of personhood, rights and justice, it is claimed, are simply inadequate to address persistent inequalities and oppression. However, no single position, or movement, is powerful enough to end inequality and oppression. Rather than reject autonomy as inadequate to the task of eradicating inequality and oppression, it might be more valuable to reconceptualise notions of autonomy, rights and justice, so that they are understood as the domain and aspirations of human beings, not of one sex only. A further challenge is to imbue these ideas with radical force and theoretical and practical value using insights from feminists such as Friedman (1997), Oshana (2006) and Westlund (2009). In summary, the central ideas connected to autonomy are: equal dignity and worth of all persons regardless of sex, rank, colour or nationality; the capacity to determine and make choices about one’s important goals and plans so that one’s dignity and worth are preserved; and treating others as moral equals. So, with respect to a charge of individualism, what matters is what kind of ‘individualism’ one has in mind. If all that the self-maximising agent is concerned with is gain at the expense of others, then her egoistic actions are morally suspect: she does not respect the autonomy, dignity, worth or goals and plans of others. If the autonomous agent does not take care of the relationships for
which she is responsible, she is, again, morally suspect and negligent. Whether these outcomes matter or not to the agent will be a variable of the agent’s moral literacy, and the extent to which she believes herself able to live independently of her community. The danger of relinquishing autonomy for the sake of intimate relations or valued gendered expectations, is that an agent may fail to set ends of her own and to be a ‘tenacious advocate’ (Hampton, 2007:29) of herself. She becomes instrumental to achieving the ends of others or acting at the behest of her neurones or genes and so understanding the conditions under which autonomous choices are made may be important to understanding gender and oppression.

Further, excessive individualism is not a prerequisite to achieving autonomy because autonomous beings, as described here, are relational beings developing their wants, wishes, plans, goals and values in social relations with others. Autonomy is not absolute. As Reath (1997:226) argues, the social dimensions of Kantian autonomy, ‘presupposes as the locus of its exercise a community of agents with the ability to guide their conduct by what they regard as good reasons’. On this conception, autonomy is avowedly social, as is learning to understand what constitutes ‘good reasons’. To talk only of brains and their neurological firings, or organs and their hormonal secretions, vital though they are to key biological functioning, is to talk of minds or hormones in non-agential, non-autonomous ways.

Failing to claim autonomy for women, indeed any minority, may be hazardous for gender and sex equality. It is difficult if not impossible, Butler (2006:21) asserts, for women, sexual or ethnic minorities to claim self-determination without claiming autonomy. As gendered selfhood begins in early childhood (Chodorow, 1978), pressures to bring anatomy, sex and gender into conformity with social and cultural norms are strong (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). The primary caretakers for (almost) all children are women. Girls learn that they, in their turn, will become female caretakers and they will be less differentiated or separated from their mothers than boys, remaining enmeshed and defined by their close and personal relationships. Boys tend to define their personalities by radically differentiating and separating themselves from their mothers, to forge distinct identities anchored to independence and autonomy. The emotionality of nurturing and rearing, these very messy domains in which empathy, compassion, love, and pain prevail and suffuse relations, is where women will remain entangled, apparently hard-wired to predetermined roles. Men, on the other hand, escape to the domains of cool objectivity, calm assessment, and rational self-pursuit.

Why do men and women pursue these different domains? According to Baron-Cohen (2003:1): ‘[t]he female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy. The male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems’, an essential difference he traces to foetal testosterone exposure. Gender capacity is linked to testosterone, the ‘male’ hormone, taking us little further from when our gender was fixed at ‘gestation’ to uterine chemical forces now imbuing us with those male capacities. However, Jordan-Young (2010) cites a variety of studies which contradict these findings, concluding that studies of prenatal hormones and sex-typed behaviour yield significantly different results across different study populations making it difficult to claim cohesive evidence for any aspect of sex-typed behaviour (2010:87). What deterministic conclusions seem to bypass is that, because human beings are ‘open in all directions’, emotionally, morally and intellectually, we have a rich capacity to develop in diverse ways, depending on our goals, values, commitments, beliefs, and our freedom to be and to do. These capacities are important constituents of our autonomy and agency as I have already argued. If either sex is limited in the range of roles available to them, because of misappropriated or misapplied scientific ‘evidence’ of hardwired emotional capacity, or related assumptions of innate difference, then neither sex can be said to be self-reflectively autonomous.

These kinds of considerations, such as the supposedly hormonal or genetic bases of our social roles or intellectual capacity, and the nature of nourishing autonomy, matter for
education if we wish children to develop the capacity to think for themselves, to question, to reason, to judge and to evaluate. Acquiring these skills seem to be at the heart of the various educational enterprises in the United Kingdom, and are exemplified in Scotland’s four Capacities: successful learners, successful individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Education Scotland). The government’s aspirations for what they wish Scotland’s young to become seem remarkably akin to the ideals of Berlin’s (2002) autonomous agent: a pupil who is moved by reasons, is a ‘does-deciding subject’, and who can conceive and realise goals and policies of her own, helped, of course, by highly trained, (professionally) autonomous teachers. Yet crudely practised neuroeducation may inhibit these aspirations.

II. Hardwired for Difference?

As I have argued, a person is autonomous to the extent that what she thinks and does in important areas of her life cannot be understood without reference to her own activity of mind (Dearden, 1972:337). The explanation of why she thinks and acts as she does in these areas must include a reference to her own choices, deliberations, decisions, reflections, judgments, individual beliefs, and so on, but norms and expectations can circumscribe her capacity for autonomy. Gender is a stubbornly persistent way in which that capacity for autonomy can be circumscribed. Sex is irrefutable biological difference, while gender is the ineluctable expression of that difference. Both gender and sex may govern the person in ways not consciously chosen. Interestingly, sex, in some important ways, can be seen as an effect of gender: the desire, perhaps the need, to confirm the truth of gender by finding the proof of its naturalness in sex difference.

On Kaplan and Rogers’ (2003:20-21) analysis, one way to understand how sex differences are constructed, maintained and then supported with ‘proof’, is to consider a hierarchy of orders of analyses that correspond to physics, chemistry, biology, psychology and sociology, each level rising in complexity. Notably philosophy does not make the list. It is possible to discuss behaviour at the level of the gene but that would yield only incomplete and oversimplified explanations. At higher levels of complexity, understanding behaviour involves the whole individual interacting with her social environment. At birth, the brain is incomplete. It does not have a sex (Fausto-Sterling, 1992, 2000; Fine, 2008, 2010a, b; Elliot, 2010), although some persist in arguing the contrary (Pinker, 2002; Baron-Cohen, 2003; Gurian, 2004; Lai et al., 2012). Many of the connections between the nerve cells and other parts of the body are tentative, as with sex, requiring some environmental stimulation to become permanent, as with gender. The brain is hardened in the first three years of life (and so with gender) and whilst it continues to harden in the first decade (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 240), it is never completely fixed but continues to develop and change throughout our lives, as do we, though notions of gender tend to be well and truly fixed by the time we are adults. The plasticity of the brain, argues Fausto-Sterling (2000), makes it plausible that the body can incorporate gender-related experiences throughout life. The point of this is that gender is not fixed biologically: much of the work for that is done by society with gender a ‘situated accomplishment’ (West and Fenstermaker, 1995: 21) based on social interaction at all levels of society in complex ways that reinforce beliefs about the naturalness and inevitability of gender and sex difference.

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5 Babies born with indeterminate genitalia, without gender-specific physical sexual characteristics, tend to be very quickly ‘sexed’ so as to be able to conform to a gender type (Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

6 The term ‘gene’ is ambiguous. The definition will change depending on what aspect of heredity is being researched (Balaban, 2003:299). To add to this complexity, ‘development’ has many layers. This is, in turn, complicated by DNA which, contrary to popular belief, is ‘not easily translated into developmental or functional information’ (p.300). Arguing for the innateness of sex is, at best, highly dubious.
The intricate multiplicities at work at the societal level can be captured by the complexity of trying to understand the operations of the central nervous system:

> The true nature of the central nervous system has eluded investigators because of its fully integrated, constantly changing structure and a symphony of chemical mediators. Each sensation, thought, feeling, movement and social interaction changes the structure and function of the brain. The mere presence of another living organism can have profound effects on the mind and body. (Arnstein, 1997:179, cited in Fausto-Sterling, 2000:242)

The pliancy of the central nervous system should be warning enough that we ought to be cautious about what we can claim as ‘truth’ or evidence of a timeless nature. Although nothing should be taken as permanently fixed, our bodies may be used to confirm and incorporate what science tells us is the case.

There are complex forces at work in the construction of something so fine, so intricate and so formidably complex, as the central nervous system (CNS), without which our organism could not function, let alone exist. The CNS, comprising the brain and spinal chord, is a complex whole, highly complex in its particulars as research on the corpus callosum, an area of nerve fibres that straddle the left and right hemisphere of the brain, reveals. However, Fausto-Sterling (2000:117) notes that complexity does not inhibit researchers or media correspondents from making reductivist, deterministic and rather outlandish claims that the corpus callosum could explain all physiological and social differences between the sexes. The debate on the corpus callosum (hereafter CC) was based on a preliminary study of just nine males and five females, concluding that the CC could explain certain gender differences, such as visuospatial functions. Further claims were made that the CC could explain all of the following: women’s greater intuition (Time magazine); inborn sex differences in mathematics (Brain and Cognition, 1994); why girls are less likely than boys to take physics and engineering (Elle); why women have stronger verbal skills (The Boston Globe), and that women think holistically because they are in touch with the rationality of the left hemisphere and the emotions of the right hemisphere simultaneously (Newsweek). The latter claim was rather unusual, because, the two are mutually exclusive on some accounts but, if we follow this line of reasoning, women are both rational and emotional. More recent neuroscientific talk has the left hemisphere ‘making choices, generating interpretations, of its knowing’ (Bennett and Hacker, 2007, p.29). Such language may, of course, be metaphorical or figurative, but without clear understanding of what brains do, or what precisely are their causal relations to the rest of the human being, such conceptual slippage may ascribe to the brain or parts of the brain, psychological attributes that only persons have.

What may follow from claims such as these is that there is no point in, for example, encouraging a girl to make autonomous choices to take up maths, sciences or engineering because they are not hard-wired for these professions. She need not reason about alternatives: what she can do and be is governed by neural or hormonal processes outwith her control. Neither is there any point in encouraging boys to be caring and compassionate or in persuading girls that their choices to do and to be are equal to the choices of boys. To an extent, of course, we have no control over these processes. The issue is, of course, that these ‘differences’ are not hard wired, and I take the learner to be a conscious, self-reflective, determining being who is not subject to hardwired differences in her CC. The data, on which some of the claims I described above are based, come from the size and shape of the CC but the CC is so irregular and complex that it is very difficult to obtain accurate measurements of its structure. However, such difficulties, along with differences in research methodologies, techniques and measurements, or attention to the different part of the CC, do

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7These examples are cited in Fausto-Sterling (2000:116-117).
not deter some scientists from making claims about sex differences\(^8\). Can researchers ‘know’ for sure about sex differences, if there are any, emanating from the CC, or indeed any part of the human body? Our response will depend on what we understand ‘know’ to mean. The epistemological bases of CC research differ, as I have suggested, so there is no single, unified ‘know’ in this sense. Further, the questions the researchers want to ask, which ones they will abandon or set aside as the research progresses, which data will be selected for further investigation, how the research is linked to their research or funding communities, and, indeed, the communities of beliefs, norms, values and so on, to which all researchers belong, all add to the epistemological complexity of ‘knowing’. Caution is, however, necessarily apposite with respect to these so-called ‘scientific’ claims about sex difference and gender.

The CC, along with other mechanisms, functions and parts of the body, acts as ‘fly paper’ (Fausto-Sterling, 2000:119) for hopes, wishes, beliefs and certainties of sex and gender differences, trapping whatever happens to fly past it. The consequence is that the person becomes but an onlooker of her own behaviour, rather than an agent intentionally influencing her choices, functionings and life’s circumstances. Another popular flypaper for ‘proof’ of sex difference is neuroendocrinology, from which we learn that early exposure to different ‘sex’ hormones apparently results in sexed brains.\(^9\) Elliot (2011) has concluded that there are only two facts that have been reliably proven so far. The first is that boys’ brains are bigger than girls by between 8 and 11 percent, a difference reflecting the height and weight differential of boys and girls. The second reliable finding is that girls’ brains finish growing about one to two years earlier than the brains of boys, reflecting the different maturation rates of the sexes, with girls entering into puberty a year or two before boys. So the brains of boys and girls are very similar and less sexually differentiated than those of adult men and women (Elliot, 2001:5). Nevertheless, the belief that the brain is sexed is still widespread and popularly accepted. Women’s brains, argues Brizendine (2006), have unique capacities, including verbal dexterity, the ability to form deep bonds of friendship and the capacity to read for emotions and states of minds, talents which men lack. But the evidence for these differences comes from studies of adult men and women (Elliot, 2011:9). How can we be certain that such differences have not arisen from years of inculcation and nourishment from gendered stereotyping? Given the plasticity of the brain, the influence of epigenetic factors on the human brain, it is highly likely that these differences are not innate, solely biologically determined or fixed.

### The Insidious Influence of Science

Influencing how we see ourselves as individuals with gendered identities and changing the way boys and girls are educated, neuroscience is being ‘insidiously misused’ (Elliot, 2011:9). Some science, allied with beliefs about gender, remains, nonetheless, a potent dimorphic schema that can influence, quite profoundly, how we perceive our status, attributes, and behaviour, both actual and imagined. There is a plethora of research, for example, to show that ascriptions of gender will have a significant impact on the way we perceive emotions and the behaviour of children (Jordan-Young, 2011:249), influencing how we foster their sense of agency. Baron-Cohen (2003), however, is clear that boys are natural systematisers whilst girls are natural empathisers. To test this assertion, in a study that has become a cornerstone for claims about innate differences according to Nash and Grossi (2007), Conellan et al. (2000) with Baron-Cohen filmed day old infants to measure how long boys and girls looked at a face and a mobile phone. Both boys and girls looked, on average, at the face for equal amounts of time. Boys, however, showed more interest than girls in the mobile phone. Boys spent more of their total looking time looking at the face compared to boys. The

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\(^8\) See Fausto-Sterling (2000:126) for a critique of such claims.

\(^9\) See Fausto-Sterling (1992, 2000); Fine (2010a,b); Jordan-Young (2010); Elliot (2011) for good critiques of this research and its doubtful claims for hormonal influences on sexing the brain.
researchers claimed their research ‘demonstrated that at 1 day old, human neonates demonstrate sexual dimorphism in both social and mechanical perception’ (Conellan et al., 2000:116). The study excited much comment and confident conclusions because day-olds would not have been ex-utero long enough to have been socialized. The study ‘proved’ that girls were hardwired for empathy and boys for interest in detail and systems building. The implications for careers were clear: girls should aim to be carers – teachers, nurses, and social workers. Boys should aim to be engineers and physicists. However, there were problems with this study (Nash and Grossi, 2007). The conclusions on dimorphic sex differences were based on statistical analyses not ‘proved beyond a reasonable doubt’, and the comparisons between the length of time spent looking at the mobile phone or the face were not significant (Conellan et al, 2000:114). If the research had been conclusive, girls and boys should continue to diverge in their innate capacities for empathy and social intelligence and reasoning skills: but they do not. Individuals may well vary in their capacity for empathy or reasoning abilities (systematising) but, as a group, the sexes do not. If women are not present in great numbers in the sciences or mathematics, that may have something to do with beliefs about boys’ and girls’ innate skills, how they are consequently socialized, and which subjects, courses and careers they are encouraged to take (Prosser, 2006; SEED 2006, 2007). Moreover, women’s absences from the upper echelons of these fields, and other competitive and ‘masculine’ professions, may have much more to do with how we ‘see’ women than how women actually ‘are’.

If conclusions such as those reached in these studies are accepted, then two governing forces combine to limit autonomy. The first consists of biological processes internal to the learner but, nevertheless, external to her activity of mind: biology governs mind. The second force consists in leaving the learner passive, at the mercy of expectations, conditioning or authority such as parents, teachers and scientific researchers. Claims about male and female capacity, in whatever field, have consequences for men and women’s capacity to evaluate and pursue their talents and for the development and exercise of autonomy.

III. The Possibilities of Neuroeducation.

In setting out my concerns that neuroscience may be crudely [mis]used to perpetuate gendered schema, I do not wish to imply that neuroscience has nothing of value to offer education. On the contrary, understood appropriately, neuroscience may be extremely valuable to education. Neuroimaging and behavioural methods, along with cognitive tests, can identify specific neuro-cognitive barriers to learning such as ADHD, dyslexia and dyscalculia, while appropriate teaching methods may be developed to support such learners (Royal Society, 2011). Teachers might more readily avoid blaming pupils for lack of effort or interest if difficulties were understood to be causal rather than intentional. Neuroscience may also provide concrete evidence that there are biological differences between children diagnosed with, for example, ADHD, autism or dyslexia, in time offering more refined diagnoses of the condition and approaches to aid their learning (Royal Society, 2011:13). This, too, is promising. Neurophysiological deficits are spectrum disorders or on a continuum of difficulty and teachers would welcome refined approaches to learning to improve the outcomes of pupils identified with these learning difficulties.

Computer and digital games can also provide specialised targeted support for learners with a poor grasp of number sense or language difficulties. Digital technologies can now be developed to support individualised, self paced learning (Royal Society, 2011:15). Action training videos can eliminate sex differences in spatial attention and mental rotation ability, or at least lead to stable gains in gender achievement (Jones, 2014) which can eliminate sex differences within just ten hours of training (Feng et al., 2007). However, despite the promising potential of neuroeducation, caution should be exercised. As the Royal Society Report (2011) acknowledges, brain correlates for learning difficulties are ‘subtle and complex’; it is not possible to ‘predict or assess and individual’s specific learning disability
from a brain scan’ because of ‘substantial anatomical variations’ from one individual to the next (p.12).

There is yet a further danger. If some learning difficulties have causal biological explanations, and if it is the ‘brain’ that does the learning, it might be tempting, when all educational efforts to support a child with learning difficulties have failed, to ignore the impact of environmental factors and the quality of teaching on learning. The medicalisation of some neurophysiological disorders, such as ADHD, may mean a shift of professional responsibility from the teacher to the doctor and to the child’s own biology (Howard-Jones, 2008). It is as if events and processes were all taking place ‘inside’ the person, disconnected from, or unaffected by, ‘events and processes “outside the skin” of particular individuals’ (Davies, 2004:27). As with beliefs about hard-wired sex differences, conceiving complex selves as merely the product of brain structures and processes ignores the intentional character of psychological states involved in learning and becoming who we are. Learning, of any kind, cannot be reduced to the brain and its functions.

How do educators themselves view the benefits of neuroscience to education? They are very supportive, according to the findings of a study by Pickering and Howard-Jones (2007). The role of neuroscience in the design and delivery of teaching, provision for special needs, and nutrition, was rated important or very important by the majority of participants, findings which accord with those of the Royal Society (2011). Yet this enthusiasm can lead to problems. The technicality of the language, the obscurity and complexity, for non-specialists, of the research methods and conclusions, may mean that it will be difficult to know which research is independent, accurate, and authoritative.

Teachers are, understandably, vulnerable to accepting and applying ‘neuro-myths’ from strong media claims about the incontrovertibility of the research and because commercial interest has grown in producing books, games and training to improve learning based on neuro-scientific research. Most teachers learn about advances in neuroscience from CPD and in-service training days. Other sources include the media, books and academic journals (Pickering and Howard-Jones, 2007). The obvious problem is that many teachers and those who organise in-service training do not have scientific backgrounds. It is also unlikely that courses on neuro-science appear in initial teacher training. Popular teaching methods, which teachers believe are explained and supported by neuroscientific research, include teaching and learning approaches using brain based learning methods, mind mapping, accelerated learning, learning styles, and educational kinesiology. All of these methods could enhance the autonomy of the learner save that these approaches have come under scientific criticism and have not been scientifically validated (Pickering and Howard-Jones, 2007).

To manage the complexity of the research, and make it sensibly and intelligibly accessible, we need, as Davis (2004:34) observes, the ‘expertise of several disciplines’. We need dialogue between teachers, neurologists, psychologists, social scientists and policy makers (Royal Society, 2011). We also need to include philosophers and gender theorists to help question and distinguish between conceptual and empirical claims about sex, gender, the nature of learning, and mind-body dualisms. The Royal Society (2011) acknowledges that the most effective tool we have for cognitive enhancement is education. So why not learn about brain plasticity to ask about gender schema and to question assumptions of hardwired capacities? We ought to learn that the plasticity of our brains is a condition of who we are as autonomous beings, as well as a condition of the brain’s own innate biological processes and functions. We are relational, thinking, reasoning, imagining, questionning, intentional, volitional and moral persons and some of us have neurophysiological defects or disorders. It seems clear that initial teacher education courses should include high-quality courses on psychology, neuroscience, and sex and gender.
Concluding Remarks

Neuroscience may not be helpful in telling us how to be a ‘does-deciding’ (Berlin, 2004) autonomous agent, a conceiver of personal goals, plans and wishes. Unlike the human beings in whom they reside, neurons, genes or hormones are not conscious entities: they are not concerned with the business of morality or ethics, or of what matters in human relations or to a good human life, free from prejudices about ‘natural’ sex and gendered hierarchies. Neurology cannot explain reasons, intentions, values, goals, or social conventions, or how we become gendered autonomous agents. Nevertheless, neurology and other biological processes and mechanisms are often interpreted and hailed as if they do possess these capacities, with the brain, rather than the person - the learner. Worryingly, advances such as those in neuroscience, cognitive science or genetics, may be coating old fashioned sexism in high gloss claims. This is a matter for educational philosophical scrutiny.

References


Enzo Paci’s pedagogical relationism between past, present and future

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1. Enzo Paci’s relationism as ‘anomaly’ in his cultural context

From a historical point of view the first and most evident of the many peculiarities of Enzo Paci’s relationism concerns the difficulty in conventionally setting it in the Italian cultural scene of the Fifties and Sixties of the last century. It is true, however, that those were years of great turmoil and fundamental change. The cultural debate, still strongly dominated, at least in the Fifties, by spiritualism and personalism, together with Marxist philosophies, together different perspectives gradually gathering form and strength: on the one hand, by focusing more attention on fathoming the processes of change affecting the whole of Europe and the USA; on the other, by resorting to a more accentuated problematization of cultural reflection.

In the pedagogical field, the consolidation of a new pedagogy, influenced by the thoughts of Dewey – along with Visalberghi and Borghi –, and by a militant and radical pedagogy – I am thinking, for example, of personalities such as Aldo Capitini – very attentive to the social function of education, came to produce an overall picture, in which the multiplicity of cultural approaches, even if antithetic with one another, converged in a fundamental need to restore the concrete emancipatory dimension of education. From this point of view, obviously, Italian Marxist pedagogy also played a key role in promoting a critical connection between school and work. On the other hand, also en philosophie, the match was played out between various orientations in a cultural debate that became increasingly animated: from neo-idealism to neo-illuministic rationalism, from critical-problematic rationalism to existentialism, from historicism to Anglo-Saxon neo-positivism.

Even in such an articulated framework – here only broadly described –, Enzo Paci’s relationism remains an anomaly, which is difficult to place in a univocal research current. Of course, the strongly phenomenological significance of his system, together with the fundamental Marxist and existentialist tendency, make this one of the most tightly anti-dogmatic and critical philosophical positions of the later twentieth-century culture. Nevertheless, what proved to be so unacceptable in this framework was the influence of Husserl, the strong phenomenological connotation of relationism, further accentuated during the Sixties, and the “Husserl Renaissance”, all promoted by Paci. It was, indeed, so explosive within this context that it aroused suspicion.

Another issue that relationism seems to avoid with respect to contemporary cultural articulations is its intentional distance from any traditional, moral, cultural, ideological or normative aprioristic reference. The fact that this tendency derives at least in part from Enzo Paci’s cultural edacity thus confirms the quality of the breadth and far reaching perspective of his thought. In the Sixties the intensity and rigour with which Paci tackles some of the most complex knots in human experience, further developing relationism in various directions and drawing from natural sciences, cybernetics, art, architecture, literature, economics, seem, rather, the key to understanding the essence of his ethical commitment to an authentic

1 Giuseppe Semerari, who was most familiar with Enzo Paci from a philosophical and also human point of view, wrote that his eclecticism – so much envied to become a presumed theoretical limit – must be interpreted in Giusto Lipsio’s sense, that “identified in the eclectics the ones who read carefully and choose judiciously”. Or in the Platonic sense that regards “the impossibility of a univocal and for good talk” (Semerari, 1991, p. 17).
process of renewal of philosophical and cultural thought. Paci has strongly pursued here, furthermore, the most significant fidelity to the teaching of his master, Antonio Banfi: intellectual freedom.

It is necessary to note how the outcomes of this intellectual approach, in many ways the only one in the debate of his days, appear today as further proof of his epistemological farsightedness. In fact, when, in 1952, he founds the Review “aut aut” — Review that still remains one of the most vibrant and interesting intellectual laboratories on the Italian scene —, he is thinking exactly about freedom as the only necessary paradigm for his challenge, and simply because the meaningfulness of the thought itself depends on it. Even Pier Aldo Rovatti, Paci’s student and current Editor of “aut aut” confirms it when, at the Review’s 50th anniversary, he asserts that

“The aut aut is very easy: either cultural freedom or barbarism”. I remember that Paci took barbarism to mean a retreat to what he called “comeback positions”. They are the false solutions that reassure us, and particularly the conceptually easy metaphysical solutions behind which we hide. On the contrary, cultural freedom — which Paci considered a point of no return, because once you have freedom you must play it — forces us to risk by experimenting ways that maybe dominant culture does not appreciate, or clearly considers blind alleys. The search for thought can even lead to where is does not know it is going. [...] Allow me to underline that this program is highly topical (Rovatti, 2001, p. 9).

The latter observation is so true to enable us, today, to draw on the pedagogical horizon of relationism as one of the most enriching philosophies of education.

It may be useful to begin from here: culture conceived in the antinomy between barbarism and civilization, in order to rebuild the roots, the meaning and the perspectives of relationism. First of all, because its constitutive substratum precisely ties it to its time and defines it as a necessarily disruptive thought, explicitly situated beyond and against conventional spaces of a reflectiveness bound to the need for reassurance, by describing, in the meantime, its strong ethical and, here, ethical-pedagogical instance. Secondly, because

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2 Enzo Paci’s philosophical-cultural reflection is long and heterogeneous. If we wished to retrace just the main points, we must point out, after his first studies on Parmenide (Paci, 1938), his interest in existentialism (Paci, 1943), the outcome of a long and clear gestation that produced the publication of various prior contributions on “Studi filosofici” (“Philosophical Studies”). The Fifties are marked by two works on Kierkegaard (Paci, 1954a; 1954b) and by the affirmation of time and relationship as decisive questions (Paci, 1954c). This until 1957, date of the decisive book Dall’esistenzialismo al relazionismo (From existentialism to relationism). In the Sixties Paci expressly devotes his studies to Husserl (Paci, 1960; 1961) and then, finally, he takes care of the first Italian translation of The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (Husserl, 1961), without forgetting the connexion with the other cultural approaches such as anthropology (Paci, 1962), sciences (Paci, 1963), literature (Paci, 1965). In this period, he achieved the maturation of the ‘cultural relationism’, with Idea per una enciclopedia filosofica (Ideas for a philosophical encyclopedia) (1973) and with a Marxist tendency in his perspective (Paci, 1974). We must not forget, in this already very rich picture, the highly successful experiment of the Diario fenomenologico (Phenomenological diary), published in 1961 and re-edited, thanks to its success, in 1973.

3 Enzo Paci owes much to his Master and, in general, some essential points: the relationship between life and culture, the idea of a philosophy of culture capable of interpreting the present, the conservation of an anti-dogmatic rationality. Concerning the relationship between Banfi and Papi see at least: Neri, 1986; Papi, 1990; Cacciatore, 1992; Papi, 2005; Madrussan, 2005.

4 The question of the relationship between barbarism and civilization, in which Vico’s resonance is explicit, originates in one of Paci’s very famous works dedicated to the Neapolitan philosopher (Paci, 1949). The outlines of this antinomy remain in all later works, almost as a constant warning to critical vigilance. For a pedagogical reading of this problem, let me refer to Madrussan, 2002.
that conflict between the elaboration of knowledge that accepts current rules and the search for a new preliminary approach towards culture implies, indeed, Kierkegaard’s risk of radical choice. As we shall see, if the modernity of relationism may no longer be the detailed assumption of its outcomes, of course it may rightly be the force of its methodological structure that today poses far from ordinary questions in the cultural horizon in which we are moving.

In fact, the immediately original element of relationism is the need for a preliminary approach able to orient the eye towards each aspect of reality we want to explore. This means no longer building the reflection and the research on strengthened bases, but on the disorientating orbit of possibility, by working with intellectual responsibility on the comprehension of the crisis of our own time. Indeed, it is not a question of a groundlessly polemical approach, of an obstinate search for an unreal degré zéro of culture. This is rather the deep ethical need to bring back to knowledge meaning and sense, and to a knowledge that strongly thirsts for worldviews that can more incisively decipher the present. This is a perspective that rejects with the same determination both an elitist view of knowledge and its specialized and self-serving fragmentation, all for a cultural composition which keeps as its fundamental purpose the constant regeneration of the relationship between man and world. Not a progressive development of knowledge starting from dogmatic and indisputable bases – all too often so far from their own origins that they take for granted the founding paradigms –, but the constant renewal of culture as an interpretative tool in the hands of man, the one who experiences, tries to understand, gives meaning to that culture.

Well, it is not difficult, now, to realize how this preliminary approach is the essential discovery that Paci owes to Husserl’s phenomenology, that is to say that to that Weltanschauung that passed through the crisis of European culture of the Twentieth century like the blade of a knife. And it is not difficult to recognize in this discovery the debt that Paci owes to his Master, Antonio Banfi, one of the first, in Italy, to draw on German phenomenology as the source for some of the decisive tendencies of his thought. Banfi, in fact, introduced phenomenological thought in Italy, thanks to the studies he made in Germany at the beginning of the Twentieth century and thanks to his direct acquaintance with Husserl and Simmel. And what Banfi considered most persuasive – and Paci too – was Husserl’s idea of building a philosophy of culture “dominated by ethical urgency to offer convincing and complex answers to the crisis” (Erbetta, 2008, p. 53). Answers that Paci looked for, above all, in the recapture and formation of subject in the age of crisis.

2. Structure and horizons of meaning of pedagogical relationism
What is relationism, then? What is its theoretical structure?

Starting from “original negative condition” of the subject, upon which Heidegger and Sartre had already worked in the terms, respectively, of the “being e-jected” and “nothingness”, man is, for Paci, “an unsolved problem” (Paci, 1957, p. 288). In a strictly pedagogical sense, man “is not a complete substance in itself, but a task to fulfil” (Paci, 1954c, p. 70). This is a task of formation of subjectivity and existential planning that entails “a new positive affirmation of freedom” (Paci, 1950, p. 43). The idea of the subject as a problem and as freedom says

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6 The importance of Husserl and Simmel in Antonio Banfi’s thought is documented by Banfi himself in his essay of 1946, entitled Tre Maestri (Three Masters), in which both philosophers were related to his Italian Master, Piero Martinetti. The essay, useful in describing the importance of these relations, is now in Scritti letterari (Literary writings) (Banfi, 1970). Concerning Banfi, we refer at least to: Banfi, 1926; 1950; 1961, 1967; Bertin, 1943; Papi, 1961. Concerning the pedagogical question in Banfi’s thought: Bertin, 1961; Erbetta, 2008 (1978).
much about a relationistic view of education, but especially time and relation define the contours and instruments.

Firstly, setting out the question of education on these bases defines that preliminary approach to the search for the origins which cannot presuppose anything since its core of meaning draws directly on experience”. On the one hand, if education may be seen as a form of culture, or as an immediate presence in the subject finds him/herself thanks to the very fact that s/he exists, on the other hand it becomes emancipation of the subject from this condition. So, the urgency to give meaning to the existence turns education into a necessity, an existential need. This is the indispensable condition that makes of man what he is and which emancipates him from the pointless brutality of his “being ejected”.

When, in 1957, Paci publishes Dall’esistenzialismo al relazionismo, the text that founded his philosophical perspective, he already has a significant interpretative background that binds together time, truth and relationship. Time and relationship are two elements that inexorably constitute the subject. Truth is what the subject searches for, what he needs, and it is the rediscovery of the content of experience, or, in other words, the reclamation of the direct and authentic knowledge of the world, not influenced by the obvious. Relationship, truth and time are, therefore, the three paradigms of relationism.

It is a question of seeing how these three paradigms of subjective existence act together.

a. The subject, seen as the “missing existent”, attempts to recover the original negativity by building the form of his/her own existence. And s/he does so thanks to his relationship with the world. Therefore, the subject’s being-in-the-world is for Paci the relationship, which means connection, contingency produced by facts, that become vital, imaginative, reflective action.

In this context, intersubjectivity has a key role, albeit not the only one. In fact, the very intersubjective relationship is, at the same time, unavoidable and dynamic. Each man is constitutively – in other words always – in a relationship. And each relationship is always dynamic. This means that no man can exist, act, speak, develop himself without all kinds of relationships that necessarily he has with the other – because each experience of relationship is always, in a sense, formative, in so far as it contributes to the knowledge of the world and to the search for meaning. Even so, no man can set the relationship with the other – or the other himself – in something definitively known.

Paci attributes the highest and most difficult task to education: not to educate by showing the way, but to educate by searching for one’s own existence. And this prominent position emerges from the field of the intersubjective relationship. The solitude of the subject, here, is not called into question: the constitutive relationship with the other permeates the formation of the subjective personality and orients hopes and critical intelligence. The fact is that this relationship is not at all ‘naturally’ positive: it does not say anything on its own. Its meaning should be cultivated, created, built. More than that: it should not be “fetishized”, and so never left to its ‘already-been’, to the setting of a cognitive certainty of the relationship with the other, in the terrible and, at the same time, comic naivety that this relationship and its meaning can be definitively codified and, exactly for this reason, disarmed and abandoned to oblivion. In fact, Paci writes: “an encounter does not have a purpose just for one or the other. The purpose transcends whom you meet. It is in the meaning of relationship. Both of them live for the meaning. They are their own, and really their own, if neither of them is only himself” (Paci, 1961b, p. 23).
In this sense, for Paci, the problem of ‘sharing’ meaning is ill-conceived. The meaning of a relationship is of course determined by its actors, the present situation, what generated the relationship itself, and everything that surrounds and passes through it. But this is not enough: the meaning nourishes itself and lives in the dynamism of the reciprocal building and not in the facticity of the mere event. The meaning, therefore, does not imply any ‘pact’, any formalization of truth that nourishes the relationship. This remains significant if, and only if, it can say and give something else, according to the phenomenological idea of Paarung, that is the mutual comprehension (“take-with-us”).

Far from any rhetoric of kind sentiments, education is for Paci the essential fuel of existential development. But this development has in itself all forms of problematicity, and it must have: change, loss, exhilaration of possibility, inexorability of choice. We could say that Paci’s subject is never alone, because always implicated with someone or something else, thanks to which he becomes what he is. So that each subject builds the form of his life by choosing, by planning, by acting in a horizon of individual responsibility, because he can never adhere or overlap with the other. This ethical instance ought to be very clear to educators, because, according to Paci, “to educate means to appeal to existence, to teach [means] to believe that you can fix existence in a technical repeatable formula” (Paci, 1950, pp. 14-15). This statement reveals the key to understanding a responsible educational relationship and, above all, it allows the need for its characteristic authenticity and truth to emerge. According to this, the need to know and to understand becomes the prior form of relationship between subject and subject and between subject and world. It is the reason why Paci can see man as nothing but “a knot of relationships”.

b. The second fundamental paradigm of relationism – truth – emerges in the pervasive forms of relationship, concretely delineated in the peculiarity of each situation. This kind of truth is far from any metaphysical characterization, and Paci conceives it as horizon, as research, as telos. In fact, it is built from time to time, from situation to situation, as a maze of experiences, from which it is necessary to remove any dregs and ideas that falsify their meanings and cover their intrinsic sense.

In other words: ‘truth’ always needs to be disclosed; it is always dynamic; it is never the same as itself (“fetichized”); it cannot be caught definitively. When it sediments in ‘objectivity’ – it “crystallizes”, according to Paci —, and it immediately loses its sense of truth. For Paci, in fact, “only what is free from pretence and prejudice makes sense […]”. Only what discloses itself, moves from being hidden toward becoming disclosed, has a significant, not an imposed, direction that I autonomously experience makes sense” (Paci, 1963, p. 480). But, at the same time, truth is not implicit, it is not the “in-itself” of things, and men have not simply to deal with the fact that they must find it. Indeed, truth is the object’s core (in German: Kern), which changes according to the subject in connection with the time. According, therefore, to the meaning of that object for the person that, from time to time, makes experience of it. That is, in short, a process of knowledge that implies a way to know “always and again” (immer wieder), an expression of Husserl’s very close to Paci’s thought.

It is worth highlighting the importance of this passage: the self-education, which Paci identifies as an indispensable process in building an existence always on the search for its horizon of meaning, must be free from those stereotypes and prejudice that any cultural tradition has attributed to it over time, rooted the common conscience and ended up falsifying world knowledge itself by occulting its most authentic meaning, which derives from the direct

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7 Emblematic, in this sense, is his relationship with Banfi, which Paci often describes in his Diario fenomenologico and in his private diaries (Madruzzan, 2005, p. 140-151). The divergence of the positions that emerge, thanks to the deep human proximity, proves to be much more significant because full of implications for both of them.
relationship between subject and object. This is why meaning can never be univocal, if we want to safeguard knowledge. Therefore, the educator’s tasks will be to search and show how those stratifications have codified social and cultural practices in models, rules, interpretations of meaning that insert themselves into the common conscience as something obvious and certain becoming something that is no longer worth exploring or challenging. In this sense, relationism not only restores the role of “critical conscience” to the educator, but, above all, it intends to reclaim the positivity of inquiry as an educational practice, rejecting the implicit arrogance of affirmation in order to make individual and common knowledge freer and stronger in contrast to appearances. So it will be possible to rebuild and support both the concrete nature of individual experience (against its cursory formal and abstract classification in the context of theories of behaviour or of worth), and an idea of free accessibility to knowledge and culture. This idea requires commitment and implies the bewilderment that goes with the lack of certainty. At the same time, however, it returns the role of protagonist on the social scene to subjects and their relationship with the world. For Paci, then, it is a question of “making of existence our own passion”.

Therefore, the essential condition of existence is the awareness of its dual connotation: on one side, the education that we call today ‘other-directed’ and, on the other side, the self-formation. Here, the latter is not to be interpreted in the meaning of the Bildung idea, but rather as work, as a cogent effort to try to satisfy the need for meaning. And since meaning, like truth, is not axiomatic but dynamic, it must be practically developed, sharpened, discussed again, rebuilt. So much so that existence itself and its form are the contingent, real, tangible expression of a lively and pulsating education, which aims to swing from the original negative condition to the positivity of meaning.

In this context, the experience of life (Erlebnis) holds an essential role, because existence takes shape starting from our own life experience. Now, for Paci, “in its fundamental structure, experience does not appear as a data system, but as a connection of needs” (Paci, 1957, p. 79) and “it is not only knowledge of conditioning but it is, in fact, impossibility, limit, finiteness, the harsh law of need, consumption, time” (Ivi, p. 78). This means that experience is the action of the subject in the world, where acting is strongly connected to thinking and interpreting. Experience, then, is not a passive or induced reaction, but it depends on formative work that starts with the realization of our own condition and with the urgency to revive existence. Paci’s night-time work of writing his diaries bears witness to this. It was a task by which he traced daily events, glances, objects, encounters, historical circumstances and from which he drew the need to give meaning to what had happened, even if on a provisional and contingent basis. The fact that Paci decided to publish a selection of these pages with the title Diario fenomenologico with the explicit intention of proving how phenomenology is not an abstract theoretical exercise but a practical, reflexive attitude, shows once more his pedagogical vocation.

In this sense, the experience of life in the world and need for truth, it remains in any case inevitably linked to the dimension of time. This is the third essential element of relationism: the dialectical dimension of time between limit and possibility. In this respect Paci changes the second principle of thermodynamics into the existential condition of irreversibility, that is to say the impossibility of going backwards into the past. But, in this case too, he places it within a relationship. The dimension of time is itself a relationship: a strict connection between past, present and future, within which the subject is a witness both of continuity and discontinuity. In fact, time itself is dispersion, entropy, infinity – an infinite past and infinite future. Man exists in this indeterminate nature, but he has been placed there in a historically circumscribed and socio-culturally determined time. It is exactly this paradox that links finite

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8 Cfr. Paci, 1961b. For a pedagogical profile of relationism and to explore Enzo Paci’s private diaries in this sense, see Madrussan, 2005.
and infinite and that produces a dialectical tension between limit and possibility. The limit is determined by the finiteness of human beings, but, in order not to remain infinitely undetermined and negative, it entails a form and a planning capable of endowing continuity on the experience of the tides of time. Such continuity in turn originates from the field of possibility.

In this sense, from being human categories able to manage time, past, present and future become tools with which each subject can build the form of his/her own existence. Here it is possible to highlight the interpretative option of relationism in respect of the progressive and cumulative vision of neo-positivist nature, through which the representation of time matches with the stratification and the exponential accumulation of experiences. Today we might say: the optimization of performance. The linear and cumulative logic that sees in the tides of time the necessary and necessarily positive condition of human action – and of progress – is, for Paci, a dogmatic abstraction. In this sense, progress itself and any ‘optimistic’ position is simply the achievement of an ideological strain. The real risk is, once again, to take for granted human development and its exponential growth, and to lose sight of real processes of realization of common life, shrouding in rhetoric the experience of the world and mistaking the weakness of a state of mind – thinking positive – with the contingent condition of human being.

In opposition, therefore, to this misrepresentation, relationism claims a connection between past, present and future that should not be predetermined, but submitted to the attention and the critical examination of individual intelligence. In this way, the identity of each subject, his/her place in history and in the contingent situation s/he has to live, becomes the opportunity to emerge from the tides of time by working on building his/her own existence, in connection with others and the world. Each person is, at the same time, the outcome of his own past (and of the past of humanity) made excited and lively starting from reflection and the responsible assumption of his meaning in the present. Only this, in fact, allows him to plan his own future in Paci’s idea of prefiguration or “planning anticipation” (Paci, 1961a, p. 233), which is the real telos of education. So the future is already present-time in each embryonic form of planning, and it does not match at all with the temporal delay outcomes of a commitment in a non-committal ‘after’.

From this point of view, the relationship between past-present-future regains the dynamism need-consumption-work of experience, in two meanings: the first concerns the fact that the actual representation of life constantly copes with the reworking of past experience in relation to future experience. The second meaning concerns the fully pedagogical idea that the “consumption of experience” alone cannot completely satisfy the “need for meaning”, because this need demands an elaboration of experience, which is the outcome of a personal, transformative and transcendental exercise.

As we can see, time, truth and relationship are the structure of relationism – here very briefly represented – according to a spiral trend, in which relationship is represented in its multiple declinations and always as the ability to establish and cultivate connections between experiences or between experience and reflection, as well as being tightly and inexorably bound, in turn, to time and truth. For this reason, if time is the contingent and necessary condition of permanence in the world and if truth is functional to the emergence from the necessary condition by acting, knowing and planning, they have a mutual influence in terms of subjective existence. This is where the attention of relationism converges: it is in

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9 The antinomy between permanence and apparition is based on Whitehead, very significant reference in the creation of relationism. In particular, here, we make reference to Whitehead, 1929a, although, in a more pedagogical sense, Whitehead, 1929, remains obviously fundamental. Furthermore, the proximity between Paci and Dewey is clear in the idea of the dimension of time as process (Dewey,
existence and in its contingent expression the need emerges to transcend the mere matter-of-fact in order to open and follow a horizon of meaning.

In this context, education is placed *between* immanence and transcendence: it is ingrained in the materiality of existence as much as in its overcoming. This is why, for Paci, education is *need, work, “paideutical ethical exercise”* (Paci, 1961a, p. 162). So, nothing concerning education can be codified in formulas, precepts, protocols of action, nor of interpretations. Still, education is the most real and concrete product of any culture, as well as the most urgent and significant experience that the subject lives in respect to his/her effort to respond to the mere survival and social productivity. In fact, it is still the process of formation that changes entropy into harmony, disorder into planning, perspective dispersion into intentionality. The subject, in other words, educates the past to become reflection, to turn the passive approach into active realization. Acting in this manner, s/he *works* on the form of his/her own existence and, on the other hand, on changing his/her own original culture: if nothing else, because the revolution that the subject achieves in giving form to his/her own existence lies in “seeing and feeling” a world that is no longer there, ready-made, but is one “to be made, has become a task” (Paci, 1961b, p. 43).

This is true: this cultural regeneration in the shape of an educational-transformative task implies the *original negation* of prejudice. If nothing else, because the revolution that the subject achieves in giving form to his/her own existence lies in “seeing and feeling” a world that is no longer there, ready-made, but is one “to be made, has become a task”. Even more nowadays, in the age of cultural waste, of lost perspectives and of ambiguous reality, which aim to amplify a miniscule and partial view of experience and of culture, so risking losing the complete picture, problematically opened to the possibility: a picture in which reality can support its own past and its own future together.

### 3. Environment and perspectives of relationism

When, in the Sixties and Seventies of the Twentieth century, relationism strode onto the Italian cultural stage, it met and interpreted the marked climate of a transformation process in progress: the political and social scene of the Italian “economic miracle”, the turmoil that anticipated the 1968 protest movement, their subsequent affirmation as a need for disclosure and desecration of the world’s economic and political processes, the urgency of a different cultural and social commitment, etc. These are phenomena that Paci interpreted, in one respect, as an expression of the European cultural crisis, which Husserl had foreseen, and, in another sense, as a lever for an overall and indispensable revitalization of our culture. In 1974, in fact, Paci wrote that “even though we have plunged into the crisis, we are not able to feel its current climax to the full; its reappearance in forms that denounce it but that always cover it up again” (Paci, 1987, p. 292). Hence the need for improved commitment. In the ‘environment’ of Paci’s cultural genealogy (Papi, 1990; Ferrari, 2004) and in the pedagogical domain, we can name philosophers of education such as Giovanni Maria Bertin (Bertin, 1968, 1973, 1981; Bertin-Contini, 1983) – Antonio Banfi’s student too – and Piero Bertolini – a direct pupil of Paci and founder of Phenomenological Pedagogy (Bertolini, 1958, 1988, 1996, 2001) –, who represented this commitment by employing the efforts to build the theoretical-pedagogical structure in order to satisfy the urgency to intercept “always again” the problems of their time. Although each one has its own specific peculiarities, the

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10 A simple historical fact might help both highlight the passion which, in those years, the Authors mentioned had for pedagogy, and imply the richness of the cultural dialogue that, most probably, linked Masters and Students. In this respect 1961 is a particularly significant year: Banfi publishes a work about the problematicity of education; Paci publishes *Diario fenomenologico* with the explicit aim of offering the reader a pedagogical demonstration of the indissoluble knot between life and culture;
philosophies of education which derive from this cultural genealogy have preserved that methodological approach. Problematicism, relationism, phenomenological pedagogy and their developments such as the phenomenological-existential horizon of education (Erbetta, 1994; Id., 2005; Iori, 2006) and the deconstructive horizon (Mariani, 2000, 2008; Erbetta, 2010), have so far worked towards, the deep, anti-rhetorical and disclosing comprehension of social, economic, cultural processes which define educational views through their complex relations. All these different philosophies of education always give preference to critical reflection, to doubting the obvious and the conventional and even their own theories, but above all warning of the cursory need to please and amplify dominant positions. They had to save, then, a free and critical education, capable of emerging from the ordered and pre-ordered tide of current values. This means education committed to:

- disclosing the ideological backstage, which generates and captures current morality;
- exercising a pedagogical practicality, capable of tackling real social problems by employing critical intelligence and cultural wealth as instruments of comprehension and intervention rather than judgments of social adaptation;
- pursuing an ethical question, inclined to consider the problems, instead of preparing immediate an urgent, still encoded request;
- nurturing an educational reflection, capable of maintaining high the attention on the problematicity of reality.

We must be aware of the fact that our European cultural crisis has still not found any authentic forms to overcome the self, in spite of its developments, its ramifications, its affirmation of the subject’s breakdown and settlement of its effects in an “age of disenchantment” (Cambi, 2006) permeated by the need to face its “sense of tragedy” (Erbetta, 2004). At the end of his life, by way of cultural heritage and with extraordinary farsightedness, Paci writes: “The disclosure of masks and concealments imposes itself. Especially when they play with the themes of transformation, transition, collapse, absolute newness” (Paci, 1987, p. 293).

In this sense, in fact, relationism should not be seen only as a fruitful and rich genesis, but it could also be reconsidered as still relevant towards the problems raised.

1. First of all, the need to safeguard cultural freedom from:
   a) the subjection to the reproduction of cultural models, according to which, as per Foucault too, the individual’s freedom ends up being sacrificed, losing its own problematicity;
   b) the drifts of specialism, that permeated the pedagogical scene of the Seventies and Eighties until the latest utilitarian approaches to the economic-institutional demand raised in the Nineties, according to a scientific and instrumental model that risks becoming a rigid delimitation of reflexive spaces of action;
   c) the constant trap of “barbarism”, that always takes root in any experience and which remains hidden by the passiveness that goes through the routine of collective and

Bertin, in his turn, pays tribute to the Master by publishing the first work on Banfi’s idea of education. Only three years before, in 1958, Bertolini published his Fenomenologia e pedagogia (Phenomenology and pedagogy), which was published just one year after Paci’s book Dall’esistenzialismo al relazionismo.

11 Two examples: think about the explosiveness, at that time, of Bertin’s “educational demonism” and about his defense of an anachronistic Nietzschean pedagogy (Bertin, 1977; 1987; 1995), or about the change produced by Piero Bertolini in the problem of child deviance and of the need to reinterpret educational paradigms of the “difficult youth” according to a phenomenological perspective of experience of life, the relationship between subject and an educational relationship based on reciprocity (Bertolini, 1965, 1988; Bertolini-Caronia, 1993). About G.M. Bertin: VV.AA., 1985; Baldacci, 2004; Contini, 2005; Calvetto, 2007. About Bertolini: Tarozzi, 2006; Erbetta, 2009.
individual lives. The barbarism that is closest to hand, the one that does not concern an external or evident enemy is the most dangerous against which it is important to take care.

2. Secondly, it is a question of answering the social demand for a less partially fragmented and utilitarian comprehension of reality, according to which the pedagogical reflection should interpret the wounds and the contradictions of our time, by searching for different ways. So, the idea of relationship as the central knot of cultural and interpretative possibilities seems to be still a relevant and prolific perspective: a fertile formative ground, where we tackle uncertainty, the unthought, the contradictoriness, the meaning and where the multiplicity of cultural approaches can really be useful for a meaningful critical view (Mariani, 2011).

Not least: this is what Paci tried to do also by means of the Review “aut aut” and through his diaries, in the constant commitment to critically oversee his own cultural and human experience. In fact, “aut aut” not only hosted significant contributions by the sharpest intellectuals of that time – writers, philosophers, artists, architects, scientists, sociologists, ethnologists, psychologists, educators, and not only from Italy – in a comparative perspective, but it started from a problem which was either closely linked to a precise historical circumstance, or emerged from a common atmosphere. This is, perhaps, the most methodologically fruitful cultural action. And it is increasingly necessary in a context where the perspectives are weak, where cultural rigidity is defended and where the positions are more and more self-referential, to the detriment of a broad comprehension of the contingent reality, inspired by relationship.

3. Thirdly, referring to the pedagogical aspect of relationship, we can consider that its connection with the search for truth and with the subject’s life, can today be interpreted by a deconstructive analysis. That is to say: as opportunity to decode knots of relationship by highlighting again their meaning, their genesis and their consequences. Therefore, by highlighting the traps of experiences and their meaning as formative opportunities to understand our own way to be-in-the-world, interpreting them according to their semantic tangle and looking at them with the courage of a new and culturally strong recomposition.

In the same way, concerning the centrality of the subject, we must repeat that it is not an abstract idea of ‘strong’ subjectivity connected to the being-in-relationship – this idea, however, did not even concern relationism. In fact, the concept of the relationship as the original condition actually blocks any subjectivist temptation. What remains rather inescapable is the fact that only the subject can explore the existential situation in which s/he is immersed, and according to which he must demystify both his/her actions and the reality of experience, to educate him/herself, to understand and participate. So, this is not a sovereign subject, but a subject that is always responsibly connected to the reciprocity of his/her relationships.

4. Finally, relationism’s suggestions concerning the idea of education can be articulated in four fundamental epicentres:

a) education as the need for form. This is an original prerequisite that makes education an inescapable existential need and that places it on a different plane in relation to the simple social norm;

b) education as “exercise”, as the constant attempt, as training for life and for the search for the form of our own existence. In this sense, the exercise, which Paci defined

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12 The link between culture and diary writing, where the relationship between subjectivity, situation, time and writing becomes emblematic expression of self-formation, has been explored in Madrussan, 2009.
paideutical and ethical”, is always situated, contingent, and it becomes, from time to time, practice where life and culture meet in a mutual involvement;

c) education as way to “learn, see and feel always again” (Paci, 1988, p. 132), by thus recognizing, the reasons of commitment to the situated exercise in the methodological request of the critical detachment, which, alone, enables the effort of a free and fruitful conscience. A detachment that, in its own ‘seeing and feeling’, works in the direction of existential planning;

d) education as restless experience, as incessant reflexive practice of experience, starting from the awareness of the inescapable ambiguity of education and the problematicity of the subject’s life.13

These are the four conceptual knots that entrust the present prefiguration of an inexistent future with the expression of the critical ability of education. They work, then, starting from the idea of an education that is a “critique of education” (Erbetta, 1994; VV.AA., 2013), in order to describe to the subject who educates him/herself and to education itself, an unexplored and contingent field of possibilities, still to be rebuilt.

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13 This theory is better explained in Madrussan, 2012. For a more in-depth treatment of “education as experience of life”, see: Erbetta, 1998; Id., 2005.


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Our children are not our children. In defence of the school in times of fast learning

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Introduction
Although the school has often stood as a symbol of progress and a better future, it has never been without blemishes. For a large part of history, efforts to chastise the school's transgressions were correctional: the school was something to be constantly improved and reformed. It was tolerated so long as it subjected itself to programmes of adjustment or applied itself in the service of a set of fixed (religious and political) ideals and ready-made projects (nation-building, civilising missions). Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, however, the school's very existence was called into question. ‘Radical deschoolers’ made influential pleas to dispatch the school swiftly, arguing that the roots of evil lay in scholastic education itself and that the school is criminal in its institutional logic (comparisons to prisons and camps were and are made, based on sound observations and arguments). Embedded in the school, so we could read, is the false idea that one actually needs the school as an institution to truly learn. We learn much more and much better outside of school, he insists.

In today’s era of lifelong learning and (digital) learning environments, perhaps one is allowing the school to die a quiet death. One anticipates the school’s disappearance on the grounds of its redundancy as a painfully outdated institution. Indeed, besides the recurring charges and accusations levelled against the school (alienating and demotivating young people, corruption and abuse of its power, reproduction of inequality, lack of effectiveness and employability), we must take note of the recent development which states that the school, where learning is bound to time and space, is no longer needed in the digital era of virtual learning environments. A revolution fuelled mainly by new information and communication technologies makes it possible to focus learning squarely on the individual learner. Learning becomes perfectly suited to changing individual needs. The learning process gains increased support through ongoing evaluation and monitoring and learning itself becomes fun. Learning, it is argued, can take place anytime and anywhere. This means that the class as a communication technology is rendered obsolete. The school and classical education become redundant according to their critics: the entire concept of curriculum and classification based on age is a product of outdated ways of distributing knowledge and expertise. The school as a whole is determined by primitive technologies of the past. It seems as if today learning becomes once again a ‘natural’ event, where the only thing that matters is the distinction between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ or ‘effective’ and ‘ineffective’ learning environments. Adieu school? We hope not. Instead, it is high time, in our view, to develop in this paper a defence of the school; not to restore an old institution, but to develop a touchstone to reinvent the school.

1. A particular invention
As part of a defence of the school, we will to try to identify what makes a school a school and, in doing so, we also want to pinpoint why the school has value in and of itself and why it deserves to be preserved or, maybe better and more precise, deserves to be reinvented. We call this a morphological understanding of the school and we distinguish it from functionalist understandings (sociological or economical perspectives on the school in terms of functions, roles, societal needs) and idealistic understandings (philosophical ones in terms of ideas or meanings of education and schooling). Our educational morphology is, however, not a kind of elaborated theory, but more like a set of propositions or invitations to think about the school in a particular and perhaps more fruitful way in terms of ‘forms of gathering and actions’, rather than functions and institutions. Indeed, from a morphological perspective, the
school is understood neither as an institution (obtaining legitimacy from an transcendent idea or ideal) nor a (multifunctional) organization (obtaining legitimacy from the performance of functions), but refers to a particular form of gathering. It is this 'scholastic form', what this form does (or creates) and the very concrete architecture, technologies, practices, figures, experiences and acts that constitute it, that we attempt to clarify, at least by pointing to some of its main features. It is important to be clear from the outset: we do not attempt to imagine an 'ideal school' or the school as 'idea', but to describe the school as a very concrete, material invention including a very particular form of (educational) gathering.

It may at first sound strange to inquire into the scholastic. Is it not obvious that the school is essentially a place of learning? Is it not self-evident that the school is about an initiation into knowledge, practices and skills and a socialisation of young people in the culture of a society? And is the school not simply the most economic, collective form to organise initiation and socialisation when society reaches a certain level of complexity? These are common perceptions of what the school is and does. In contrasting this view, it is very important to recall that the school is a specific (political and material) invention of the Greek polis, which implies that schools have not existed everywhere and always, and that schools might one day indeed also cease to exist (see also Stiegler, 2006, 2008; Pena-Ruiz, 2005). One could probably say that each society has its forms of learning and of dealing with knowledge and skills in relation to new generations, but the Greeks invented a very particular form (just as they invented the particular form to deal with our living together which is called democracy). And, although it may sound strange and too bold, we would even risk the hypothesis that, as such, the invention of the school is maybe the 'unthought' of philosophy (of education). In what follows, we will make some further reference to Greek antiquity, but we do not intend to offer an historical account. As part of our morphological account, we start from references to the Greeks in order to sketch some features of the school form.

In order to set the scene for our morphology, we want to start with three remarks. First, the school is not about learning, and not one learning environment besides many other learning environments. Second, the school is not the economic solution for the impossibility of organizing or financing individual teacher-pupil or master-apprentice relationships. Third remark: what we often call ‘school’ is in fact (fully or partially) a tamed, neutralised and hence deschooled school. Thus, in this article we want to reserve the notion of the school for a particular invention of a particular form of education. It is a form that throughout history was exposed to several attempts of taming and acts of neutralisation. We hope the features of the school form that we present here can function as a kind of touchstone in the true sense of the word; not as a kind of benchmark or set of principles to judge, assess or evaluate educational practices, but as a source of inspiration or point of reference in attempts to re-invent school practices. Let us now explore some of the features of the invention of the school. These could be approached as materialised beliefs and decisions or acts, written in stone, in practice and ethos (i.e. in a form), so to say.

2. Suspending the natural order
The Greek school emerged as an encroachment on the privilege of aristocratic elites in ancient Greece. And of course, from the very beginning there were operations to restore privileges, to safeguard hierarchies and classifications, but a major act that ‘makes school’ is precisely the suspension of a so-called natural, unequal order. The school one could say is the materialisation of the belief that humans have no natural destination. It is the materialisation of the refusal of natural destiny and of the confirmation of homo educandus; since there is no (given) destiny, (wo)men can and have to be educated. The school was doing this while providing scholē or free time, that is, non-productive time, to those who by
their birth and their place in society (their ‘position’) had no rightful claim to it. ¹ That is also the reason why Bernard Stiegler defines the school as “otium/scholé for the people” (Stiegler 2006/2008, p. 150). School is literally a place of scholé, that is the spatialisation and materialisation of ‘free time’ and, thus, of the separation of two uses of time. What the school did was to establish a time and space that was in a sense detached and separated from the time and space of both society (polis) and the household (oikos). The invention of the school constituted an emancipatory rupture and provided the ‘format’ for time-made-free, that is, the particular composition of time, space and matter that makes up the scholastic. With the coming into existence of the school form, we actually see the democratization of free time which at once is, as Jacques Rancière (1995, p.55) argues, the “site of the symbolic visibility of equality”. The school form should be regarded as the visible and material refusal of natural destiny. This also explains that the invention of the school form was at the same time the start of several attempts to tame or neutralise the school: time and again there have been attempts to reintroduce some kind of ‘natural’ order (e.g. age, talent, capacity, natural development...) and hence to claim a kind of natural destiny and neutralize the free time. These are reactions to the fact that those who dwell within the school literally come to transcend the social (economic and political) order and its associated (unequal) positions. The scholastic format, as a consequence, suspended in various ways the urgency of the moment and enabled a particular dis-closure of the world.

3. Suspending the urgency of the moment: delay, suspension, profanation, attention

School is invented to develop faculties through study and exercise without the constraints of the moment. For that reason, school-children are no apprentices of a craftsman. School time is time of knowledge/matter for the sake of knowledge/matter (related to study), of capability for the sake of capability (connected to exercising) and of conversation/argument for its own sake (which is at stake in thought).² Time for study, exercise, thought is time to bring oneself into good shape. In this sense, school time is freed from a defined end and therefore from the usual economy of time. It is ‘un-destined’ time where the act of appropriating or intending for a (immediate) purpose or end is delayed or suspended.³ School time therefore is the time of delay and rest (of being inoperative or not taking the regular effect) but also the time which rests or remains when purpose or end is delayed. Study, exercise and thought are thus, and importantly, practices which in themselves slow down and install a delay. Free time is separated from productive life, it is time where labour or work as economic or instrumental activities are put at a distance.

A typical feature of this separateness, then, is suspension. Economic, social, cultural, religious or political appropriations are suspended, as are the forces of the past and the future and the tasks and roles connected to specific places in the social order. The school offers students for instance the opportunity to leave behind their past and family background, and indeed to become students like all the rest. Past and background, of course, do not disappear but when entering the school form they are suspended. And a similar suspension exists from the side of teachers (a profession that is not really a ‘serious’ profession), and from the side of subject matter (knowledge and other things that are not ‘for real’). Clearly,

¹ The Greek word ‘scholè’ means first of all ‘free time’, other related meanings are: delay, rest, study, school, school building. Free time however is not so much leisure time, but rather the time of play, study and exercise, the time separated from the time of production. ‘Scholé’ as time to cultivate one self and others, to take care of the self, i.e. of one’s relation to self, others and the world. See: Masschelein & Simons, 2010.
² See also the remarks of Huizinga on some sentences from Aristotle (Politeia 1337 b 28) where he clarifies also that scholè/free time is opposed to labour-time and is the time in which we “learn certain things – not, it be noted, for the sake of work but for their own sake” (Huizinga 1949, 161).
³ The Oxford Dictionary of English traces the original sense of ‘destination’ and ‘to destine’ back to the Latin destinare: ‘the action of intending someone or something for a purpose or end’.

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suspension seems no longer to be part of education today; in contrast, there seems to be the opposite tendency, that is, to connect students to their past and family background, to transform teaching into a productive activity and to make subject matter directly useful. It is important to stress that to suspend means not to destroy or ignore, but to ‘temporally prevent from being in force or effect’. Education as a form of suspension is not destroying or denying anything, e.g. the past or the institutions, but is disorientating the institutions, interrupting the past. The necessities and obligations of professions, the imperatives of knowledge, the demands of society, the burden of the family, the projects for the future; everything is there or can be there but, as Barthes (1971) would say, in a condition of “floating”.

Suspension could be regarded more generally as an event of de-privatization; it sets something free. The term ‘free’, however, not only has the negative meaning of suspension (free from), but also a positive meaning, that is, free to. Drawing upon the terminology of Agamben, we use the term profanation to describe this kind of freedom. According to Agamben “[p]jure, profane, freed from sacred names is that thing that is being replaced in view of the common use by people” (Agamben 2005, p.96). A condition of profane time is not a place of emptiness, therefore, but a condition in which things (practices, words) are disconnected from their regular use (in the family and in society) and hence it refers to a condition in which something of the world is open for common use. This is in line with Tyson Lewis (2013) who suggests to look at study as “profanated learning”. Thus as part of practices of study, but also of exercise or thought, things (practices, words, movements...) remain without defined end: means without an end (Agamben, 1995; Simons & Masschelein, 2009). It is in front of common things available as means that the young generation is offered the opportunity to experience itself as a new generation, i.e. the experience of (im)potentiality/beginning in front of something that is open for common use.

Things however are not only made profane but the school makes it possible for the new generation to become attentive for the world, for some-thing. Through the teacher, school discipline and architecture the school forms attention and makes attentive. According to Simone Weil (1948) and to Bernard Stiegler (2010) this is even the most important issue when considering the essence of (school) education. The importance of attention can also be formulated differently: the school does not only make things known, but also exposes students to these things and gives them ‘authority’. The school makes that the common things, or the world, can ‘speak to them’. The magical event of the school – and hence, not the mechanical process of learning - invokes things to become ‘alive’, to come to speak, and hence, creates the possibility for students to become interested. The school does not just offer the opportunity to learn mathematics, but to become interested in mathematics. School than is also a space of inter-esse.

The form of suspension, profanation and attention is what makes school time a public time; it is a time where words are not part (no longer, not yet) of a shared language, where things are not (no longer, not yet) a property and to be used according to already familiar guidelines, where acts and movements are not (no longer, not yet) habits of a culture, where thinking is not (no longer, not yet) a system of thought. Things are ‘put on the table’, to use this wonderful image of Hannah Arendt (1968/1983), transforming them into common things, things that are at everyone’s disposal for free use. What has been suspended is their ‘economy’, the reasons and objectives that define them during work or social, regular time. Things are thus disconnected from the established or sacred usages of the older generation in society but not yet appropriated by students or pupils as representatives of the new generation. In a way school can be seen as the material, visible form of this ‘not yet’ or ‘gap’. It is in front of common things available as means that the young generation is offered the opportunity to experience itself as a new generation, i.e. the experience of (im)potentiality/beginning in front of something that is open for common use. The profane school or scholé functions as a kind of common place where nothing is shared but everything
can be shared. In other words, schools are not public because of how they are financed, how they are regulated or by whom they are owned, but due to their form.

4. Opening a future

The school is the materialisation of the decision of a society to offer a time and space for study, exercise and thought in order to give the young generation the opportunity to renew society. Therefore, the school form is also the way in which society puts itself at a distance of itself and brings itself into play as way to offer to itself and the new generation a future in the sense of the French ‘avenir’ (à venir), which is to come and radically unknown, i.e. not knowing what one does not know (Rheinberger, 2007). To put it differently, school is the place where a world is dis-closed (its closure is removed) and where the belief that ‘our children are not our children’ gets a concrete visible and material shape. That our children are not our children, means that they are not to be reduced to members of a family or a community, state or society, and cannot be tamed by the destinies imposed on them. To give a very simple example: the school is the place where the daughter or son of an engineer can become interested in arts or language. In a different register, Stéphane Moses (1992) argues, that school-time is ‘a time of the possible’ or the materialisation of ‘the time of the generations’.

As indicated before, school turns something of the world into ‘school matter’. What is at stake is offering or presenting the world once more without trying to define how it should be continued or used, i.e. to offer it un-destined, without end, to set it free, so that students or pupils can begin anew with these things, with the world. For instance, at school it is not just about learning a language, but offering young people to possibility to become interested and hence to relate to it. These things can now get meaning again, or get a new meaning. That is also why Arendt writes: “Our hope always hangs on the new which every generation brings; but precisely because we can base our hope only on this, we destroy everything if we so try to control the new that we, the old, can dictate how it will look” (Arendt 1968, p. 189). Indeed, in all traditional and archaic societies knowledge and skill is protected and shielded and even kept secret. In contrast, knowledge and skill brought into the school becomes an affair of each and all and in principle does not presuppose any exceptional gift, particular talent, election or privilege. Of course, knowledge was, and still is, in fact not really equally available and public, and we are aware of the position of slaves and women in Greek society and several exclusions today. The point here is that in principle, that is, as part of the difficult act and belief of making and remaking school, it was, it is an hopefully it remains.

Again, to bring something (a text, for instance) into play and to set it free from regular usage is always risky. Without this risk, however, without offering the new generation time, space end material ‘for play’ - be it in study, playful conversation or exercise - there is no school. The school form discussed here clearly maintains something of a site of initiation: to conserve and pass on what the older generation knows about how to live together, about nature, and about the world. But the specificity, and the real ‘school form’ of this transmission or passing on, lies in what is transmitted being detached and released from any ‘community’ and ‘position’ (the older generation, the wise, etc.). This happens through a public time and place that brings knowledge (culture, habits, customs...) into play in a radical way. It is radical, and even possibly revolutionary, for at school everything can always potentially be put under discussion or be questioned. To put this in simple way, at school reasons can be asked for the most diverse phenomena: Why is the sun shining?, Where comes the rain from?, Why are there poor people?, ...

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4 We give here a particular twist to the famous words of Kahlil Gibran’s poem: ‘your children are not your children’.
5. Abandoning: An experience of ‘being not unable’

Exercising and studying are forms of learning in which one does not know in advance what one can or will learn; it are open-ended events. Consequently, the ‘experience of school’ is in the first place not an experience of ‘having to’, but of ‘being able to’, perhaps even of pure ability and, more specifically, of an ability that is searching for its orientation or destination. Conversely, this means that the school also implies a certain freedom that can be linked to ‘abandon’: the condition of having no fixed destination and therefore open to a new destination. Here, like elsewhere, we foremost point at the positive, educational understanding of ‘being able to’ and not, as Agamben (1997) elaborated, the negative condition of being banned in relation to sovereign power: homo educandus and not homo sacer.

That educational solitude, openness or indeterminacy is aptly expressed in the following excerpt from a novel by Marguerite Duras (1990, p. 79-80) about a boy who does not want to go to school because there he learns what he does not know (which is of course the exact reverse of Meno’s slave learning what he did know):

The mother: You notice how he is, schoolmaster?
The schoolmaster: I see.

*The schoolmaster smiles.*
The schoolmaster: So you refuse to learn, sir?
Ernesto: No Sir, that is not the point. I refuse to attend school, sir.
The schoolmaster: Why?
Ernesto: Let us say that it makes no sense.
The schoolmaster: What has no sense?
Ernesto: To attend school (*pause*). It is useless (*pause*). Kids at schools are abandoned. The mother brings the kids to school so that they learn that they are abandoned. In this way she is released from them for the rest of her life. *Silence.*
The schoolmaster: You, Master Ernesto, didn’t you need to go to school to learn?
Ernesto: Oh yes sir, I did. It is only there that I understood everything. At home I believed in the litanies of my idiot mother. It was only at school that I met the truth.
The schoolmaster: And that is...?
Ernesto: That God does not exist.
*Long and deep silence.*

When Ernesto is confronted with the truth “that God does not exist”, we take that to mean that he has come to the realisation that there is no fixed (natural) destination or finality. But that does not mean that the school has no meaning. Quite to the contrary. What the school makes possible is ‘formation’ through encounters and opportunities to study and practice. In other words, the absence of any destiny does not make (school) education impossible or meaningless, instead it makes school meaningful: the time and space offered to find a destiny.

*Scholè*, than, is not simply a time and space of passage (*from* past to future), project-time or initiation-time (*from* family to society). It is precisely an open event of ‘preparation as such’, that is, preparation without a pre-determined purpose other than to be prepared and ‘in form/shape’. Being prepared must therefore be distinguished from being competent and from the claims of employability that are associated with it. In this respect, it is not surprising that the most basic role of the school is to impart ‘basic knowledge’ and ‘basic skills’. These are part of the exercises and study that prepare us and help us to ‘come into shape’.
6. **A form of gathering**

We want to emphasize once more that the school is not an idea or ideal, but a form of gathering that is to be made. Education, or *pedagogy* if understood in its broadest sense, then could be regarded as being the art and technology to make school happen, that is, to spatialize and materialize free time. School pedagogy is about the tracing of spaces and the aesthetical arranging and dealing with matter that sets things free, makes students attentive, places them in the silence of the beginning and offers the experience of potentiality in front of something that is made public. School forms, then, are forms of suspension, profanation and attention, and pedagogy is the art and technology to give shape to these forms. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this in detail, but we want to stress here that a school pedagogy that aims at constituting the happening of ‘free time’ includes particular architectures and particular forms of discipline (intellectual and material technologies of mind and body, specific pedagogic gestures) and certain pedagogical figures (persona characterized by a particular ethos, i.e. an attitude or stance such as embodied in the figure of the teacher) (Masschelein & Simons, 2010; Simons & Masschelein, 2011). Here we just want to call out two often neglected aspects of the school form.

First, as Stiegler (2006, pp.174-175) states, there is no school before and without writing and reading practices: these practices are not only about disciplining the body, but foremost about “learning to sit still when listening attentively.” Without the school form, this particular kind of attention, and the related experience of being-able-to, would be impossible. In this context it is interesting to remind that Isocrates, which is in fact for the school much more important than Socrates (e.g. being the inventor of particular school techniques such as the essay and the exam), emphasized the practice of writing as a way to *install a delay and to suspend urgencies*. More particularly, Isocrates is said to have offered “the gift of time” to the art of rhetoric that by that time was enclosed in political and juridical practices: “Away from the courtroom and outside the general assembly, rhetoric was no longer constrained by a sense of urgency and, in the absence of that constraint, did not have to sacrifice its artistic integrity to the contingent demands of a client’s interests.” (Poulakos, 1997, p.70). The gift of time was related to the practice of writing that Isocrates favored; writing being in itself a delay and being not only a way to make words readable and storable, but also a way to make ‘things’ audible, to liberate them from their muteness and to change objects into things that can concern us. Through and in writing, the world is materialized and is opened for study, that is, to reveal various, often unsuspected and uncontrollable, dimensions.

Second, and equally important, typical for the school form is that it involves more than one student. Of course, often we consider education in (large) groups to be a matter of efficiency, and hence, implicitly or explicitly a one to one relation between teacher and student is considered to be the most optimal learning context, but practically impossible. Individual education, or focusing exclusively on so-called individual learning pathways, is however not a form of school education. This is because it is only by addressing the group that the teacher is put in a vulnerable position and is *forced*, as it were, to speak to each one and to no one in particular and thus to everyone. A purely individual relationship is not possible, or is constantly interrupted, and the teacher is obliged to speak and act *publicly*. It is the scholastic discipline imposed by the group on the teacher, and it ensures that whatever she brings to the table becomes a common good. And that also means that the typical scholastic experience on the part of students – the experience of ‘being able to...’ – is a shared experience from the outset. It is the experience of belonging to a new generation in relation to something – always for the students – from the old world (see also, Arendt, 1961). This something thus generates interest, calls for attention and attentiveness, and makes ‘formation’ possible. A community of students is a unique community; it is a community of people who have nothing (yet) in common, but by confronting what is brought to the table, its members can experience what it means to share something and activate their ability to renew the world. Of course there are differences between students, be it clothing, religion, gender, background or culture. But in the classroom, by concentrating on what is brought to
the table, those differences are (temporarily) suspended and a community is formed on the basis of joint involvement.

7. Taming or reinventing the school?
When considering the features of the school form, we can read the long history of the school as a history of continually renewed efforts to (intentionally or unintentionally) tame the school (and the teacher) and to rob the school of its scholastic i.e. potentially innovative and even revolutionary character, that is, as attempts to 'de-school' the school. Today, the school seems to be under attack more than ever before, because it concerns the very things that makes a school to school. The attacks on the school today are lurking in the appealing calls to maximise learning gains and optimise well-being and pleasure in fast learning for each and all. Behind these calls lurks a strategy of neutralisation of the scholastic form, one that reduces the school to a service-providing institution for advancing learning, for satisfying individual learning needs and optimising individual learning outcomes. The focus on learning, which today seems so obvious to us, is actually implicated in the call to conceive of our individual and collective lives as an enterprise focused on the optimal and maximal satisfaction of needs. In this context, learning appears as one of the most valuable forces of production, one that allows for the constant production of new competencies and operates as the engine for the accumulation human capital. Time as time to learn is equated here with productive time. Or more precisely, learning becomes a matter of constant calculation keeping one eye towards (future) income or return and the other eye focused on useful resources to produce learning outcomes. Learning becomes a personal business, a matter of productive and investment time, something that is open to endless acceleration.

Indeed, today as yesterday there are many strategies to tame the school. However, today the most important one is to conceive of the school as a 'learning environment' helping students to produce essential 'learning outcomes'. The issue of offering good education now becomes the issue of the efficient and effective production of employable outcomes as being investments. It becomes unimportant where these outcomes are produced and therefore schools are challenged to prove their added value. Just as teachers have to prove they are productive and become responsible in terms of outcomes. And as learners (learning coaches, etc.) have to manage their time investment in an efficient way. Therefore the space of a learning environment seems to be the perfect mirror of our hyperactive, accelerating society, aiming at returns on investment in a way which is as effective and efficient as possible. The space of learning environments is no materialization of free or public time, time of delay, but of time of investment and production. The school is no longer a place where society puts itself at a distance of itself. It becomes a (public) service delivered to individuals and to society, the community or the economy itself in order to reproduce itself, to strengthen, grow or expand.

Thinking the school space starting from outcomes actually prevents it from being a potentially revolutionary space, a space of renewal of society offering itself up in all its vulnerability. A society does not put itself on a distance of itself spontaneously, and certainly not at the moment that she is dominated by all kinds of media powers that are used ‘to form opinions’ and ‘capture attention’. Gaston Bachelard (1934/1967) once spoke about “une société faite pour l’école” (that means a society that fits the school not a school that fits a society). He asked whether society is ready to recognize the school as such, as having its own ‘public’ role and to provide it with means to work, a society which does not asks of the school what it cannot do but offers the means to be school: to provide ‘free time’ and transform knowledge and skills into ‘common goods’, and therefore has the potential to give everyone, regardless of background, natural talent or aptitude, the time and space to leave their known

For a detailed discussion of several taming strategies (such as politicisation, psychologisation, naturalisation, pedagogisation, flexibilisation, professionalization), see: Masschelein & Simons, 2013.
environment, rise above themselves and renew (and thus change in unpredictable ways) the world. The price such a society has to pay is to accept that it is slowed down (because there could be something more important), that it gives its future out of hands (and reconfirms that there is no destination, fundamentally accepting its finitude) and ready to trust people enough to free them of requirements of productivity in order to enable them to make school happen (and allow them to be teachers and students).

The assumption of our school morphology is simple in this regard: the school is a historical invention, and can therefore disappear. But this also means that the school can be reinvented (and re-decided), and that is precisely what we see as our challenge and as our responsibility today. Reinventing the school comes down to finding concrete ways in today's world to provide 'free time' and to gather young people around a common 'thing'. This reinvention could be guided by the touchstone we tried to sketch. But it definitely has to deal with an important challenge: the new information and communication technologies. ICT may have a unique potential to create attentiveness (indeed, the screen has the ability to attract our attention in an unprecedented way) and to present and unlock the world – at least when ICT is freed from the many attempts to privatise, regulate and market it. Many of these techniques are geared toward capturing attention and then redirecting it as quickly as possible to productive purposes, that is, toward penetrating the personal world to meet predetermined targets (determined by the state or others), produce particular learning gains (as part of a learning capitalism) or to increase the size of the market (in advanced economies) (Stiegler, 2010). In this case, we can speak of the capitalisation of attention (indeed, the screen has the ability to attract our attention in an unprecedented way) and to present and unlock the world – at least when ICT is freed from the many attempts to privatise, regulate and market it. Many of these techniques are geared toward capturing attention and then redirecting it as quickly as possible to productive purposes, that is, toward penetrating the personal world to meet predetermined targets (determined by the state or others), produce particular learning gains (as part of a learning capitalism) or to increase the size of the market (in advanced economies) (Stiegler, 2010). In this case, we can speak of the capitalisation of attention, with the school being as an accomplice in the effort to reduce the world to a set of resources. ICT certainly does make knowledge and skills freely available in an unprecedented way, but the challenge is whether and how it can truly bring something to life, generate interest, bring about the experience of sharing (gathering around a 'common good') and enable one to renew the world. In this sense, making information, knowledge and expertise available is not the same as making something public. Screens – just as a blackboard might have a tremendous ability to attract attention, exact concentration and gather people around something, but the challenge is to explore how screens help to create a (common) presence and enable study and practice. The challenge clearly does not only concern the reinvention of a school form, but also the decision regarding a (public) belief: a belief that there is no natural order of privileged owners, that we are equals, and that the world belongs to all and therefore to no one in particular. For us, the future of the school is a public issue, and our defence is meant to contribute to maintain it as a public issue.

References
Does good school leadership require ‘vision’?

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Attempts to capture the distinguishing qualities of those schools and school leaders best equipped to face the challenges of the future in terms of ‘vision’ and being ‘visionary’ are relatively common. For example, an advertisement for a headteacher’s position might specify that the successful candidate will be “creative and visionary”, or have “the ability to inspire through vision and leadership” (TES 2013). A training provider might boast the opportunity to “establish your vision and non-negotiables for school leadership” (SSAT 2012) on its courses. The Office for Standards in Education in England (Ofsted) identifies “communicating the vision” (2. P5) as a key activity that is undertaken by leaders who are ‘effective’.

However, beyond signalling that it is a necessary aspect of high quality leadership, it is not clear what having a ‘vision’ or being ‘visionary’ means in these cases. Nor is it always agreed that ‘vision’ is necessary. When the National Standards for Headteachers in England (DfES 2004) (hereafter referred to as ‘The Standards’) were first published, they identified ‘vision’ as ‘critical’ to headship. They identified the headteacher’s ‘core function’ as providing ‘vision, leadership and direction for the school and ensure that it is managed and organised to meet its aims and targets.’

‘The Standards’ were archived by the Department in 2010 but remain a useful reflection of influential ideas about vision in the dominant school leadership discourse. References made to ‘vision’ in the Ofsted Inspection Framework for Schools in England have come (Ofsted 2003) and gone (Ofsted 2009) and come again (Ofsted 2012) with inspectors typically being asked to consider the extent to which leaders and managers “demonstrate an ambitious vision for the school and high expectations of all pupils and teachers” (p.19).

The Pay and Conditions Document for Teachers in England and Wales, which underpins the employment contracts for headteachers in maintained schools, used to make no mention of ‘vision’ (e.g. DCSF 2009). However, more recently the ‘Professional responsibilities’ identified for headteachers have included - within a section on ‘Whole school organisation, strategy and development’ - the stipulation (47.2) that they may be required to provide overall strategic leadership and, with others, lead, develop and support the school’s strategic direction, vision, values and priorities (DfE p.48).

This paper offers a critical reading of this practice within the analytical tradition, drawing in particular on John White’s exploration of the imagination in The Child’s Mind (2002). It starts by showing that the association made between ‘vision’ and good leadership in ordinary language derives originally from the Book of Proverbs. It argues that this has produced three interpretations of ‘vision’ that have passed into common usage and that are relevant to the context of leadership and schooling:

i) a privileged form of perception or mental seeing;

ii) a capacity to think creatively in the sense which White connects with the imagination; and

iii) an ideal future state.

By elucidating these possible conceptions of ‘vision’, it is easier to discern the value of different uses of the term in the practice of leadership in education. The paper argues that it is more helpful to interpret ‘vision’ as a form of imaginative perception that many people might cultivate, rather than as an intuitive capacity to know the future good that is exclusive to certain, privileged individuals, embodied in the headteacher. While a clear sense of future
direction and purpose may well be significant to the strategic development of a particular school, the paper argues that in democratic societies the notion of 'shared vision', as an overlapping consensus of an ideal future state, reached through a process of fair and open deliberation, is more appropriate.

The biblical origins of ‘vision’
“Without vision, a people perish” is a claim that Robert Fisher (2002) has said exerted a strong influence on his view of leadership. The origins of the declaration are biblical, from Proverbs 29:18. If Fisher is aware of this - and it is not clear that he is - he plays down the association. In contrast, John West-Burnham (2014: 1) overtly acknowledges vision’s provenance in the Christian Bible, describing “where there is no vision, the people perish” as an orthodoxy of modern theories of leadership and organizational effectiveness. Vision, he suggests, is fundamental to effective leadership and forms of organizational activity.

Both Fisher and West-Burnham appear to assume that the meaning of ‘Without vision, a people perish’ is self-evident. But it is not. It is a popular ‘common sense’ saying that has a deceptively authoritative air of wisdom about it. We st-Burnham suggests that ‘vision’ provides a focus for all aspects of organizational life which characterizes the organization to others. Yet this observation fails to capture with any clarity what a ‘vision’ is, what the proverb is saying about ‘vision’ and what this might have to say to us which illuminates the nature of very good leadership. The significance of this omission is compounded by not one, but three possible interpretations of the passage, as revealed by the following brief exegesis.

1. ‘Vision’ as a non-natural experience
The Book of Proverbs was written originally in Hebrew for a community of Messianic Jews. They believed literally they were living in the last days, interpreting the radical social and political changes around them as signs that the ‘eschaton’ was imminent (Anderson 1978). Given the extraordinary nature of the times, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that this community believed there were prophets living among them. It is to this literal, overwhelmingly powerful, direct revelation of the word of God to which the Hebrew word, ‘hazon’, refers.

“Hazon means a prophetic vision or oracle, in which the will and purpose of Yahweh are made known: it is given to the people. The reference is either to oracles of the prophets, or more probably, to the utterances of the sages, for which the same divine inspiration and authority is claimed.” (Scott 1985) footnote 18a

From Hebrew, then, Proverbs 29:18 translates “Without prophecy, the people of God will perish”. An interpretation of ‘vision’ along these lines is still widely understood among speakers of English. It may be defined as ‘a supernatural or prophetic apparition’ (Oxford English Dictionary), even if many people may doubt whether such experiences happen.

2. ‘Vision’ as imaginative perception
The form of Proverbs 29:18 used by Fisher comes from the Authorised Version. Like other modern translations, this draws on the Vulgate compiled by St Jerome in the fourth century so comes from Hebrew through Latin into English. The context in which the Vulgate was translated has an impact on the text too; the early Christian community for whom this text was prepared believed that the age of prophecy in its literal sense had ended. The Messiah had come in the person of Jesus, who had lived on earth and died on the cross for the sins of the world. With his resurrection, they believed, came new hope; the fear of annihilation was over.

The notion of a ‘vision’ came to have a figurative meaning: without imaginative perception, the people will never flourish (Scott 1985). Modern English picks up on this interpretation of ‘vision’ too. The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘vision’ as ‘a thing or idea perceived vividly
in the imagination’. Is this what West-Burnham understands the meaning of ‘vision’ to be, the quality which exercises such a positive influence on organisations, including schools?

3. ‘Vision’ as interpretation

The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek for Jews dispersed by Roman occupation (the Septuagint) provides a third possible interpretation of the Proverbs 29:18 text (Anderson 1978). This community no longer expected the literal prospect of prophecy among them either but were closer in time and culture to its possibility. The translation of the passage deliberately steers clear of any association with prophecy so that ‘hazon’ is translated as ‘interpretation’ or ‘exegesis’.

This emphasis on interpretation arises from the concern of a scattered community to retain a distinctive cultural and religious identity. The Law, or Torah, is what holds the Jewish people together. Proverbs 29:18 translates into English from the Septuagint to mean: “Where there is no interpretation, a nation acts contrary to the law.” Without accurate and consistent interpretation of the law, including its enforcement, by those in authority, the nation of Israel will fall apart.

There are possible connections between this interpretation of ‘vision’ and its use in modern English but these are more strained. The Oxford English Dictionary states that ‘vision’ can be used to describe a quality of ‘statesmanlike foresight’ or ‘sagacity in planning’ that may or may not connect with this reading of the text. ‘Foresight’, for example, could be linked just as easily with the notion of imaginative perception.

Without ‘vision’, would schools perish?

The ability to develop a distinctive ‘vision’ is widely regarded as a ‘hallmark’ of successful leadership. Yet as Bush and Glover acknowledge the term is ‘highly problematic’ (2003). ‘Vision’ is an important if complex idea that can be used to shed light on the nature of good school leadership, they suggest (Bush and Glover 2003) without demonstrating clearly how ‘vision’ ought to be interpreted in this context. ‘Vision’ may well allude to something of genuine importance to leadership but without greater clarity of meaning its value must be qualified. Of particular concern, however, is that ‘vision’ is used without qualification to promote as best practice an overly directive approach to leadership in schools. Examples taken next, from policy and practice, illustrate how the three possible interpretations of ‘vision’ that have been identified may be used to distinguish conceptions that are consistent with democratic values from those that are more problematic.

1. ‘Vision’ as a non-natural experience?

It seems far-fetched to connect ‘vision’, understood as ‘a supernatural or prophetic apparition’, with the more earthly and grounded professional knowledge required of good school leaders. Can this really be what researchers in the ELMA field have in mind when stressing the significance of ‘vision’ to practice? Visual metaphors are used regularly in English to define non-natural sense experiences of various kinds, including ‘enlightenment’, ‘illumination’. These words describe a form of internal ‘seeing’ leading to a feeling of deep comprehension which might happen in an intense burst, as ‘a flash of inspiration’, or gradually as the ‘light dawns’ over time.

Richard Peters (1966) likens the experience to some kind of ‘inner flash’, an intuitive feeling of inner certainty that leads to an unusual degree of prescience about the future. Is this what a ‘vision’ should be taken to mean? Do the best leaders ‘know’ the best possible future for

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1 I am most grateful to Rev Dr Darryl Hannah who was kind enough to guide me through all these interpretations of Proverbs 29:18
the school they lead, if not literally in a dream, certainly independently and without consultation?

The appeal of this account to someone with a particular view of leadership, either as a leader or follower, is not difficult to understand. However, of all the possible interpretations of ‘vision’ discussed here, it is the least democratic. The feeling of growing confidence and certainty a leader might experience when ‘the penny drops, or the ‘light dawns’ needs holding in check. A headteacher who claimed to know something about education on this basis would be confusing belief with fact.

Senge (1992) is right in one sense to associate the power of a ‘vision’ with the response that bright ideas generate, rather than the idea itself. ‘The Standards’ (DfES 2004) suggest that a good leader is able to communicate ‘vision’ in a compelling fashion, to ‘inspire’ and ‘challenge’. Yet inspiration is a personal and subjective matter. A ‘visionary’ insight to one person might seem abhorrent to another.

Furthermore, in a democracy ordinary citizens hold differing conceptions of the good life. Where their values and preferences are founded on an intuitive sense of what is right or good, these cannot be challenged or verified by rational means. Reason offers a practical basis against which competing values can be assessed and decisions made. Reason cannot reconcile every disagreement in a pluralist society but it provides the rules of engagement and terms of reference upon which they can be discussed at least.

Intuitions, on the other hand, are private mental experiences that cannot be challenged or verified by argument or persuasion. Granted, a ‘bright idea’, a ‘pipe dream’, followed through by systematic reflection as to its feasibility could provide a helpful stimulus for change. Yet to act on impulse alone, make decisions where the welfare of others could be at stake on the basis of a whim and without further thought, seems inconsiderate at best, at worst potentially reckless. With regard to vision and good school leadership it is hard to see how such a quality could be “fundamental to effective leadership and forms of organizational activity” (see above).

‘The Standards’ (DfES 2004) go on to suggest that headteachers should be committed to ‘a collaborative school vision of excellence and equity that sets high standards for every pupil’ (DfES 2004) By ‘collaboration’, it seems reasonable to infer that notions of excellence, equity, have been discussed openly in the school and a consensus of opinion reached; this would reflect a positive state of affairs in a democratic context. Consistent with this idea of vision is the belief that while collective deliberation over aims and values might take longer, the quality of the deliberation is better than reflection in isolation.

However, if a ‘vision’ is a private mental event, exclusive to particular individuals, it cannot be ‘shared’ in any meaningful sense, because it is by definition private and particular to that person. The idea of a shared or collaborative ‘vision’ on this view becomes something that the headteacher imparts for her followers to implement. This is precisely the kind of emphasis on ‘vision’ with which Fullan feels uncomfortable.

“The current emphasis on vision in leadership can be misleading. Vision can blind leaders in a number of ways…. The high-powered, charismatic principal who ‘radically transforms the school’ in four or five years can.. be blinding and misleading as a role model… Principals are blinded by their own vision when they feel they must manipulate the teachers and the school culture to conform to it.”(1992)

2 I am very grateful to John White for making this observation in correspondence
There are particular cases where people may expect individual leaders to make executive decisions. Imagine that tragedy struck in a school, so that a pupil was killed suddenly perhaps, or fire took hold of the school building: in such exceptional circumstances a good leader might articulate a clear plan of action which others chose to follow without debate. However, even in the face of such adversity the best responses would be likely to reflect improvisation on a careful, premeditated plan to deal with emergencies rather than intuitive brilliance at the time and on the spot.

One study which explored the kinds of ‘vision’ that are proposed by school leaders found them to be “neither surprising nor striking nor controversial” but very traditional; “closely in line with what one might expect on the British system of education.” (Bolam, McMahon et al. 1993) There is no suggestion, in ‘The Standards’ (DfES 2004), for example, that ‘utopian’ change might be desirable, although the concept of a ‘utopia’ is more straightforward than a ‘vision; defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “an imagined perfect place or state of things”. The association in ordinary language between utopian thinking and the ideals of the political left (which isn’t assumed here) may be too strong in practice to find widespread favour.

Two final further difficulties with this view of ‘vision’: first, if it could be demonstrated that the future good for a school could be known with precision by a particularly insightful individual, this information would only be very useful if it could also be ‘known’ how the goal could be reached. Such a strategy would rely on direct and reliable causal links between identified inputs and the desired results or outputs. However, there is little evidence that such precise relationships exist in practice and rather more evidence, on the contrary, of too many variable possibilities and circumstances to translate knowledge of an ideal future state into reality.

Nor is it clear that the value of a ‘vision’ lies in ‘knowing’ what a school ought to be like. It may lie in the process or the quality of the experience of conceiving future possibilities imaginatively and creatively instead. This is not to dismiss the value of meeting targets entirely, although once met there are always new targets; rather to highlight the importance of the means by which something is achieved, not the achievement. If the value of ‘vision’ does lie in the process, one responsibility good schools should accept is to actively distribute opportunities for creative thought widely, not keep them as the preserve of one or two people. Even this suggestion attributes considerable value to ‘vision’ in terms of thought and final outcome, rather than in feeling and being imaginative about future possibilities, a matter which lies beyond the scope of this particular paper.

2. ‘Vision’ as imaginative perception?
Some form of ‘imaginative perception’ seems far closer to the meaning of ‘vision’ intended in The Standards’. One key areas of headship identified there is the role of ‘Shaping the Future’ of the school. Headteachers are expected not to dictate but to create a shared vision and strategic plan which ‘inspires and motivates’ members of the school community. At least one element of the professional knowledge required to meet this challenge is the capacity to know about ‘leading change, creativity and innovation’ (DfES 2004). There are close and obvious connections here between ‘vision’ creativity and imaginative thought.

However, the imagination is a complex philosophical theme, as John White demonstrates in The Child’s Mind. Understanding ‘vision’ or ‘visionary thinking’, even in this particular sense, is not straightforward. Is ‘vision’ the capacity to perceive imaginatively or that which is perceived through the imagination?

Imaginative perception is a similarly abstract and philosophically complex concept, requiring further analysis if this interpretation of ‘vision’ is to help us understand leadership qualities better. Some theories of the imagination, for example, would argue that only certain people
who are unusually clever, sophisticated or intelligent would be capable of imaginative thinking (Kenny 1989). Anthony Kenny suggests that imagination is bound up with the ability to create original ideas, a mental capacity not every person possesses to equal degree. Is ‘vision’ as imaginative perception, like intuitive insight, a special and exclusive gift?

John White has demonstrated other ways in which the imagination is described in common speech which do not derive from a privileged form of intellectual insight (2002). One form of imaginative perception, seeing ‘in the mind’s eye’ (White 2002), has been highlighted already as a form of thinking which involves no particularly unusual or sophisticated mental skill. A headteacher might attempt to illustrate, with practical examples, what the school in her charge could be like in five years time to enthuse and motivate members of staff. Those listening would be required to imagine ‘in their minds eye’ as much as the headteacher. It is not clear that such a conventional image qualifies, however, as a ‘vision’.

Imagination can also be understood to mean the capacity to ‘suppose’, or to think “beyond actuality into the sphere of the possible” (White 2002). People suppose when they “speculate”, for example, or “entertain alternative scenarios” of what could be the case (White 2002). These connotations of imaginative perception connect very well with mental skills and dispositions that might be needed to discharge school leadership well. Those with ample opportunity to practice thinking of this kind may prove more adept at it than others over time.

Headteachers are often required to think in ways that combine conventional images of known objects in order to make something new. Kate Griffin, for example, illustrates her capacity to ‘foster creativity’ as a headteacher by applying a conventional model of care for employees from industry to the context of a school staffroom in an original way.

“A few years ago I employed somebody to serve coffee into the staff room before school and at break time. This encouraged a much higher proportion of staff to gather there and the opportunities for conversation, the development of ideas and the exchange of information that this created have been invaluable. Certainly the return has far exceeded the investment.” (2001)

Headteachers suppose when they generate new ideas based on systems or practices that exist already, translating them to other, acceptable purposes (White 2002). For example, the toilet facilities available to pupils in English schools are often terrible; this is a problem for which no standard, adequate response is currently available. One creative headteacher decided to overcome the difficulty in his primary school by involving pupils from the school council.

While many schools have student councils, few use this mechanism as an active force for institutional change. In this case, however, the headteacher included the pupils actively in decisions regarding refurbishment and design, gave them a budget and access to the building contractors. When the work was complete, he listened to suggestions pupils made to keep the facilities pleasant and fresh once they were finished. His imagination and the confidence he showed in the pupils were rewarded.

Kenny is right in one sense to emphasise the sense of originality inherent to being ‘imaginative’. Headteacher John Cain, for example, supposes beyond the actual to the possible to describe his idea of a possible future state without painting a particularly strikingly
creative mental picture. He emphasises the importance of achieving realistic targets related to the school roll and improved examination results.

"Broadly the vision running around in my mind was to increase the intake, raise standards, and to have the students behaving well in good facilities. By the year 2001 there would be 850 students, achieving a GCSE pass rate at above the national average in a school which would value and respect all its members." (1999)

If what distinguishes imaginative thinking is the capacity to entertain alternative scenarios, think beyond standard conventional responses, it is not clear from this ‘vision’ how far Cain in this instance meets those criteria.

At the same time, John White points out, genuinely creative ideas must still remain "within the bounds of what is appropriate in the context" even if they transcend conventional expectations. Very rude or mad people can transcend convention with ease, White continues, but that does not make them imaginative (2002). A headteacher of a small primary school decides to spend a year’s school capitation on balsa wood because she wanted every child to have an opportunity to make something. Her ‘vision’ is most certainly original but a swift intervention from a teacher’s union is needed to limit the havoc reeked by her eccentricity.

It is not clear from these examples that to attribute creative genius to these practically minded headteachers would describe a quality ‘core’ to the purpose of a headteacher in the way ‘vision’ has been identified. Nor is it clear, if the imaginative perception required of headteachers is closer to the quality of ‘supposition’ described by John White why in a democracy the quality of ‘vision’ should be confined to the headteacher. Other people are capable of supposition. The headteacher who addressed the difficulties with the school toilets imaginatively did so by allowing the pupils in his school the opportunity to think imaginatively too.

‘The Standards’ state:

“Critical to the role of headship is working with the governing body and others to create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the school community. This vision should express core educational values and moral purpose and be inclusive of all stakeholders’ values and beliefs. The strategic planning process is critical to sustaining school improvement and ensuring that the school moves forward for the benefit of its pupils.” (DFES 2004)

If a ‘vision’ is to be shared, all members of the school community deserve opportunities to be imaginative. If vision is an expression of educational values there can be no expert knowledge of the best possible future for the school, only opinions; by opening this subject up for discussion, the ‘vision’ that is agreed cannot in one sense be ‘wrong’. Expertise on the other hand would be needed to co-ordinate the process well, so that the debate which ensures is constructive, consistent with democratic values and conclusive.

So ‘vision’, a mental image of the possible future state of a school culminating from a process of consultation through which imaginative suggestions and ideas are shared, may be important to ‘shaping the future’ of a school but say nothing particular about the headteacher. A headteacher who did not feel particularly imaginative personally might nonetheless oversee successfully the creation of a shared vision led by other confident creative thinkers in the school. A ‘vision’ may be the product of imaginative perception; however, the ‘vision’ and being imaginative do not mean the same thing.
The responsibility distinctive to the headteacher lies, as the Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (DfES 2005) implies, in ensuring that the aims and objectives of the school, policies for their implementation are formulated. ‘The Standards’ (DfES 2004) suggest this ought to be done in a way that includes members of the school community. ‘Vision’ could be critical in this sense to the flourishing of a school in a liberal democracy but not critical to the role of a headteacher. While other personal qualities and attitudes would be needed by the best leaders for this to happen, imagination might not be necessary.

3. ‘Vision’ as interpretation?
A final, unexpected complication may be introduced to the analysis at this point. ‘Vision’ can be taken to imply the capacity of good leaders to understand the rights and responsibilities of the community they lead, such that they successfully and consistently distinguish legitimate actions and beliefs from the illegitimate. Furthermore, ‘interpretation’ of this kind may be a widely recognised quality of good leaders. However, the way in which vision and interpretation are interconnected in this third reading of the Proverbs passage is a dimension of vision in leadership omitted from accounts in the existing ELMA literature.

Thomas Greenfield has identified ‘vision’ with the idea of a ‘moral imagination’ (1993). The best leaders, he suggests, are those able to perceive accurately how things could be in the future and where the discrepancies might lie between this and the state of things as they now are. There are obvious links between this notion of the imagination and the capacity for supposition discussed by John White.

The moral dimension to imaginative thinking of this kind, Greenfield suggests, lies in the capacity to bring clear personal and organisational values to the role of educational leadership (1993). This view is supported by Bush and Glover who argue that good leaders are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values representing their sense of “moral purpose” for the school” (2003) as well as Gold et al (2003). This point needs to be qualified: a skilled, successfully corrupt headteacher could be ‘good’ at what she did and her actions could infuse a school with ‘moral purpose’ of a particularly unpleasant kind (Wright 2003). Nonetheless, priority is regularly afforded to the quality of ethical decision-making that individuals demonstrate in accounts of good school leadership in the ELMA literature.

Rarely, if ever, though, does that literature insist that the moral purpose of school leadership considered within the wider political context in which it is situated. In many cases, given its widespread acceptance across the world, this will require the leader to bring personal and organisational values to their role that are appropriate to a democracy. Following John White’s lead, it has been argued already (see above) that genuinely creative ideas will remain within the bounds of what is contextually appropriate, even if they transcend conventional expectations. In democracy’s case, contextually appropriate values rest characteristically on a dual commitment to political liberty and political equality (Wolff, 1996 p.85).

Hence, local schools, individuals engaged in educational practice, who are being true to the notion of vision in this third sense of interpretation appropriate to the context will need to be able to demonstrate a form of moral purpose which is acceptable within these bounds. This is not to argue that where schools are located in a democratic context they need act as though they were a democracy. Schools lack the constitution of a political constituency and many of the members of school communities are underage.

However, as John White has argued in The Aims of Education Restated (1982), in a democracy the purpose and content of state education is a political matter to be decided through a democratic political process. School leaders, as educational professionals, are no more privileged in this process than other citizens. As they are not privy to privileged
knowledge of right and wrong in relation to education and the good life, they should not be in a position to dictate a school’s moral purpose.

The value of autonomy should be promoted too by educational leaders in a democratic society. This places particular pressure on the traditional model of the headteacher as the ‘lynch pin’ (White 1983) of the school. Values will be transmitted through the means by which headteachers execute their professional responsibilities: ‘The Standards’ stress the responsibility of headteachers to ‘model the values and vision of the school’ (DfES 2004). If state maintained schools are required to promote democratic values, including autonomy, that power to decide autonomously cannot be limited to the headteacher.

However, ‘The Standards’ also make it clear that vision should be shared across a school, albeit that headteachers are responsible for ensuring this happens. A newly constituted section on ‘Strengthening Community’, moreover, requires headteachers to involve parents and the community too in “supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision” (DfES 2004). The values underpinning the curriculum can and should be promoted through the way schools are organised.

Currently headteachers with ‘vision’, in the sense that they ‘transcend the bounds of convention’ have developed models of institutional change that are consistent, not at odds, with democratic values in this way. Moreover, efficiency is not grounds for denying people in schools an opportunity to be consulted in matters directly concerning their well-being. An influential study in the ELMA literature (Gold, et al., 2003) found that schools flourished when led in ways informed by democratic values; and studies focussed on children and young people and their achievement in schools (e.g. Dutson-Steinfeld, 2005, Flutter and Rudduck, 2004, Morgan and Streb, 2002) show how they may take on an active and constructive responsibility for decision-making in ways that do not detract from other kinds of educational attainment.

John MacBeath has encouraged schools for a long time to ‘speak for themselves’ (1999) through largely democratic means. This does not reflect normal or expected practice, however. ‘The Standards’ now state that headteachers should find ways to “build, communicate and implement a shared vision” (DfES 2004) but do not indicate clearly how this might be realised.

While headteachers might be innovative thinkers, I have argued that it is confusing to see this quality as essential to their role. The idea of ‘vision’ is strongly associated with being creative and hard therefore to distance from a personal capacity to initiate radical social change. People who enjoy thinking creatively are valuable members of liberal democratic society and may contribute ideas that lead to radical change but need not hold official positions of formal responsibility or leadership.

People who do take on formal positions of leadership, on the other hand, need to know and interpret the bounds within radical change might be possible. These bounds are informed by the values appropriate to a particular context. Leaders need also to act in ways informed by these same values.

These qualities can legitimately be described as ‘vision’ too. In the Oxford English Dictionary ‘vision’ is also defined as ‘statesmanlike foresight’ or ‘sagacity in planning’; both relate to the skill of interpreting values in context. Statesmen at their best are diplomatic and politically astute: their concern, to hold the social order together with references to the principles by which it stands. A sage develops great wisdom over time through lived experience. These ideals of leadership appear at first glance to relate well to the role of the headteacher but move away from the qualities that appear to be identified with ‘vision’ in the existing policy and research literature.
Conclusions
If 'vision' is to be referred to in school leadership policy documents at all, its meaning needs to be clear, coherent and consistent. This is not the case at present; three related but distinct interpretations – a privileged form of perception, a mental image of an ideal future state and an ability to judge the best are analysed in detail here. Two meanings of 'vision' in particular contribute to very different ideals of the school leader. One is inconsistent with liberal democratic values: this should be made clearer. Some people will continue to believe leadership should be 'visionary' in a charismatic sense but this is not a view that should be enshrined or sanctioned in policy.

The use of 'vision' in the final version of the National Standards for Headteachers in England can be interpreted in ways that are more consistent with liberal democratic values. ‘Vision’ is used to highlight the importance of imaginative thinking in the life of a school community, the place of regular and structured discussion of aims and values, goals and aspirations for the future. This account locates ‘vision’ as a function of human reason rather than unusually gifted or perceptive awareness. ‘Vision’ in this sense need not come from the headteacher. Distinctive to the formal authority of the headteacher is the capacity to interpret legal and statutory requirements made of a school according to the particular context in which the school is situated. This quality could legitimately be described as ‘vision’ too, although it is a less familiar sense of the word; distancing it from less desirable connotations in a democratic context of personal, charismatic authority, is difficult however. ‘Vision’ in this sense is extremely important to good school leadership; the ability to interpret what to do in the right place, right time and in the right way.

References


Who watches who. Comparing educators and pupils in the contemporary world.

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Abstract

What do we really mean form youth and adulthood, today? In the eighties Riccardo Massa, an Italian philosopher of education and pedagogical expert, has denounced the end of pedagogy as a consequence of the endless debate between the ones defending the complexity of the educational experiences and the ones who want to limit it to the age of school. Today the same endless debate – we believe – encourage the contrast between permissiveness and disciplinarism.

The first part of our work provides for a description of today’s youth. Then we question the eyes of those that describe the young people in this way. Which kind of parent or teacher, a boy looks sweet or unbearable to? We believe that the same educational frame is setting the repressive act as coercive. These are just two ways – one positive, one negative – to do the same (discipline). More than discussing between authoritarianism and "laissez-faire", we want to raise the question of what it really means authority. Hour statements are based on Michel Foucault’s studies.

In the second part, we also use the analysis of a Lacanian psychoanalyst – Massimo Recalcati – who traces the history from Sigmund Freud to the present day through four figures of sons. Oedipus and Anti-Oedipus are different children from Narcissus. While all three children are different from Telemachus, who is expecting a different father. Anti-Oedipus and Telemachus instead are brothers because they do not recognize the traditional father’s authority. Yet there are differences: only the last is the right heir.

We can start to exercise not only acts of repression and/or coercion, but an authentic witness of desire. Perhaps the word "emancipation" can be today – in 2000 – a new hope as the word "formation" – to Riccardo Massa – when “Educazionisti” and “Istruzionisti” were involved in a school-discussion without end in Italy.

1. When you wake up in the morning

The expression “at home” (Ariès 1994, p.476), seemingly so obvious, did not exist before the birth of modern family. While the latter was progressively becoming dominant and extending its success, it managed to hide its aristocratic and bourgeois origin. The affirmation and spreading of new institution of education (boarding schools) gradually determined a detachment from medieval family life and from educational practices such as the apprenticeship. A new feeling, namely domestic intimacy, became a model for the entire society.

Let’s go in one of these homes. In 1763, almost three centuries ago, the Italian poet Giuseppe Parini described the morning of the Giovin signore – not really a hard awakening. Even the God of Sleep talks to him directly to wish him good morning:

Ti sprimacciò di propria man le cóltrici  
Molle cedenti, ove te accolti il fido  
Servo calò le ombrifere cortine:  
E a te soavemente i lumi chiuse
We can imagine this boy – with an anachronism or a flash back – waking up in the morning after he went to bed at dawn, still high from *The Saturday night fever* (1977) or from a rave party’s trip. We can imagine he survived a drunk night, he went back home by car, and he is now half asleep and yawning - an experience very popular for many youth today:

Poi de’ labbri formando un piccol arco  
Dolce a vedersi tacito sbadiglia.  

Who finds this boy *dolce* (sweet)? This is a first important question.

Certainly, as I mentioned and as literary critics point out, Parini, whose life was completely different, meant to be ironic. He claimed that the boy might not have looked so sweet to the eyes of the *duro* (severe) captain who would have initiated him to war and arms. The captain would have rather shouted at him with all his authority, and would have invited him to show a completely different attitude. This is how the poet described the male figure of the educator:

Sgangherando la bocca un grido innalza  
Lacerator di ben costrutti orecchi.  

I am not interested here in the description of the ideal day of a young adult from a noble family. I just would like to focus on some details at the beginning. Once awake, after breakfast, he would have gone through a parade of visitors. Then he would have only had to dress up with the clothes and accessories of a typical Eighteenth Century gentleman: knife, snuffbox, wig… and go out by coach. But let’s go back to the breakfast time, when a valet enters into the young gentleman’s private room in order to ask him what he would have liked to drink: coffee (which tends to make him fat) or chocolate (which could help him to digest the previous night’s dinner). Parini uses the word *enjoy* to ask the question. He writes:

Ma il damigel ben pettinato i crini  
Ecco s’inoltra; e con sommessi accenti  
Chiede qual più de le bevande usate  
Sorbir tu *godà* [my italics] in preziosa tazza.  

Parini uses this term in order to ridicule a young teenager devoid of character. Nevertheless according to the recent and most successful psychoanalytic literature, the fact that this boy can choose or must choose *what he likes best* (*Scegli qual più desii*) is an interesting and thought-provoking fact. When desire becomes the criterion of an adult's behavior towards a youngster, the latter is exposed to an (evil) pleasure, and thus becomes a prisoner of unregulated impulses; he is therefore traumatized by the same vital potential which traverse him and push him to live. To the injunction to enjoy, to its lawfulness, liberalization and propulsion (which is increasingly common according to the analysis of Slavoj Žižek), the young man consistently answers with a whim (*Tu cioccolatte eleggi*).
Despite these behaviors may look frivolous, my analysis will focus on their profound reasons. Caught in between pleasure and whim, exposed to an adult world whose pivot is desire, what is left of this young adult’s vocation (the Italian “voto” as Massimo Recalcati translates the Freudian Wunsch; Recalcati 2012, pp.239-336)? Who will sustain the true search for life, pleasure and satisfaction of a teenager who still has to complete his process of growing? On the other side of the educational relationship, who – which educator: parent, teacher, professional educator or servant – will burden himself of this heavy commitment?

The boy I am thinking about is the king of (his) family; he is a child of desire, as demonstrated by two interesting interventions of Marcel Gauchet (Gauchet 2010). Everything revolves around him: he does not have to choose, as Parini said.

I believe that the Giovin signore is no longer a king whose life adventures are or will become part of the great History (Foucault 1976, pp.210-212): nevertheless he is still an aristocrat. On the contrary the boy I mentioned earlier, who followed the lifestyle of the Eighties, has never been an aristocrat. The latter, as developed by Michel Foucault, is a pivot around which all the concerns of the modern family revolve. At least starting from the Freudian turn onward, Foucault claims that psychoanalysis wanted us to believe that it was the son who desired his parents; but it was in fact them who were suspicious, worried and anxious about him. The family cell, from this point of view, becomes an instrument or a relais – as Foucault calls it – of an another power: the medical power, i.e. the bio-power which governs and organizes our entire lives today.

This power emerges when in the narrative of the adventures of a person “the epic gives way to romance” (Foucault 1976, p.211): instead of the stories of kings and queens, it describes the life of ordinary people. Modernity has to be distinguished from previous times because it lost any forms of ascending individualization for a few (every genealogy responds unanimously to questions like: who are my ancestors and what is my lineage? Who were here before me? Where do I come from?) and invented a descending one (believing to have a personal past – a childhood, an individual history which is no longer a history of what preceded me but the observation and the reconstruction of the conditions that constituted me as subject within specific economic and social organization – this is the novelty that makes us all modern and disciplined individuals). Today we are observed and classified; we undergo exams and we have become the files storing all these data. This is the power which Michel Foucault aims at escaping from.

2. A false dilemma
That son of a noble family, a bit lazy and effeminate, looks like a true child of a contemporary, average, western family for our educators. He looks sweet to us, as if we were his mom or his dad. But what if he did not look so sweet? He would certainly seem shameful, as he was for the severe captain. Which authority or educator could really exert a power on him, beyond a certain aversion or hysterical despotism? Beyond the angry shout of the traditional educator, we cannot but be fascinated by or complacent toward this young man. But could we really be helpful as educators?

Riccardo Massa would say that when we try to educate, we are caught in our erotic implications (seduced or seductive) and in our power implications (authoritarian or inefficient). If we were able to unmask the “bad” educational behaviour - repression (Freud) and alienation (Marx) – of the old pedagogy, and if we are no longer attracted by the “good” educational behaviour belonging to a kind of Humanismus, we still do not want a pedagogy that purses an ideal, abstract or utopian model of man. We are trapped in a false dilemma between Eros and Power without an up-to-date pedagogy enable to include both.

But education is neither good nor bad; it is rather effective. It produces effects. It is “a procedural system in action” (Massa 1997, pp.23-24) in every field of experience or phase of
life. As Michel Foucault showed us, it is a practical-discursive dispositif of subjection and subjectivation. In fact, I think it is not possible to choose to educate without sweetness and desire, or without authority and respect of the limits which, as Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote, are within things themselves. I believe that every authentic encounter between teacher and student can take place only within an asymmetry (of power and knowledge) and in the mutual respect of such positions.

This teenager who at first glance may seem to us fragile and arrogant (Charmet 2008), at a closer look may seem different. We can recognize him as Telemachus (Recalcati 2013). He looks at us and calls us, the adults: educators, teachers and parents. He searches for an help in order to grow up but he cannot be easily engaged by us. How can we pedagogically handle an image of adolescence that is no longer the classic Oedipus? Aren't all our resources – from the right to the left – quite ineffective in order to treat a Narcissus? Shouldn't we change our point of view in order to see who we have in front of us?

Contemporary adolescence – psychoanalysts claim – can't be defined anymore by the Freudian coordinates. Fathers changed even more than children. And if we look back, as historians invite us to do, we can see that such a new adolescence is the result of a golden childhood, which looks golden precisely as a consequence of a modern pedagogic point of view (Papi 2001, p.33). Such a point of view morphs into a feeling toward this childhood: it takes care of him, it protects him, it upholds him and promotes him. Nowadays this “Golden puppy”, as Gustavo Pietropolli Charmet calls him (Charmet 2008, p.13 and the following), is no longer, as Sigmund Freud put it, a “perverse Polymorph” (that has to be controlled, curbed and corrected); it became “a little messiah with miraculous abilities” (to be worshipped, cared and loved). This child, around which the cares of the family revolve, has grown up into a Narcissus-teenager, similar to the one described by Parini.

Around him, with him and for him the family cell - evolved from a “moral and social reality” (Ariès 1994, p.433) into an emotional reality – gets shaped. It was again Philippe Ariès who demonstrated how such a family did not exist sentimentally among the poor. Something similar was also explained by Michel Foucault in the lessons we previously mentioned. If it is true that at the foundation of an educational project which does not choose anymore the negative path – “the fear of punishment and the physical and moral pain” (Charmet 2008, p.14) – but a positive and relational path – “to be obeyed for love” (Ibidem) – there is the emotional family, it is also true that this aristocratic family has become more and more ordinary and normal. It is the family in which the new generations have grown, whose regime of power – as demonstrated effectively Michel Foucault in Surveiller et punir (1975) – is no longer the medieval torture (which targets the body of the convict) nor the modern semio-technique of punishment (which aims at manipulating the representations of the soul of the convict), but the discipline: a new type of soft power that from the second half of the Eighteenth Century attempted to discipline the bodies in order to reach the soul, also within the family.

The freedom of the disciplined individual – a cumulative unit capable of self-control and crucial for the functioning of jails, factories, hospitals and schools – became the pivotal point for an application of a new power. This widespread diffusion of discipline does not mean that we have become pedagogically better or more humane, or that we have stopped to educate. It means only that education is different and that the force of repression with its “theater of sorrow” (Foucault 1976, p.69) or its “theater of punishments” (Ivi, p.115) has given way to coercion and exercise (Ivi pp.147-247).

Repression and coercion are not the same thing from a pedagogical point of view, but they pertain to the same will. Repression is consistent with a negative action which forbids, whereas coercion is consistent with a positive action which pushes the body to action. The latter trains the body in order to manipulate the soul, but it also enables the manipulated soul
to go back to its body in order to demand modes of life (Ivi, p.33). Michel Foucault himself claimed that stones (that is, the architectural-disciplinary system), can make a subject tame but also knowable, as only clinical examining practices are able to do (Ivi, p.188).

At this point there is another problem: how not to conflate the pedagogical realm with the psychological? How can we still educate without imperceptibly fabricating the desire of our children and students? We are all convinced, as claimed by Pietropoli Charmet, that “the educational model based on guilt and fear of punishment could make sense (and it has had and still has) if it preserves a representation of the child as attempted by natural instances that can be kept at bay only by a good dose of ethical and moral values. In this perspective, the amount of pain that can be administered to the child in an educational perspective can also be very high (Charmet 2008, p.15”).

However, as educators we must add that the Rousseauian model of the good nature - a model that paved the way of the history of modern pedagogy in which we still dwell – did not prevent to have the same disciplinary effects that support the repressive model that no one likes anymore. It is always a panoptic power after all. The gesture is always the same: it is the Enlightening or Romantic gesture of every education to civilization or to culture (Rossi 1975, pp.1143-1157). There are, however, different ways: no more force against the body or against the soul, but a clinical or psychological disciplinary sweetness. It is in this sense that the negative and the positive path in pedagogy belong to the same archaeological point of emergence. We called it a will (to educate), thinking of Nietzsche. And we called it “our” because it is a Western pedagogical tradition.

3. **Eyes with which we see Telemachus?**

Why do we keep looking at this boy with either the “severe eyes” of a captain or with the “sweet eyes” of a mother and a father? Why do they continue – those who believe there is some evil to correct or, as Freud says (Freud 1989, p.488) “to contain”, in the pupil, following the same medical strategy of John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) (Franza 1988, pp.100-117), and those who, from Aristotle to Rousseau, from activism to development psychology, believe that some good of him will be expressed – to be fascinated by this *Genio ribelle*? And why do we, as educators, feel so different and do we fight against each other just because we have different ways of doing the same thing, when we all believe that we are looking at the same boy? Shouldn’t we acknowledge that through the course of generations, or simply because of the changes within the family (other, sociological studies should support the use of this adjective), as a Lacanian Italian psychoanalyst claimed, that this sweet or unbearable tyrant — who has to be corrected or promoted — has been replaced by a different pupil: Telemachus? Isn’t it that maybe, while we educators are splitting up between permissiveness and discipline, we haven’t understood the real educational issues we have to face?

There is no more *Giovin signore*. Nowadays very different teenagers demand to take care of their desire. These pupils are real: they question us and demand to have parents and educators capable of showing the joy of being in the world in their lives, and capable of being responsible for their educational phantasms in their pedagogy (Kaës 1981, pp.9-90). Thus we have to wake up and hear the call of our children and students. They call us to the troublesome but necessary commitment of being adult. But they demand from us another educational relationship, different from the one in which we believe we are. That is why it is so important to ask ourselves: it is just us, the parents and educators, who keep on seeing Oedipus or Narcissus everywhere?

Which point of view do we assume in the educational relationship? We believe that an interplay of points of view sustains the educational relationship between those who see the pupil as a wild plant to be domesticated (Oedipus) and those who see him as a badly grown helpless little plant to be protected (Narcissus). On the contrary, a different visual dialectic
concerns Anti-Oedipus (a child who does not recognize the authority of the father) and Telemachus (the son who looks for his father), as I will develop. The champ scopique I am investigating, or the educational interplay based on the educator-pupil relationship — i.e. the frame which allows the exchange of points of view —, might really have changed since the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Or maybe we might have been prey of a strange generational walleye.

Young people do not have to be straighten no more than to be loved. It is not a question whether it is more important the authority of the teacher or the agency of the student. They are all false dilemmas. Massimo Recalcati suggests a generational articulation in four steps with “four figures of children” (Recalcati 2013, p.97). We can group these four pupils that followed one another since Sigmund Freud’s time up to nowadays differently than Recalcati. While he arranges them in a sequence, we will consider them pedagogically as crossed couples.

The first and the second figure - Oedipus and Anti- Oedipus – belong to the “Freudian theater“ (Ivi, p.97) and embody a rivalry against the father. Between these two forms of violent attempts to take the father’s place, and the third, Narcissus, there is a break, as Recalcati claims quoting Charmet. There is a rapture: certainly a difference in the treatment of these two figures in the clinical and psychoanalytical field. Narcissus does not have a father to fight in front of him and perhaps he does not want to fight him anymore. Telemachus on the contrary reclaims his father and waits for him while looking at the sea. But maybe in the domain of education this is not the same thing.

We believe that the first and third of these figures belong to the same pedagogical theater, borrowing an expression of Riccardo Massa (Antonacci-Cappa 2001): they mise-en-scene the modern family from his triumphant debut (the severe authority of Laius that blocks the way of the young Oedipus at a crossroads) to its affective epilogue (the current affective family with all the love the father is capable of giving to Narcissus) while the second and the fourth - Anti-Oedipus and Telemachus – probably belongs to another pedagogical theater (even though the time where Telemachus becomes a protagonist is no more the time of L’Anti-Oedipe, 1972).

Perhaps it is true that the dream of the generation of 1968 becomes true today, when a father is no longer able to scolds, yells at or correct his son and looks at him with a rather strange admiration. Or when a teacher is not able anymore to keep the discipline of a classroom, and becomes the best friend or the seducer of his pupils.

The first and the third figure, as we have seen, are opposed to each other in the mainstream discourse of the Humanities: Oedipus is not Narcissus. They have different fathers (and mothers), teachers and educators. The former has been treated harshly, while the latter sweetly. However I believe that the ways both are treated and the ways they relate to an adult, have something in common that distinguishes them clearly from Telemachus and perhaps even from anti-Oedipus. They do not ask for a different father. They rather accept all the strength or all the kindness he is capable of.

What do the new generations ask? Which adult figure – father and mother, teacher or coach – do they reclaim?

4. Medical clinic and psychoanalytic

There was a time when the conflict between parents and children could have been read through the paradigm of the Oedipus complex: patricide and incest were the defining elements of the clinical field. The son-Oedipus, according to Sigmund Freud, challenges his father to death in order to tragically affirm his own desire. If we looked at the psychoanalytic discourse with the eyes of Michel Foucault, we would be suspicious of a family tale according
to which Oedipus would be, as Recalcati writes, “the hero of fate and the father would be the only repressive obstruction against his will for freedom” [italics added] (Recalcati 2013, p.100). As it is known, the story gives to the father, who is convicted to death, a kind of reversed leading role. If the son is guilty, it is only because his parents became an object of love and admiration. However, such a leading role is only the effect on the parents of an even greater mechanism of power: the medical knowledge of life. It is them - the parents — who are guilty or have to be blamed (in good company with all the other teachers).

Michel Foucault says that these parents under accusation “they must prevent them from dying, watch over them, and at the same time train them. The future lives of children lie in the hands of their parents” (Foucault 2003, p.255). When the “the principle of health [will appear] as a fundamental law of family ties” (Ivi, p. 327), Foucault says, that “the family cell [will be distributed] around the body-and the sexual body-of the child": then, “the organization of an immediate physical bond [will appear] a physical struggle between parents and children in which desire and power form a complex knot [ emphasis added]” thanks to “a new apparatus of knowledge-power”.

The putting in question the child’s sexuality was one of the procedures of construction of this new dispositif. The small incestuous family, the tiny, sexually saturated family space in which we are raised and in which we live, was formed from this (Ivi, pp.327-328). Michel Foucault affirms that the campaign against masturbation in the education of male children was “the great family drama of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries: the little theater of the family comedy and tragedy with its beds, its sheets, the night, the lamps, with its stealthy approaches, its odors, and the carefully inspected stains on the sheets” (Ivi, pp.246-247). This family, whose tragic script became increasingly comical, and from being noble and aristocratic became increasingly bourgeois and normal, and where the parents have all the “immediate power over the child’s body” (Ivi, p.254), is also the family that is “controlled externally by medical knowledge and techniques.”. They were not only doctors of the body, but, as we mentioned, also doctors of the soul: psychoanalysts, psychologists and psychopathologists. And today, perhaps, even educationalists.

Michel Foucault considers child’s sexuality - the great Freudian discovery of the Twentieth century - a “trap” by which “the close-knit, affective, substantial, and cellular family was constituted”; a trap or a “worthless money” that was left in the parents’ possession and to which, “parents are enormously attached” (Ivi, p.258). But it is a money that in fact expropriates them of the same power that pretends to give them.

There was a time when intellectuals used to denounce the repressive power of the fathers (Deleuze-Guattari 1972). In pedagogy there was a time when the category of desire was over-emphasized to a point where it produced a “rejection of all forms of limit” (Recalcati 2013, p.105). Certain pedagogical positions (such as the famous experiment of Summerhill) had anti-pedagogical effects that revived a certain traditional counter-moralistic stance. If nowadays we go back to read the positions of Alexander S.Neill or those of one of his current most renowned detractors not only in Germany, Bernhard Bueb, they can be perfectly overlapped. The appeal of the former to not confuse freedom with whim echoes the claim of the latter to not confuse authority with authoritarianism. According to both, terms such as freedom of the pupil or love toward him, are crucial.

In the seventies in Italy two paradigms of education confronted each other (Bertolini-Massa 1996, pp. 337-360): the “practical” and the “technical”. The former considered education an art that would have never become a science, while the latter considered it a sort of technique that should have been used by science. In the debate in the philosophy of education, these two positions produced two opposite factions: “educationalists” and “instructionists”. In commonsensical discourse as well as in educational policies, they have exacerbated a
contrast between those who wanted to defend education and its values, and those who wanted to regiment any mystique of the educational relationship.

That season has been pedagogically fruitful and it is still so even nowadays, but some of those positions were wrongly read and interpreted on the left, and realized even worse. Borrowing an expression from L’Anti-Oedipe, what does it mean when it is claimed that the educational effects of the pedagogical disciplinary practices are neurotics? Would it be better to have a psychotic effect, like the schizophrenic out for a walk proposed by Deleuze and Guattari? Certainly we cannot educate like our fathers anymore. However, if on the left things went too far proposing again the French and revolutionary Enlightenment of civilization, the right relied too much on the romantic culture of the Bildung. But if in the Eighties in Italy, the word “formazione” could still represent a solution in order to overcome the false dilemma between “educazionisti” and “istruzionisti” because it was able to include the great pedagogic tradition of the forma (Bild) – a project that failed because the widespread use of the expression “educazione e formazione” opened up the dilemma again – which term can currently overcome the new false dilemma between disciplinarianism and permissiveness?

In a time dominated by the evaporation of the father (Recalcati 2011, 2013; Lacan 2005) a fake horizontality seems to have replaced the rigid hierarchy that oriented our collective life before. We do not use courtesy forms anymore when addressing a parent, but le-nom-de-père does not work anymore as a metaphor or as a substitution for the desire of the Mother. If it is true that the narcissism of children is a consequence of the narcissism of their parents, according to Recalcati, the cocoon that protects the child-Narcissus aims at sparing him the pain of existence: but – we add – also the pleasure of existence, which is Freudian (Lust) category as well as a Foucauldian (Plasir). We agree, in fact, that “[...] All educational activity – even the most just and loving – it can never pretend to save the lives of their children [as students, we might add] without the encounter with the real meaning of life, from its contingency unlimited from his ungovernable absolute (Recalcati 2013, p.109-11)”.  

5. A pedagogical point of view

The relationship between this educator (who looks either gently or severely) and this pupil without any desires is an encounter that does not yield subjectification neither in the mentor nor in the novice. If we keep adopting the point of view of Laius, Parini or Pietropolli Charmet, we will always see what we want to see and we keep on educating according to old clichè. Seemingly different educational effects do not change the pedagogic practices and procedures that govern them.

In the Middle Ages the apprenticeship, namely the fact that “seven years old children lived in a household that wasn’t their own” (Ariès 1994, p.434 and the following), was the dispositif that led kids to adulthood. With the transition to modernity, “the school ceased to be reserved for clerics and became a normal instrument of social initiation”. And if until the Seventeenth Century it was possible for a parent to wonder whether “it was better to send a child to a boarding school or to trust the superior efficacy of a home school with a private tutor”, from the Eighteenth Century school gained its guarantor of efficacy through the exam (Foucault 1976, p.204). However it was only in the late Twentieth Century that the school in Italy became a mass school and started to lose its traditional disciplinary form.

The historical reconstruction that traces a path of evolution that goes from the Middle Ages to nowadays, does not consider the change and the break operated by psychoanalysis; the latter has been a discursive and a power change that, even according to the psychoanalysts themselves, nowadays has been so successful that it became naturalized and it is not even perceived as such. Maybe Michel Foucault was right: we have to consider that the success of psychoanalysis way beyond any repressive hypothesis (Foucault 1978, pp.19-48) corresponds to its utter inactuality. We do not go to the psychoanalyst and prefer short cognitive-behaviorist therapies or getting information from magazines where there is always
an expert – psychologists or sexologists – who has a column of advices. We are still convinced that our freedom lies in the depth of ourselves. It is the triumph of the dispositif de sexualité. This is the context we have to keep in mind when considering the rapid crisis the school in Italy has undergone from the second postwar period up to nowadays. The boy from the boarding school quickly became a mass school student and the school thus became a place of emotional bonds just like the family.

A pedagogic study that was considered (or dreamt of) an alternative to any pious or priestly psychoanalysis (Deleuze-Guattari 2002, p. 123), is the famous book written by Ivan Illich in 1971. If Deschooling Society is an hypothesis (or a wish) that is becoming concrete nowadays thanks to the success of the Internet, it is nevertheless an absolutely sterile proposal in order to imagine a change in the traditional school form (as in the title of the latest book written by Riccardo Massa in 1997): that is, its disciplinary structure. We can imagine a different school organization without necessarily demolishing the institution or dreaming an impossible restoration.

If the slogan schizophrenic versus oedipal (Deleuze-Guattari 2002, p.122) could work well for a protest, in the field of pedagogy it has opened up the way for “a revival of a nostalgic disciplinary and authoritarian model of education” (Recalcati 2013, p.107), opposed to permissiveness. However, far from any nostalgia for an obtuse form of traditionalism, there has also been a sincere attempt to think the necessary asymmetry of the relationship of education in a different way. Neither the negative model (repression) nor the positive one (compulsion) – the former because of a lack, the latter because of an excess – are able to reach the authentic level of confrontation between educator and pupil: that is, an authority that assumes “the vertical responsibility of education” (Recalcati 2013, p.107). Such a level, or frame, constitutes the true change for a possible pedagogy in western culture.

What does it mean if we leave behind a way of educating that we do not recognize anymore? Haven’t we always done this, from generation to generation? Fascinated by the sweet appeal of the pupil and captured in the reflection of our childhood we are incapable of giving a testimony of adulthood. If the very anonymous and disciplinary power fosters these positions, how can we get out of the shadow of traditional pedagogy and of its specular falsifications? What does growing up really mean for us, when we, as educators, also have to grow up throughout our lives? (Was it ever different, by the way?) If the problem is not to adapt to an ideal model of adulthood dictated by our culture, nor it is believing that the adult should be awaited or stimulated according to a natural development.

Telemachus, Massimo Recalcati says, waits. He waits for the homecoming of an Ulysses who we, as educators, shall have been. Our job as adults is to always address, from a not yet realized past, a future that we will have been able to build, being witnesses of life and desire for our children and students.

As Foucault demonstrated, “the moment when we saw the transition from historical-ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to scientific-disciplinary mechanisms (Foucault 1976, p.211 and following)” is the moment when “the normal took over the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man”: this was the moment when human sciences were born. That is when the classic episteme broke down (Foucault 1966) and thus man could emerge: the man who lives, speaks and works. This man is no longer a king of the world who, because he reigns over being, does not appear in the canvas that represents the world. This man started to live in the interstices of that canvas’ pieces. So the adventure of a life worth telling stopped to be that of “le bon petit Henri” and started to be that of “little Hans’s disgraces”. In this passage the family – the bourgeois family determined the great seizure of love within its moral – is not so much the target but the mean, the transmission belt, of a new dispositif of power and knowledge.
Again, we are not proposing the demolition or the overthrow of this family, the problem is how not to be too adhesive and tight: it means how to become true credible adults? How can we allow children to adapt and grow up in this regime of reality, and not somewhere else? How can we also allow a relative emancipation from it? How can we favour the necessary separation from the adults as figures, partners, mentors, or models not only at the end of the educational relationship but also from the generation we represent?

"Emancipation" is an old and ambiguous word (no less than “formation”, a word Riccardo Massa suggested in order to conceptualize the false dilemma between education and instruction) and can nevertheless hold surprises when confronted with the questions we have addressed in this writing. We would like to answer these questions looking at Telemachus and at a renovating future.

References
Summoning the attentive subject

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Introduction

In my forthcoming Ph.D. thesis I look into the notion of education as attention formation. The question that I raise is in what way(s) education, from a relational perspective, can be seen as an activity of attention formation. In order to deal with this rather complex question I have split it up into three major inquiries. In the first inquiry I focus on the becoming of an attentive subject. There I delve into the significance and meaning of becoming an attentive subject in and through an educational relation by asking in what way(s) education can contribute to the becoming of attentive subjects. In the second inquiry I focus on the object(s) of the attending subject, such as the self, the other and the teacher. In the third inquiry I focus on different processes of attention with educational significance. Here I follow some etymological traces of the word attention, such as stretching out, waiting, caring and listening and argue for their significance in the painting of a more pregnant picture of the attending subject of educational relations. I end the exploration with a philosophical reflection in which I look at the event of education as an event of attention formation. This is done as an attempt to bring the different inquiries together into a more holistic view, of educational relations in general and of the forming of attentive subjects in particular.

In this paper I discuss the becoming of an attentive subject drawing from the notion of education as a call from outside (drawing from Biesta 2013 and Todd 2003) and the notion of education as a summons (drawing from Fichte 1796-7/2000 and Uljens 2001). Starting from the concept of Aufforderung, which was developed by Fichte and which describes how the subject gets summoned into self-awareness and self-efficacy by the outside world, I investigate how the becoming of this attentive subject paves way for an understanding of educational events as events of attention formation. The second half of the paper consists of an exploration of how the notion of “a pedagogy of the place” makes possible an interpretation of Aufforderung as an embodied activity of attention formation. In my concluding paragraph I show how the notion of an educational summoning, as an event of attention formation, addresses and contributes to the question of education and the search for a common world.

From a battle for to the battle of attention

Attention can mean different things and be understood differently. The etymology of the word attention leads into slightly different conceptions like listening, waiting, caring, and stretching out but generally, in political and public discourses on education, attention seems to have come to designate a variable characteristic of the student that values his or her ability (or inability) to concentrate on certain objects or engage in certain tasks, i.e. his or her ability to perform schoolwork. What is often lacking in these discourses is the question of attention as a general ability that could grow in and through schoolwork (without going into the specifics regarding the form and content of this schoolwork) and a specific quality of relations that are established between students and different subject-matters (see Stiegler 2010). In short: attention as an educational aim itself. The general trend of increasing AD/HD-diagnoses in many western countries is one indicator that points to the fact that attention is seen as a precondition for the ability to perform schoolwork rather than an integral part of educational aims (Lardizabald 2012). In today's society, flooded with information of all sorts, teaching has lost its function as an activity of providing students with information and supporting them in transforming it into knowledge. Instead it has become more of an authoritative activity of guiding the students in a world of information or selecting the information most important for the students to transform into knowledge. But, as the view of the teacher as the source of knowledge is a limited way of understanding education, the view of the teacher as a provider...
or selector of pieces of information/knowledge to be handed out to students with attentive mindsets is just as limited.

Bernard Stiegler argues in his book *Taking care of the youth and the generations* from 2010 that the adult generation has withdrawn from its responsibilities as the young generation’s attention former. The problem today is, according to Stiegler, that there has been a transformation of the meaning of attention, from caring to vigilance that has a) made education unable to pay attention to its own role as a caring institution of attention forming and b) further devaluated the definition of attention into being a mere function of the human brain, now to be trained through a different variety of attention forming technologies (either within or outside the confines of education) escaping the trans-generational development of collective intelligence. Stiegler writes that it is important to see attention as something more than the precondition for succeeding in education since education in itself is a kind of attention formation. He claims that if attention is understood without its connotations of caring and waiting, there is a risk that education undermines its own role as an attention former, making room for attention forming technologies (i.e., ICT) that if mis- or overused might short circuit the trans-individual processes that uphold and develop the collective intelligence of a society:

Any system of care is a social pedagogy whose goal is to reground primary psychic identification as primary collective and socially referential identification, as a function of its organological changes. Attention, always at the base of any care system, is formed in schools, but as a rational discipline of adoption inculcated into the psyche of the student-as-scholar (i.e., rationally adopting a knowledge or skill) before the entire literate world (initially, classmates). (Stiegler 2010: 60)

Jacques Rancière (1991) has shown that education is problematic since it defines and controls the objects of attention and he stresses the importance of the teacher not directing attention but instead being attentive to the attention of the students. To Stiegler (2010), education cannot withdraw from its function as an attention former, since education, as the link between the generations, is the guarantee for the accumulative intelligence of the collective. Education, to Stiegler, is what cares for the maturation of a society. Attention is therefore not a capacity to bring into or onto education, since education, as attention forming is per definition trans-individual (ibid: 17):

The work of constituting the transindividual involves the formulation of a transindividuation process that cares not just for language but for things, allowing us not just to designate them but to think them, to make them appear, and finally give them their place – by giving them meaning. [...]But short-circuiting this dialectical process through sophistical attention formation results in mental deformation and, in the end, the destruction of attention (as cynicism). (ibid: 21-22)

Drawing on Kant’s ideas of enlightenment as a process of maturity, attention forming is the formation of public reason, something that is the result of reading and writing. Stiegler’s critique against society today is that the adult generation seems to have abdicated from its responsibilities for the minors, in making the attention formation into a technological process that “short-circuits” the intergenerational communication that, to him, should be the core of every educational institution. Stiegler compares modern attention forming technologies with the Sophists who offered ready-made knowledge as objects of attention available for anyone who had the money to pay for it (ibid; 21). Education should however not rely on these technologies only, because education should be built upon a transgenerational development of collective intelligence, which is a relational and collective activity:

Thought and intelligence are always already collective; both are part of a process of individuation that is actually a metastabilizing co-individuation of the transindividual,
where a circulating intelligence, as *interlegere*, forms an organological milieu linking minors and adults, parents and children, ancestors and descendants, and the generations containing mind and *spirit*: *pneuma, ruah, spiritus*. (Stiegler 2007, 34)

The organological milieu is the milieu in which intelligence is shared intersubjectively, meaning that intelligence is not to be regarded as a faculty but as something that connects individuals and is constituted interpersonally, developed socially and transformed historically. The informal organological development is the result of the parent-child relation while the formal organological development is the result of education (ibid.).

**Attention in relation to educational purposes**

The arguments Stiegler makes are quite strong but I believe that they need to be developed from an educational perspective. Education does not only concern social identification and trans-generational knowledge acquisition. At least since Herbart (1908), education can be understood as partly concerning the becoming of unique persons. Biesta (2013) has looked into some domains in which education not only functions but also has specific purposes. These are the domain of socialization, the domain of qualification and the domain of subjectification. The domain of socialization could be said to concern the identification of and adaptation of identities, the forming and reforming of groups. The domain of qualification concerns the acquiring of skills and knowledge that meet the demands of a specific vocation or have been identified as what is required in order to function in a specific societal domain. Now, as these domains are overlapping and sometimes in conflict (regarding both content and purpose), education will always face the challenge of practically and theoretically dealing with these conflicts, at least if they are all to be taken seriously. Biesta’s own focus lies on the domain of subjectification, the domain in which students are aloud to become and assert themselves as unique persons. The risk, Biesta claims, is that if the two other domains are put too much in focus, this domain will be neglected. By stressing the importance of this domain, Biesta shows that education also has ethical responsibilities.

**Education and the becoming of the subject**

As described above, the first part of my over-all inquiry delves into the meaning of becoming an attentive subject in educational situations. However, as shown above, the notion of the subject is a delicate educational problem. Since education, as a relational and intergenerational affair, centers on the becoming of subjects, these subjects are always at risk of being framed or determined too rigidly (Biesta 2013, Säfström & Månsson 2004). One way to deal with this challenge is by departing from a notion of a weak subjectivity that avoids any a-priori definitions of the subject (Biesta 2013). A weak subjectivity can be seen as sprung from the relation of a self and its surroundings (people, places and/or situations) and therefore something that is constantly shaped and reshaped in and through this relation.¹ Out of every situation, in every context, a subject has the possibility of emerging, as a concrete other, which calls for an ethical response from those who witness and want to take the responsibility for the possibility and the consequences of this emerging. This inherent otherness of an educational situation can be described in different ways; as a call from outside (Biesta 2013), as speech from the (completely) other (Todd 2003) or as difference (Säfström 2005). All these perspectives have in common that they define educational relations as educational if and only if they are based on responses to otherness and responsibility for the other. It is in and through these responses that the subjects of the educational situation are shaped and reshaped, where they come to being. Since the response cannot be any response (as in a simple reaction), but a response initiated by and directed towards something or someone specific, it must also be an attentive response (Todd

¹ However, the term “weak” can be problematic since it alludes to a subject without limits or integrity. In this case “weak” should be thought of as signifying the ability to be otherwise, or to transform. I suggest the term “sensible subjectivity” instead, since it better keeps the intentionality of the subject.
2003: 130-131). Another way to put it is that these kinds of ethical responses are nothing less than attentive in there acknowledging of the otherness of the other. In order for these relations to be ethical and educational rather than just ethical they must also contain an element of transformation. The notion of weak subjectivity is also what makes educational interventions in the domain of subjectification ethically possible (Biesta 2013) but, in order for the relation between the self and its surroundings to be educative (i.e. transformative rather than adaptive), it has to be initiated by someone or something that brings something new and unknown to the table (ibid.). Drawing from Biesta’s notion of education as something that brings something new, as a call from outside, I will explore, using Fichte’s notion of Aufforderung, how this attentive gesture has both an inbound and an outbound direction that bares with it attention to both oneself and the other. Aufforderung thus becomes important in the understanding of the notion of education as attention formation.

Aufforderung as a constitutive principle of education

The German educationist Dietrich Benner has tried to outline an educational theory (Eine Allgemeine Pedagogik) starting from a notion of education as a co-existential, based on four principles, two constitutive and two regulative (Uljens 1998). The two constitutive principles are the principle of Bildsamkeit (in English: plasticity) and the principle of Aufforderung zur Selbsthätigkeit. The former principle can be said to concern the possibilities and limits of educational aims and purposes whereas the latter concerns the possibility of the very existence of education itself (Uljens 2001). Lars Lovlie (2007: 94) has described Bildsamkeit as a concept that points towards the total field in which a student participates and acts. Uljens (1998) describes the principle of Aufforderung zur Selbsthätigkeit as one concerning the educator’s demand to the student to engage in free activity, a fostering of the will, so to say. Uljens (2001) means that this fostering of the will could be thought of as an educational paradox but also that the principle of Aufforderung itself opens up for intersubjective interpretations of education. These interpretations emerge if one regards the fact that, from an educational standpoint, it is the newcomer, born into the world, who summons those who are to take responsibility and to care for her (ibid.). While in his discussions, Fichte with a brief remark defines Erziehung as ”Die Aufforderung zur freien Selbsthätigkeit” (Fichte 1795-6: 32), any further educational arguments must be drawn from his more thorough discussions on the notion of Aufforderung itself2. As the notion contains thoughts on the subject’s self-awareness, I will in the next section investigate this more closely.

Fichte’s intersubjectivity

The notion of Aufforderung was defined and used by Fichte in his book The Foundation of Natural Right from 1795-6 in order to solve the problem of self-consciousness. In the book Fichte tried to outline a political philosophy by establishing what Neuhouse (2000) describes as “the basic principles of a liberal political order”. Fichte claimed that it was impossible to be conscious of oneself without acknowledging other selves, since one consciousness alone would only produce a vicious circle ad infinitum of states of consciousness, trying to capture a solid state that could be the determining ground for the self. He further claimed that a human being only could become conscious of itself through a summons (eine Aufforderung) made by another human being. While Uljens describes this summons as leading to a delicate problem to be solved educationally (how do you educate a free will, without imposing it on the other?), Fichte’s own definition and use of Aufforderung can be considered to set a common starting point for self-consciousness and consciousness of other beings. The

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2 Fichte wrote elsewhere more elaborately on the subject of education (see Dimic 2003), but those writings are not the focus of this paper. The task of this paper is rather to explore the educational significance of the notion of aufforderung and its bearing on contemporary educational thought.
summons is therefore to be regarded as an account for intersubjectivity, in the sense that the other precedes the I.\(^3\)

With Fichte the encounter with the other and the response to otherness, acknowledged through the other’s summoning, was first and foremost a self-attentive response. But, this self-awareness of the summoned subject was only possible through an awareness of other free beings. On that matter Fichte wrote as follows:

The finite rational being cannot ascribe to itself a free efficacy in the sensible world without also ascribing such efficacy to others, and thus without also presupposing the existence of other finite rational beings outside of itself. (Fichte 1795-6/2000: 29)

The notion of freedom was thus only possible together with an outside world that also set up the limits for this freedom:

…the nature of an object is such that, when it is comprehended by a subject, the subject’s free activity is posited as constrained. (Fichte 1795-6/2000: 31).

With the notion of *Aufforderung*, Fichte wanted to describe the asymmetric traits of every initial step towards intersubjectivity. The practical consequences of *Aufforderung* would be the notion of the reciprocal activity of *Anerkennen* (recognition) by which Fichte went on to set up his theory of natural right. In his reading of Fichte, Wood (2006), claims that the notion of *Aufforderung* makes the starting point for the free subject, not the subject itself, but the community, which outlines both the possibility and the constraints of this freedom. For Fichte, the self-efficacy of the subject was only possible through the existence of other subjects by which the subject got summoned into self-awareness.

The subject, according to Fichte, could only become self-conscious, that is, aware of itself as a free subject, through a summons from the outside world. The summons worked as a waking call towards the subject, who in its turn found its place in the world among other fellow beings. Therefore, self-awareness was not the only thing made possible through the summons. From this awareness followed also an awareness of the outer world, an outer world that showed itself in and through the very summons calling upon the subject to act. Wood (2006) has suggested that the word *Aufforderung*, as it has many German connotations (spanning from, on one end request, to the other end, demand), is translated into *Invitation* since the summons leaves the subject free “*either to do or not do*” as it is summoned to do. So, states Fichte, the activity of the subject cannot be seen as a mere effect of the summons, since the summons is always followed by a self-determining action that in no way can be predicted or produced by the summons. Fichte means that a summons only can take place between two rational beings and that the summoning subject must presuppose an ability in the summoned subject to comprehend the summons. “*The purposiveness of the summons is conditional on the understanding and freedom of the being to whom it is addressed.*” (Fichte 1795-6/2000: 35). With Fichte it follows that if there is one rational being there must be other rational beings. Individuality is thus strongly connected with the notion of a community.

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\(^3\) Here one finds the link between Fichte and other intersubjective thinkers of the 20th century, such as Buber and Lévinas. The interesting thing with Fichte is that his intersubjectivity keeps the intentionality of both sides of the relation, whereas, on the one hand, Lévinas tries to avoid intentionality in the face to face relation and, on the other hand, Buber claims the impossibility of an educational relation to be a reciprocal I/You-relation. Lévinas and Buber is thus helpful in safeguarding the ethicality of educational relations, while Fichte tries to combine the educational (i.e. summoning) and the ethical aspect of inter-human relations.
Summoning an attentive subject, becomes with Fichte, the act of inviting the self to self-assertion and self-efficacy, i.e. it is the necessary act of making possible for the subject to see itself as a (free) subject. Although, conceptualized from an egoistic standpoint, this ego cannot become aware of itself unless it is summoned into presence. Since this self-assertion only comes from the acknowledging of another human being, attention to oneself necessarily also becomes attention to the other. The summons is what brings forth a becoming of an attentive subject and its object.

The summons and uniqueness

It can be argued that Fichte’s notion of Aufforderung, however seemingly intersubjective by definition, is just another way to re-instate the I as the foundation of inter-relational experiences (Uljens 2001). Some authors have described Fichte as too of an ego-fixated philosopher and Bertrand Russell (1946/1994) even described the subject-philosophy of Fichte as close to insane. In that light the summoning and the one performing the summoning would just be means to re-instate the subject as the ground for thinking, feeling and acting. However, by looking closer at those parts where Fichte elaborates on the notion of Aufforderung, it is possible to see that the self-consciousness sprung from the summoning is not a Cartesian cogito, but rather an awareness of awareness, a constitution of subjectivity that comprises a subject, the other and the relation in-between (Wood 2006). The subjectivity of the summoning can therefore be regarded as more of a contingent subjectivity than that of a stable ground for constructing a self and a world, as in the case of the Cartesian cogito. This contingency becomes more apparent if one adds that the summoning, as earlier stated, is not regarded as a command but rather as an invitation to act or as an offering of an event of self-realization, in which the self is constituted through a unique self/other-relationship (self-awareness) together with a relation to this relation (self-efficacy and self-activity). Uljens (2001) has described pedagogical interventions as something that both summon and create a safe room in which to respond to the summons and where the stakes (for the student) do not get too big proportions. One could say that if the summoning is to be regarded as educational, the teacher as the one summoning must take responsibility for this action but must also be open for being summoned herself.

I began this paper with Stiegler’s critique against the adult generation and its reluctance to take responsibility for the attention forming of the younger generation. As this critique mostly, from an educational perspective, concerned the domains of socialization and, to some extent, qualification, I claimed that attention forming also works in the domain of subjectification, the domain in which students can assert themselves and come to being as unique persons. Whereas, from a perspective that focuses on qualification and socialization, attention forming becomes something of a mimetic activity, where knowledge and sociability are already carriers of a certain constitutive attending, in form of explicit and/or implicit subject/object-relations, the domain of subjectification allows for student to form a certain self-attending that always has the possibility of forming a unique attending in relation to the other domains of education. Following Fichte’s discussions on Aufforderung it was possible to understand this self-attentiveness as the result of a summons, where the subject’s self-attentiveness was activated, so to say, by being addressed by another subject. The question of being addressed has been actualized anew by several writers of educational philosophy, such as Biesta (2013), Säfström (2005) and Todd (2003), who all stress the importance of not letting education lose its concern for otherness, difference and the becoming of unique persons, in case of which education would lose its transformative potentials and (at best) turn into mere schooling (Säfström 2010).

However, education is not only about interpersonal relations, it is also about other relations such as relations to materiality, to situations and to the relations themselves. Following the idea of a summoning that provokes self-attentiveness, I will in the next section extend the intersubjective interpretation of Aufforderung and explore the becoming of an attentive
subject as provoked by a material and place-specific summoning, a summoning emerging from the educational place itself.

**Aufforderung and the materiality of education**

With the notion of Aufforderung, subjectivity becomes linked to intersubjectivity, since the subject becomes a (self-conscious) subject only in response to the other’s otherness that both enables and sets the limits for the freedom of the subject. In this section I will investigate the notion of Aufforderung from a perspective that transcends the intersubjective perspective and more radically erases the boundaries of subject/other and subject/world. Lars Lovlie (2006) has suggested that one speaks of a pedagogy of the place, a notion of education that turns the educational situation itself into a subject. This, because of the fact that education does not just happen anywhere but in specific places and in specific situations, and can therefore not fully be grasped if one not takes the place and the situation into account. Since those who find themselves in a specific place relate not only to each other subjectively but also through their extended corporeality offered by the material constitution of the place, the place itself becomes integral in the forming of the subjectivity that emerges. This way of regarding the subject as emerging out of a specific context is something that Fichte also had thoughts on, here through an interpretation by Wood:

> An active I “finds itself” (to use a favorite expression of Fichte in this connection, SW 3: 33; 4:18-21, GA 4:2:181-182) only as willing (SW 4:18), and its willing takes the form of a striving against a material world on which it acts, and to which it is at the same time also passive. (Wood 2006)

By extending Fichte’s willing subject, through its bodily constitution, into the material world we come closer to a more contextualized notion of subjectivity, that is, not only the willing but the subject as being comes forth in her striving against the materiality of the world. Lovlie’s notion of a pedagogy of the place consists of three components; a situation, attunement to this specific situation and the materiality of the place. With these components and with the notion of a situation as a subject, educational actions, i.e. actions emerging through the situatedness of the place, can be interpreted from a standpoint where questions of input/output and learning outcomes transcend their inherent causal structure. Actions carried out from within or in constituting a pedagogic place could thus be said to be initiated by the subjectivity of the place itself. It would therefore be possible to say that a situation, as subject, summons the other subjects into being.

This way of reasoning might easily fall into an infinite regression of cause and effect, if one does not acknowledge that subjectivity can be discussed on different organizational levels that mutually depend on each other. This brings the question of becoming into a question of enacting. This means that subjects that emerge in and through a situation, whether in form of an educational place or in form of persons, do this through, what Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1993) call, a history of structural coupling. This means that an organism and its surrounding environment cannot exist without each other since they are not only mutually dependent but come to existence through an inter-dependent relation (ibid.).

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4 It is with this inherent intentionality of the self-attentive response I believe that Fichte’s discussions have educational relevance. There is always a choice to respond or not to respond.

5 Davis (2006) has made an overview of different fruitful relations between the so-called complexity sciences and education. Davis shows how the complexity sciences help educationists to see that certain taken for granted conceptions of education (or educational categories) do not always belong to the same organisational levels. This means that, in some situations, students, classrooms and teachers can be seen as contextually dependent phenomena that do not have to exist simultaneously or have to be causally connected.
From a biological perspective, the surrounding environment, that is the world that we live in, can from a certain perspective be said to offer affordances for the creatures inhabiting this environment. An attending being would be a being that resonates with a specified affordance, such as an ape climbing a tree, where one of the affordances of the tree is its climbability. Every being can thus interact with the environment through specific affordances, in a sort of reciprocal match. Following an embodied perspective, the concept of affordances does not work according to Varela et al. (ibid.), since the being and its life-world are interwoven and co-created through their history of structural coupling. The specific embodiment of being/world is therefore not an optimization, through a series of adaptational fitting, but just a possible way of a life-world pattern to grow (emerge) through and out of its own enactive history. I believe that the embodied perspective together with the notion of a “pedagogy of the place” make room for the becoming of a weak subjectivity.

A metaphor used by the writers of *The Embodied Mind* in order to capture the enactive perspective is the path that is laid down through the activity of walking. This metaphor is used to express that neither the world nor the subject exists prior to actions or enactions that bring forth both the notion of a world and a subject. Jan Masschelein also uses the metaphor of walking in a slightly similar way, but he emphasizes its transformational potentials. Drawing from a short essay by Walter Benjamin’s, Masschelein uses the metaphor of walking to explore the notion of education as *educere*, as leading out. The terrain of a landscape cannot be grasped in its totality (as when flown over), but it commands the subject in a way that calls for “an education of the gaze”. To use the vocabulary of Fichte and Lovlie, one could say that the materiality of the landscape summons the subject into self-presence and self-efficacy. That is, in the activity of walking, the landscape forms the walking in itself but leaves it to the subject to decide the direction, creating a unique path that in its turn shapes the landscape.

**From educating for a common world to education as a common “worlding”**

In this paper I have elaborated on the becoming of attentive subjects in educational events. What has been investigated is the idea of these events as summoning subjects into awareness of themselves and of the world. Paying attention is not an inherent capacity of the subject but rather a relational mode of being, which constitutes a specific directedness of the subject. From this perspective, distraction just means that the attending does not meet the specific educational intentions of the educator. Seeing distraction, not as an incapability of paying attention, but rather as an attending to the “wrong” things, would make an educator (who intends to reach as many students as possible) to try and capture this attention and direct it towards the content of what is being taught. But, if education is thought of as a summons an educational relation turns into an event of attention forming. Although education is based on asymmetric relations, it is important to understand the summons as an intersubjective and reciprocal phenomenon, keeping the educative asymmetry ethical in its core. Education summons from both directions since the world never will be given. As much as education is about handing over a world it is also about receiving a world. Education can thus be seen as a form of shared attention formation. The first educational gesture of attention forming would be the one that summons the subject into presence. When this happens the subject is given the opportunity to find/make itself and the world. Education would thus be about a common “worlding” and not just about coming into the world.

**References**


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6 What Fichte brings to the table, I believe, is that to be a subject is to be aware of both oneself and of other subjects. With Varela et al. It one might loose track of the subject all-together, something that also would erase the educational perspective of intersubjective relations.
Boman, Y. et. al. (red.) (2007): Erfarenheter av pragmatism, s.77-104. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
Taking a chance: Education for aesthetic judgment and the criticism of culture

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I. Beyond freedom and control

In *Experience and Education* (1938), John Dewey writes: ‘the rise of what is called new education and progressive schools is of itself a product of discontent with traditional education’ (p. 18). In this more developed progressivism, Dewey came to express discontent with the misinterpretation of his idea of ‘child-centered education’. Thus, in this book, he tries to restate what he means by progressive education: progressivism should not be interpreted simply as a shifting of focus from control to freedom and from an initiation into a culture to innovation. Whereas ‘MANKIND likes to think in terms of extreme opposites’, of ‘Either-Ors’, Dewey affirms his own purpose of exploring ‘intermediate possibilities’ (p. 17), in ways that speak beyond the dichotomy of freedom and control. He raises the question: ‘What does freedom mean and what are the conditions under which it is capable of realization?’ (p. 22). In giving the impression that he is merely shifting between freedom and control, however, Dewey shows us the philosophical and practical difficulty of living and thinking beyond ‘Either-Ors’. This still is a continuing challenge to education today. We live in an age when the neo-liberal discourse of the global market is encroaching upon the field of education and when it has become all the more difficult to trust one’s own judgment. A simple dichotomization (and, hence, combination) of freedom and control, cannot help us reorient our thinking about culture and its criticism. More than ever, we need the kind of education through which we can learn that criticism requires tradition, and that tradition awaits criticism, to renovate our culture from within.

In response to this continuing challenge, this paper explores the possibilities of the antifoundationalist thought of Dewey and Cavell with a particular focus on their idea of chance in aesthetic experience, as a framework through which to destabilize the prevailing discourse of education centering on freedom and control. I shall try to present the idea of chance in a particular way, which does not identify it with chaos or limitlessness but takes it rather as a condition of meaning-making, and more generally of a perfecting of culture, of a conscientious sense of its further possibility and betterment. Along these lines reference will be made to John Cage’s idea of chance in art. Cage is an American composer who was influenced by Thoreau and whose idea of chance has, perhaps because of this, some similarity to Cavell’s. Discussing these antifoundationalist American writers, I shall argue that criticism of culture requires trust in one’s taste, which is at the heart of aesthetic judgment. ‘Taking a chance’ is a mode of thinking and use of language that might replace a prevalent discourse of critical thinking in education and realize a possibility of liberal education beyond the dichotomy of freedom and control.

II. Dewey and the metaphysics of chance

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey assiduously balances the freedom of children and control by adults. When a teacher exercises his personal power, Dewey says if it is done ‘in behalf of the interest of the group’, such action is not ‘arbitrary’ but is ‘just and fair’ (Dewey 1938, pp. 54-55). In his account of habit reconstruction, Dewey claims: ‘When customs are flexible and youth is educated as youth and not as premature adulthood, no nation grows old’ (Dewey 1983, p. 73). In order to ‘rejuvenate civilization from within’ (ibid.), it is a task of education to integrate innovation and inheritance, and the originality of the individual and social harmony.
Dewey’s metaphysics of chance plays an indispensible role here. Heidegger’s metaphysics is in a way similar to Dewey’s. Things are understood in their possibilities. Possibilities are part of what things are. Trees are understood as trees first and foremost in terms of what might be done in relation to them, whether to shelter under them or take berries from them. But in Dewey’s pragmatism, far more strikingly than in Heidegger’s thought, the element of chance plays a crucial role in realizing possibilities. Destabilizing the conventional idea of an end, Dewey says that the ‘love of certainty’ (p. 163) is an illusion and that adventure into uncertainty is at the heart of his philosophy of action and experimentalism. Insistence on a ‘fixed antecedent standard’ blinds us to the ‘genuine uncertainty of possibilities and consequences’ of the situation (p. 166):

We live in a world which is an impressive and irresistible mixture of sufficiencies, tight completenesses, order, recurrences which make possible prediction and control, and singularities, ambiguities, uncertain possibilities, processes going on to consequences as yet indeterminate. (Dewey 1981, p. 47)

The world of empirical things, Dewey says, is ‘fundamentally hazardous’ (p. 45): the ‘world is precarious and perilous’ (p. 44). Precisely because of this generic trait, ‘fear’ is a ‘function of the environment’ (p. 43). The source of our ‘happiness’ is derived from ‘happenings’ (p. 45) – and etymologically ‘hap’ – means chance, and happiness originally implies something more like luck. ‘Happiness’ is not something to be sought after but to be ‘now attained even in the midst of pain and trouble’ (Dewey, 1983, p. 182). Because of this uncertain nature of existence, and in order to mitigate the instability of life, human beings have been in search of ‘stability’ and ‘assurance’. It is this very ‘precarious nature of existence’, Dewey says, that is a condition of the ideal, the regular, and the assured (Dewey 1981, p. 58). In order to adventure into ‘genuine uncertainty’, the releasing of the power of impulse, the source of novelty, is crucial. In Dewey’s educational attempt to go beyond the ‘Either-Or’ of freedom and control, he takes chance to be the crucial element in the renovation of culture; and taking a chance, the moment of the leap, is at the heart of his experimentalism and philosophy for action. ‘[P]rogress is a present reconstructing’ (Dewey 1983, p. 195); and ‘Perfection means perfecting, fulfillment, fulfilling, and the good is now or never’ (p. 200). In this antifoudnationalist thought, there is a sense of taking a risk, being on an edge, always on the way.

It is Dewey’s later aesthetic writings that communicate illustratively and vividly, if indirectly, the implications of his metaphysics of chance for education and more generally for cultural criticism. In Art as Experience (1934), Dewey presents the idea of art and aesthetic experience as being in continuity with ‘normal processes of living’ (Dewey 1987, p. 16). Aesthetic experience is not a property of professional artists, but is at the heart of human experience.

There are some distinctive characteristics here. First, Dewey characterizes aesthetic experience as involving ‘happiness and delight’, related to a ‘fulfillment that reaches to the depth of our being’ (p. 23). Art has to do with the ‘intensity’ and immediacy of the moment, of ‘what now is’ (p. 24), and the experience of ‘direct seizure’ (p. 150). Here Dewey highlights the role of a receptive dimension of experience typified in ‘esthetic surrender’ (pp. 35, 51, 108). We find ourselves by ‘forgetting ourselves’ (P. 110). All of this requires the interrelated working of perception, which is to be understood as ‘an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not withholding of energy’ (p. 60).

Second, we can find in Dewey’s aesthetic theory his idea of growth – growth without fixed ends. Aesthetic experience is ‘the ever-recurring cycles of growth’ (p. 152):
Between the poles of aimlessness and mechanical efficiency, there lie those courses of action in which through successive deeds there runs a sense of growing conserved and accumulating toward an end that is felt as accomplishment of a process. (p. 45)

Creation without a preset goal does not mean the abrogation of an end: it is a reconfiguration of the idea of an end, as continuously reoriented and revised as we go. He writes: ‘The real work of an artist is to build up an experience that is coherent in perception while moving with constant change in its development’ (p. 57); and ‘Plans grew as the building grew’ (p. 58). This evokes a process of ‘continuing perfecting’ (p. 177). Dewey expresses the sense of being on the ‘growing edge of things’ (p. 149), where the artist is a forerunner who carries forward a new vision. From time to time, Dewey describes the moment of what might be called being on a threshold in the ‘twilight’ (p. 198), where ‘ordinary boundaries are transformed into invitations to proceed’ (p. 213). When an aesthetic experience comes to a closure, this is not its final end but is an ‘inclusive and fulfilling close’ with the anticipation of a new horizon ahead’ (p. 62). Exposing oneself to this ongoing movement is the condition of attaining ‘consistency’ and ‘security’ (p. 63).

Third, in Dewey’s aesthetic theory, although an emphasis is put on ‘personal perception’ (p. 157), aesthetic experience is understood not as limited to the individual experience of the artist, but as extending into ‘a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity’ (p. 87). And again, this is not a closed whole but ‘an expanded whole’ (p. 171). As is typical of pragmatism (his own and that of William James), Dewey’s whole is a unity with diversity (p. 184). In this whole, the term ‘egotism’ does not work, and we are ‘citizens of this vast world beyond ourselves’ (p. 199).

This takes us to the fourth point: aesthetic perception as the precondition of social and cultural criticism. Discussing the significance of criticism from within tradition and convention, Dewey highlights the role of aesthetic judgment as social and cultural criticism. ‘Better criteria are to be set forth by an improved examination of the nature of works of art in general as a mode of human experience’ (p. 313). Unlike his typical emphasis on social intelligence, Dewey reminds us in aesthetics of the significance of ‘a bias, a predilection’ as the origin of social and cultural criticism, and encourages us not to surrender ‘the instinctive preference’ (p. 327). And then he touches upon the necessity of the cultivation of aesthetic perception as follows:

The function of criticism is the reeducation of perception of works of art; it is an auxiliary in the process, a difficult process, of learning to see and hear. . . The moral office of criticism is performed indirectly. . . The moral function of art itself is to remove prejudice, do away with the scales that keep the eye from seeing, tear away the veils due to wont and custom, perfect the power to perceive. (p. 328)

The imagination typically exercised by an artist is the ‘precursor of the changes’ (p. 348). Through the power of ‘imaginative projection’ and as ‘the moral prophets of humanity’, poets become ‘the founders of civil society’ (p. 350).

In Construction and Criticism (1929) Dewey discusses the way that construction and reconstruction require criticism, hinting at a subtle dynamism between the inheritance of tradition and innovation through criticism (Dewey 1984). If cultural criticism necessitates imagination and aesthetic taste, then what matters is how such moment of change is produced: by standing on a threshold, by staking oneself to the realm that is yet to come. It is here that the element of chance is crucial. In ‘Time and Individuality’ (1938), Dewey refers to the very moment of ‘discontinuity’ when something new is produced (Dewey 1988). It is only through subjecting oneself to chance that such a moment arrives. Thus, Dewey’s aesthetic work and other later writings help us see again the dynamism between tradition and
innovation, beyond freedom and control, and they point to the education of aesthetic perception as a key to cultural criticism.

It is salutary to look at Dewey’s aesthetic theory in relation to the establishment of a particular educational institution that took his theory as its guiding principle. Dewey’s educational thought is typically associated with the schooling of children, and hence its significance is seen in teacher education. Its pertinence to education in liberal arts institutions remains very much to be explored. One such example is the notable Black Mountain College (1933–1957), a liberal arts college in North Carolina whose practice was supported by, and exemplified by the attitudes of, such modernist artists as John Cage and Robert Motherwell. For the elite education of artists, especially in a context dominated by modern art such as Black Mountain College, the issue of excessive freedom should always be a matter of concern. The emphasis on experiment and innovation in modern art puts under peculiar pressure the implications of Dewey’s ideas of chance as the element of creativity and of aesthetic education as developing the ability of conducting cultural criticism. Here, in an especially acute way, the problem of determining ‘criteria’ through which to exercise aesthetic judgment inevitably arises as a matter of some controversy. Dewey’s answer would in theory be to follow ‘the principle of continuity’: if growth is the ‘active, participle, growing’, then the criteria of educative experiences should be found in continuing growth, here and now (Dewey 1938, pp. 36, 37). There is reason then, in the face of the real challenge of this example, to test further Dewey’s antifoundationalist affirmation of continuing growth and of chance in aesthetic experience. Can these be revised and reinforced in order to defend his progressive education? In order to address this question we shall need to turn to the related, though significantly different pondering of these matters in Cavell.

III. Cavell and the idea of chance in art

It is Cavell who makes us see again, more thoroughly and elaborately than does Dewey, the implications of chance for our rethinking in education beyond the dichotomy of freedom and control. In an essay on radical experimentation in music and with a sharper focus on what is at stake, here and now, Cavell invites the reader to consider a dimension of aesthetic experience in which taking a chance is not simply a matter of adventuring into uncertainty. Through his antifoundationalist view on cultural reconstruction, Cavell points towards the role of aesthetic judgment in cultural criticism.

Cavell on chance and composition

For Cavell, philosophy and art are inseparable from the human endeavor of creation. Like that of Dewey, his general position on art can be understood in terms of ‘art as experience’. It is here that the idea of chance is crucial. In an early essay, ‘Music Discomposed’, he writes of ‘composition, improvisation, and chance’ (Cavell 1976, p. 193). Cavell’s idea of chance is illustrated in his take on modernism in music, especially with reference to the radical innovations introduced by Arnold Schoenberg. This is brought into focus especially through an examination of Ernst Krenek’s critical discussion of inspiration in his 1960 essay ‘Extents and Limits of Serial Techniques’. As a ‘faithful disciple of Schoenberg’ and ‘an important spokesman for total organization’, in Cavell’s words (p. 195), Krenek tries to overcome the dichotomy of tradition, history and copying, on one hand, and inspiration, on the other hand. How to be released from the ghost of the past (which returns in the form of ‘recollection, tradition, training, and experience’) – how to overcome it has been the problem of modernism (ibid.). It is here that Krenek, following Schoenberg, makes a radical move with the introduction of the idea of total structure. In that total structure, Krenek claims, ‘[t]he unexpected happens by necessity. The surprise is built in’ (Krenek quoted by Cavell 1976, p. 195).

In response to the new music, Cavell is suspicious both of responses that cling to traditional values and of unquestioning commitment to innovation, both of which become ideological, closing down the responsibility of critical judgment. He is critical of Krenek’s distrust of
inspiration and submission to the total organization of formal tonal structure and principle: ‘In denying tradition, Krenek is a Romantic, but with no respect or hope for the individual’s resources; and in the reliance on rules, he is a Classicist, but with no respect or hope for his culture’s inventory of conventions’ (Cavell 1976, p. 196). Here it should be noted that Cavell uses the term, ‘resources’, not ‘sources’. A source might suggest a pure origin of inspiration, a well-spring, whereas resource, a reworking of source materials smacks of Heidegger’s ‘standing-reserve’. Yet for Cavell there is no firsts, no absolute beginnings: sources are rather constantly being renewed. Hence, continual exploration or unfolding is internal to music, and this is a pattern of inquiry within composition.

It is the idea of chance – or, to put it more precisely, the taking of chances (p. 199) – that Cavell thinks, plays a crucial role here. Chance is a part of the life we ordinary live. Human life cannot be put total planned. Contingency is the nature not only of art, but also of our thought in general. He writes:

> Within the world of art one makes one’s own dangers, takes one’s own chances. . . And within this world one takes and exploits these chances, finding, through danger, an unsuspected security. . . Within it, also, the means of achieving one’s purposes cannot lie at hand, ready made. The means themselves are inevitably to be fashioned for that danger, and for that release. . . The way one escapes or succeeds is, in art, as important as the success itself. (ibid.)

Pointing to a way beyond the dichotomy of absolute structure and pure chance, Cavell’s idea of chance is close to Dewey’s. Cavell, however, puts a sharper focus on the sense that it is ‘you’ who has a responsibility to take the chance: that ‘the chances you take are your own’, that ‘every risk must be shown worthwhile’ and that you are marked by ‘the fate of being accountable for every thing you do and are’ (ibid.,). Here is a poignant sense of taking a risk, or in taking a better chance, Cavell highlights the significant role of taste – taste in aesthetic judgment, on the part both of artists and their audience, in virtue of its ‘partialness’ (p. 206). It is an illusion to assume that in aesthetic judgment we can close down the significance of taste. Tolstoy underestimates the inevitability of taste: he destroys it, seeking some greater better commonality, the product of our common enlightenment. And again, for us to trust our taste and to express it involves a risk: that we stake ourselves in expression, stake ourselves in what we mean. ‘The task of the modern artist, as of the modern man, is to find something he can be sincere and serious in: something he can mean. And he may not tell at all’ (p. 212). It is this sense of precariousness, of ‘stand[ing] on tiptoe’ (Thoreau 1992, p. 71), that permeates Cavell’s idea of taking a chance.

Cavell’s aesthetic theory is, indeed, inseparable from his ordinary language philosophy: contingency is there at the heart of meaning-making. As in the ‘invocation of chance’, even silence is conditioned by language, by the ‘muse’, as the articulation of the possibility of speaking for one another (Cavell 1976, p. 202). Articulation of the relation to the muse is a condition of human being. Things are not raw data: sound is already interpreted. With reference to the idea of a repetition from within which the occasion of breaking out takes place, Cavell describes a conception of composition in which anything is altered by what happens next. This is what Cavell shows in his idea of the projective nature of words. There
is no way to contain the concatenations and associations of meaning occasioned by words. This is illustrated in the learning of language by a child:

Now take the day, some weeks later, when [the child] smiled at a fur piece, stroked it, and said ‘kitty.’ My first reaction was surprise, and I suppose, disappointment: she doesn’t really know what ‘kitty’ means. But my second reaction was happier: she means by ‘kitty’ what I mean by ‘fur.’ . . . If she had never made such leaps she would never have walked into speech. Having made it, meadows of communication can grow for us. (Cavell 1979, p. 172)

Language learning involves such leaps in meaning-making. But the projective nature of language is not limited to children’s language learning: it continues to be a task assigned to human beings life-long. This resounds with Thoreau’s idea of speaking in ‘extra-vagance’: ‘I desire to speak somewhere without bounds. . . In view of the future or possible, we should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side’ (Thoreau 1992, p. 216). To take up this responsibility is always to risk the rebuff, to risk being not understood, being rejected or dismissed. But to fail to do this is to deny the very possibility of oneself. With this projective nature of meaning-making, taking a risk, making a leap, cannot simply be a matter of making a random choice. Rather it is, against the background of linguistic and cultural practice, to speak in one’s own voice. Without space for these new ‘meadows of communication’, there is no possibility of meaning-making, and hence no hope for education.

Cavell and Cage

Cavell’s idea of chance in music theory and meaning-making is not simply a matter of a reaction to structure. In order to elucidate this point, it is helpful to examine its apparent contiguity with the views of John Cage. Cavell refers to Cage as follows:

In the writing of John Cage, chance is explicitly meant to replace traditional notions of art and composition; the radical ceding of the composer’s control of his material is seen to provide a profounder freedom and perception than mere art, for all its searches, had found. (Cavell 1976, p. 194)

It is difficult to judge only from this remark whether Cavell expresses some affinity with Cage or not, and perhaps it is not Cavell’s intention to make his views explicit here. Still a brief, though indirect, exploration of the potential parallels in this respect may be a means of exposing further the radicalness of Cavell’s idea of chance, and more generally the crucial role that it plays in antifoundationalist American philosophy.

Cage is known as the composer who introduced the idea of ‘chance operations’ into music. Under the influence of Thoreau, especially from the early 1970s (Nicholls 2002, p. 4), he introduced the noises and sounds of daily life into his music, explaining, ‘In contrast to a structure based on the frequency aspect of sound, tonality, that is, this rhythmic structure was as hospitable to non-musical sounds, noises, as it was to those of the conventional scales and instruments’ (Cage 1961, pp. 19-20, quoted in Shultis 2002, p. 28). His famous piece, 4’33” – which is ‘about silence, about finding that silence is not silent, and about learning that the sounds in which we are immersed can be perceived as art’ (Williams 2002, p. 232) – was completed in 1952 at Black Mountain College. The idea of chance operations is characterized by ‘emptiness of purpose’ (Cage 1960, p. 135, quoted in Patterson 2002, p. 89) and absence of goal (Cage 1982/1976, p. 72). He takes the view that the complexity of our life is derived from chance, and hence that we need to give up the idea of dichotomous choice in our thinking (p. 79). Like Cavell, Cage’s introduction of chance into music does not mean the abandonment of structure as a whole. Rather he transcends the dichotomy of contingency and structure, and more broadly of the inheritance and renewal of traditions: his aesthetics is willing to ‘place controlled systems and unpredictable processes side by side’.
for example, in his work, *Music of Changes*, there is an ‘intersection of control and chance’ (Williams 2002, pp. 230, 231). Discussing the ‘affinities between Cage and postmodernism’, Williams locates Cage somewhere between ‘modernist doctrine of structure’ and ‘postmodernist notion of text as something built on contingency’ (pp. 227, 231). He takes the view that some of Cage’s music is ‘so difficult that the violinist is forced to make decisions in order to render the music playable’ (p. 231). This is parallel to Cavell’s idea of meaning-making in that Cage locates the authority of judgment somewhere between the score and the performer (and hence, a reader is freed from ‘the person of the author’ [Cavell 1984, p. 53]) – with the performer being asked to pay close attention to the score, and yet to exercise her own judgment. Similarly, the reader of Cavell’s texts is forced to make difficult choices and to exercise judgment, in a way that is demonstrated in his rereading of Thoreau in his *The Senses of Walden* (1992). Furthermore, just like Dewey and Cavell, it could be said, Cage returns music to the everyday, experimenting with this in the experiment of 4’33” (Williams 2002, pp. 232-233). Noises are in the background of silence: in silence, we hear noise. Williams calls this Cage’s attunement to the idea of ‘art as experience’ (p. 234).

Indeed there are some striking commonalities between Cavell and Cage with regard to their ideas of chance. Gerald L. Bruns’ article ‘Poethics: John Cage and Stanley Cavell at the Crossroads of Ethical Theory’ (1994) is helpful in identifying some undeniable commonalities between the two, and hence in seeing the way that chance is a key to a dimension of thought that exceeds any simple dichotomy between freedom and control. Bruns introduces us to their common ground through Thoreau. In reference to Thoreau’s senses of sound and silence, Bruns points out that for Cage ‘the relationship between music and noise is no longer an aesthetic relation of harmony but (in Cavell’s language) an ethical relation of acknowledgment – music letting sounds be themselves’ (Bruns 1994, p. 214). Bruns also finds commonality between Cage, Cavell, and Heidegger in that they share the view that ‘chance brings openness to mystery down to earth in the form of acceptance’ (p. 215). He quotes from Cage’s statement that ‘we are made perfect by what happens to us rather than by what we do’ (Cage quoted by Bruns 1994, p. 215, my italics). For Cage, to succumb to chance is to accept disturbance and to allow ‘chance to recompose the order and fixity,’ to release us from our mode of grasping and framing (Bruns 1994, p. 216). And yet, exposing ourselves to chance, for Cage, does not mean abrogating the sense of coherence: the music is – ‘not chaotic, not incoherent or unintelligible, but anarchic and unassimilable’ (p. 217). Bruns finds in Cavell’s ordinary language philosophy a parallel to this alternative route to coherence through chance in the view that ‘imp-words’ (as in ‘impulse, impels, impatient, important, impertinent, impossible, imprisoned impressive’) are resuscitated as ‘necessary recurrences’, as ‘noises language makes on its way to being intelligible’ (pp. 219-220). The peculiarly impish quality of these words is realized if one faces up to the fact that the connotations and associations project into new contexts and uses. While the impish quality of words can surprise you, in music you lose yourself in repetition. From within repetition, something new and unanticipated emerges. Just as Cage pays attention to each sound in the noises he hears, Bruns points out, Cavell leads us via Thoreau (or is it that Thoreau comes to us via Cavell?) to a condition where become ‘attuned, open and responsive (responsible), to the sense we do make, taking responsibility for our words’ (p. 220) – where we can live through ‘the accidents of ordinary life’ (p. 221).

Bruns’ examination of the commonality between Cage and Cavell, with its reference to Thoreau, shows us how philosophy, aesthetics, and art join hands in the preconditions of meaning-making, which are inseparable from chance. In their different ways Cage and Cavell confront the question of how it is possible to be engaged in the process of perfection without being constrained by fixed structures. The beginnings of an answer to this question lie in

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1 See Cavell’s discussion of Edgar Allen Poe’s ‘imp of the perverse’ in his *In Quest of the Ordinary* (Cavell 1988, pp. 122-128.)
taking a chance – taking a chance by loosening our grip. Cavell refers to Emerson’s ‘explicit reversal of Kant’ in his picturing of ‘the intellectual hemisphere of knowledge as passive or receptive and the intuitive or instinctive hemisphere as active or spontaneous’ (Cavell 1992, p. 129); it is in this radical overturning of the active and the passive that Cavell and Cage find chance as a source of aesthetic creation.

In contrast with Cavell’s emphasis on aesthetic taste, however, Cage claims that the continuity of music composition is ‘free of individual taste and memory (psychology)’ (Cage 1961, p. 72 quoted in Burns 1994, p. 215). In his reading of Thoreau, Cage seems to puts a stronger focus than Cavell on the forgetting of the ego:

The fifth paragraph of Walden speaks against blind obedience to a blundering oracle. However, chance operations are not mysterious sources of ‘the right answers.’ They are a means of locating a single one among a multiplicity of answers, and at the same time, of freeing the ego from its taste and memory, its concern for profit and power, of silencing the ego so that the rest of the world has a chance to enter into the ego’s own experience whether that be outside or inside. (Cage 1980, p. 5)

The idea of self-abandonment (Cavell 1992, p. 137) is also crucial to Cavell’s replacement of the subject of philosophy and art. Cavell claims that for Emerson and Thoreau, in contrast, say, to Heidegger, ‘the achievement of the human requires not inhabitation and settlement but abandonment, leaving’ (p. 138); and this leaving, the moment of take a leap, requires, on Cavell’s (Thoreau’s) view, one’s trust in taste. ‘Unattachment’ in Walden, Cavell emphasizes, is recorded as ‘interestedness’ (p. 117). Without interest, you take a chance, and interest may be the motive for leaving. What matters to Cavell is how to relocate our interest in our own selves. By contrast, Cage says that his pedagogy includes the teaching of detachment, which he associates with nothingness in Zen (Cage 1982/1976, pp. 75 76). It is beyond the scope of this paper to pursue this potentially radical difference between Cavell and Cage with regard to the state of the self who is taking a chance. And yet, in view of Cage’s later devotion to Asian aesthetics, it is not impossible to guess that here, at least, Cage and Cavell part company.

IV. Taking a chance and finding perfect pitch

How can the antifoundationalist mode of thinking in American philosophy that runs through Dewey and Cavell (and Cage) be translated into education? How can avoid that thinking in terms of freedom and control that was our starting-point? In response, Cavell, more poignantly than Dewey, acknowledges chance in our reengagement with language and culture. To take a chance does not mean to destroy culture, but rather to find culture’s resourcefulness: it is ‘to confront the culture with itself, along the lines in which it meets in me’ (Cavell 1979, p. 125). To take a chance is not to abrogate rules, but to resuscitate the practice of rule-following, in a revision of the criteria for judgment. A Pitch of Philosophy (1994) presents the idea that finding one’s voice is a matter of finding ‘perfect pitch’ (pp. 30, 48) – an attunement of my words with those of culture, and this at each moment. To find the right tone, in the right moment, and through the right medium, is something in which one’s aesthetic judgment is at stake. Aesthetic judgment is the model for the wider role of judgment in our lives, including in our political lives: and hence its development is a task of education, education in the name of cultural criticism.

Cavell highlights the moment of departure, of taking a leap. His Emersonian ‘onward thinking’ (Cavell 1992, p. 135) puts a sharper focus than does Dewey on the critical moment of conversion, on the ‘threshold’ and the ‘crossroads’ (Cavell 1979, p. 19), moving ‘from darkness to light’ (p. 102). This is different from a move ‘from certainty to uncertainty’ (ibid.) In contrast to Dewey whose idea of art and aesthetic experience are permeated by the sense of the whole, Cavell points to separation. Perhaps more consciously than Cage, Cavell encourages us to release our power from within, in the process of finding our own voice, and
this, though paradoxically, by disowning oneself, such that ‘the inmost in due time becomes
the outmost’ (Emerson 2000, p. 132). Our own partiality, our own taste, never dissipates.
Criticism of culture is to be conducted from within, and the test of its success cannot be
known in advance. Yet ‘power seems to be the result of rising, not the cause’ (Cavell 1992,
p. 136).

This is Cavell’s Emersonian perfectionism, goalless and following Emerson’s idea of finding
as founding (Cavell 1990, p. xxxiv). Emersonian perfectionism is ‘a perspective from which it
may be seen 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). There is no absolute new beginning:
we always begin anew, taking a chance. We need to learn to take risks in speaking, where
risk implies not so much adventurous forward movement but rather a humble, receptivity in
action, involving suffering and patience. It requires a transformation in the way we see the
world, hear its sounds and words, in the everyday: to find the unfamiliar, the strange in the
familiar, as Cage prompts in the experiment of 4′33″. To take a chance in this sense is to
destabilize the prevailing discourse of critical thinking, enhancing the possibility of a liberal
education beyond the dichotomy of freedom and control.

Black Mountain College, which styled itself as a Deweyan education in democracy,
conjoining creative arts and practical responsibilities in the development of the intellect,
certainly took its chances, and it became a magnet for experimentation in the arts. But
Cavell’s critique of a commitment to experimentation that becomes ideological, exemplified
in the work of Krenek, helps to reveal the nature of aesthetic judgment and shows something of
what an education in democracy must become.

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Thinking prototypes theory. A complex/simplex paradigm in bioeducational sciences

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Abstract
The history of bioeducational sciences originates from the educational sciences. Anyway, it may be said that the biopedagogia did not take ground in Italy. The actual interaction between pedagogy and biology emerges in 2002, when bioeducational sciences arise and assert themselves in the international area. Bioeducational sciences (BES) are a research line that addresses the issue of mind, brain and education through multifaceted and multiform lens. The entanglement of this interpretation has to deal with the choice of including cultural frameworks for the understanding of the mind and brain relation through an educational approach. Bioeducational sciences has developed over the past ten years in the field of pedagogy. The mission of this research is to build up a field of study that connects pedagogy and advances in the biological sciences and neuroscience in a dialogical way. Bioeducational sciences’s purpose is to study the development of mind in epigenesis from an educational point of view. The current proposals emerging in the direction of an overcoming of the plurality of sciences of education are now rooted in a renewed consideration of pedagogy as an holistic science. This implies a more homogeneous meaning attributed to the scientific nature of pedagogy as a unitary discipline. On this track, bioeducational sciences leads to a scientific interpretation of pedagogy, by considering it a complex science. Epistemological positions on which bioeducational approach is based imply indeed an holistic understanding of the human system. Bioeducational sciences leads also to an interpretation of pedagogy as a simplex science, because it is possible to outline simplicity elements in its architecture. It is possible to relate the simplicity idea to Thinking Prototypes Theory, because this theory explains how the elementary thought may functions through the study of the adaptive potential of implicit learning, at phylogenetic and ontogenetic level. Thinking Prototypes Theory is a possible interpretative paradigm for a wide application in education. At the basis of complex thinking this theory identifies simplex prototypical logical processes being activated in the possible collaboration opportunities between explicit and implicit thinking. So knowledge prototypes would be not entirely implicit, due to their continuous interacting with the explicit. Knowledge prototypes may be considered possible linking patterns in the presupposed intersection between implicit and explicit processing. In this hypothesis, linking patterns may refer to spatial symbolic representations, probably more influenced by the implicit dimension of knowledge, even if spatial thought can imply both the activation of implicit and explicit processing. According to bioeducational sciences adaptive knowledge can be either explicit or implicit, and implicit learning has an evolutive value which is expressed throughout life. Adaptation builds a continuous link between ontogeny and phylogeny that can be well represented by adaptive processes in epigenesis. This is particularly relevant as regards the dynamics of the relationship between implicit and explicit. Cognitive behavior of each student is complex and may be correlated to a plurality of aspects divided into a multiplicity of levels. The simplex role played by the implicit mind in the construction of knowledge identities cannot be then overlooked, and it influences bioeducational adaptive learning environments design.

Bioeducational sciences in educational research
The history of bioeducational sciences originates from the educational sciences, whose initial configuration was the publication in 1953 of the volume La pedagogia come scienza of De Bartolomeis (De Bartolomeis, 1953). However, the idea that education could be a “practical theory” – attentive to the processes of development – had already been expressed by Durkheim in 1911 (Durkheim, 1911). In 1929 Dewey loomed a possible link
between pedagogy and biology, to be considered as a possible source for a science of education (Dewey, 1929). In the mid-twentieth century the possibility to relate biology and pedagogy seemed to be based only on the transfer of the results of the experimental data from one area to another. In the meanwhile the perception of a felt need to relate the two disciplines runs along the entire second half of the twentieth century, without finding an explicit solution up to the eighties.


Anyway, it may be said that the biopedagogia does not actually take ground in Italy (Santoianni, 2006b). In the thought of Laporta emerges – particularly in Educazione e scienza empirica of 1980 – an indication of a pedagogy as paidetica. This is an empirical science of education (Laporta, 1980) that identifies some basic concepts to outline a possible link between biology and pedagogy. For instance, the idea of freedom as a distinctive feature of the development of living, which is expressed in the volume L’assoluto pedagogico of 1996 (Laporta, 1996). According to this view, the theory of Elisa Frauenfelder states since 1983 – in the volume La prospettiva educativa tra biologia e cultura – that there is no bios without logos, and that they may interact. The aim to approach pedagogy to biology may be achieved only in a non-reductionist way, by framing the issues of nature in the wider cultural contextuality (Frauenfelder, 1983, 1994-2000). Nevertheless this theory does not represent yet a “bioeducational” approach.

The actual interaction between pedagogy and biology will emerge in 2002, when bioeducational sciences arise and assert themselves in the international area. Bioeducational sciences (BES) are a research line that addresses the issue of mind, brain and education through multifaceted and multiform lens. The entanglement of this interpretation has to deal with the choice of including cultural frameworks for the understanding of the mind and brain relation through an educational approach. Bioeducational sciences has developed over the past ten years in the field of pedagogy (Frauenfelder, Santoianni, 2002-2003; Santoianni, 2003). The mission of this research is to build up a field of study that connects (Santoianni, 2004) pedagogy and advances in the biological sciences and neuroscience in a dialogical way. Bioeducational sciences’ purpose is to study the development of mind in epigenesis from an educational point of view (Santoianni, 2006a).

Bioeducational sciences promote three integrated research perspectives – epigenetic, biodynamic, and synergic (Santoianni, 2003, 2004). These deepen through an interactionist approach the intertwined relationship between the individual, the adaptive system, and the knowledge society. This intertwining reveals a significative correlation between body and environment and vice versa. They are to be both intended as reciprocally interdependent organisms, which links may strengthen their mutual cooperation (Damasio, 1996). Conceptual cores of bioeducational sciences involve the development of cognitive identity as a situated subjectivity (Kirshner, Whitson, 1997; Clancey, 1997) with a biological idiosyncratic significance (Boncinelli, 1999, 2001; Lewontin, 1998; Gottlieb, 2002) in the specific interactions (Rogoff, 2003) of cognitive domains (Hirschfeld, Gelman, 1994). According to this view, bioeducational sciences propose a consideration of the individual as a whole, i.e. an entanglement of cognitive, affective-emotional and perceptive aspects (Santoianni, 2007a).

**A complex/simplex paradigm in scientific pedagogy**

The current proposals emerging in the direction of an overcoming of the plurality of sciences
of education are now rooted in a renewed consideration of pedagogy as an holistic science (Cambi, 2006; Orefice, 2006; Santoiani, 2007b). Epistemological positions on which bioeducational approach is based imply an holistic understanding of the human system. On this line, bioeducational approach leads to a scientific interpretation of pedagogy by considering it a complex science\(^1\).

Bioeducational sciences may be indeed defined as a field of research characterized by complexity. According to this view, a renewed consideration of pedagogy as a science is focused on situativity, contingency and socio-cultural relativity\(^2\). The concept of educability (Santoiani, 2006a) is in effect a complex one because it concerns the premise of educational processes and the potential of educating, the conditions of modifiability of individuals and the dynamic contextual interactions – in other words the criteria for adaptive development. The education of a subject needs to focus on her/his educability. This focusing contributes to dispel some myths, i.e. traditional contrapositions such as emotional dimension versus cognitive processing, perception versus higher processing, explicit versus implicit, ... . In the same way educability discusses some possible lacking integrations, as learning processes and knowledge structures, individuality and collectivity, biological and cultural evolution, ... .

Bioeducational sciences leads also to an interpretation of pedagogy as a simplex science, because it is possible to outline simplicity elements in its architecture. According to the Theory of Simplexity (Berthoz, 2011), even if innovation can only come from complexity, it necessarily entails a spatial and temporal, original and innovative, order which is proper of simplicity. As Berthoz writes, simplicity is a property of living organisms which find solutions to solve complex problems through mechanisms that are not simple, but simplex. Evolution has solved the complexity by decomposing the problems. The simplicity is then rooted in a rich combination of simple rules.

Theory of Simplexity – intended as focusing on phylogenetic properties of living organisms – find the potential of human development in the search of widely shared adaptive solutions, which matrix seems to be, indeed, simple. The different, multifaceted and plural, combination of simple rules may then generate complex formulations, which decipherability lies in the possibility of tracing back to the simplex elements that originally have constituted it. These elements have in this hypothesis a considerable adaptive significance, as they represent a possible evolutionary response to the demands of the environment. Simplexity can be recognized as a biological potential ruled by the needs of the living species to survive in

\(^1\) In the second half of the last century the "crisis" of the idea of science has challenged the concepts of analysis, observation, unity of methods, and linear development. This has been achieved through a plurality of interpretations that returned a problematic and complex image of science, focused on uncertainty, instability, disorder, diversity, evolution, and situativity (Fornaca, Sante Di Pol, 1981; Bocchi, Ceruti, 1985; Cambi, 1991; Resnick, 1994; Cavalli Sforza, 2004). As a result of the problematization of science and of the criticism of its infallibility – operated by Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Feyerabend – the traditional "principles of intelligibility" of classical science (a consideration of science as causal, linear, deterministic, a-contextual, observer-independent, objective, logical) have been discussed (Santoiani, 2007b). The paradigm of complexity (Morin, 1993), who "holds" many elements – facts, actions, feedbacks, decisions – and their possible correlations seems to be significantly representative of the nature of the pedagogical discipline, that involves uncertainty, variability, and plurality (De Mennato, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Pedagogy may be then intended as a complex, and not systemic, science.

\(^2\) The principle of a paradigm of complexity would consist in the idea that science is interpreted as contingent, historical and, in this sense, irreversible. Science is then viewed as holistic, and it means that its structure is not simply attributable to the global connection of all its parts. Science is subjected to inter-relations, inter-feedback, re-orientations in the framework of an overall capacity of system self-organization.
different contexts.

It is possible to relate the simplicity idea to Thinking Prototypes Theory (Santoianni, 2009, 2011), because this theory explains how the elementary thought may function through the study of the adaptive potential of implicit learning, at phylogenetic and ontogenetic level. According to Thinking Prototypes Theory, prototypical implicit processing may be considered as an entanglement of simplex functions that operates synergically to their explicit expression. Thus it is justified the use of simple elements in the structuring of complex thought. This means that a combination of several simple elements can produce complexity in reticular and aggregative ways without having as a consequence the intrinsic evolution of each element of the combination itself.

May be it possible to envisage some common points of contact between Theory of Simplexity and Thinking Prototypes Theory. In the Theory of Simplexity there is a significant reference to spatiality, intended as a principle of simplification which tends to decrease complexity, while in the Thinking Prototypes Theory spatiality is a representational linking format between implicit and explicit. In this theory the invariant elements – consisting of the implicit codes – and the variable elements, represented by the multiplicity of the explicit, find their meeting point in spatiality as a representational format of transition. In this case the spatiality facilitates the cognitive response because it represents a shared element with connecting functions.

Another aspect of Theory of Simplexity, closely linked to the adaptive potential of simplex elements, concerns the recurrence of similar or even identical patterns with specific functions in different organisms. The spatiality may be indeed interpreted as a generator of common codes. In the Thinking Prototypes Theory, the factors of generalizability of the implicit level – inherent its own nature of cognitive level primary and adaptive – affect its transversal presence among several individuals in a continuous and often shareable way. However, as it has been already said, the recurrence of a simple element, its repetition and its composing within structuring of greater complexity does not necessarily imply its own change from simple to complex.

The spatial organization in both theories would seem therefore to be responsible of the mental handling of space and of the ability of mind of structuring concepts. This latter aspect is particularly important because it focuses on the possible link between space and conceptualization that emerges from the Thinking Prototypes Theory.

**Thinking Prototypes Theory and the implicit turn**

Thinking Prototypes Theory (Santoianni, 2009, 2011) is a possible interpretative paradigm for a wide application in education. At the basis of complex thinking, this theory identifies logical processes simplex and prototypical. These are activated in the possible collaboration opportunities between explicit and implicit thinking. So knowledge prototypes would be not entirely implicit, due to their continuous interacting with the explicit. Knowledge prototypes may be considered possible linking patterns in the presupposed intersection between implicit and explicit processing. They may be considered as ‘linking nodes’ of knowledge approaches, shareable as cognitive and generalizable organizing criteria. In this hypothesis, linking patterns may refer to spatial symbolic representations, probably more influenced by the implicit dimension of knowledge – even if spatial thought can imply both the activation of implicit and explicit processing (Chun, Jiang, 1998; Lleras, Von Mühlenen, 2004; Haun, Allen, Wedell, 2005).

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3 Thinking Prototypes Theory anyway is clearly related to implicit thinking while Theory of Simplexity is modular. In Fodor’s Theory (Fodor, 1988) modules are rapid, while implicit thinking is considered, in itself, a slow process.
According to Thinking Prototypes Theory, the construction of explicit knowledge develops in a related way to functional patterns connected with the implicit level. These patterns play the role of prototype models and are supposed to be competences shared by the development of both linguistic and mathematical thinking. Prototype models can be systematized into 3 classes (union, separation and correlation) made up of 2 logical functions each (add integration, chain sequentiality; each identification, compare comparison; focus inference, link correlation). The logical relations regulating the prototypical structuring of concepts can be categorized as thinking prototypical processing – underlying different cognitive areas – and may have a specific spatial expression.

In this hypothesis, implicit processing may consist of a prototype, i.e. a model acting as cognitive antecedent in the primary evolutive stages of development and in any learning situation. The process of collaboration between explicit and implicit does not have only a role in the early stages of cognitive development, but it remains available for activation also in the following course of development, as a default level always in a possible interaction with explicit processing (Reber, 1993). Then implicit processes may play a default role in every phase of the interpretation of reality. The activation of the implicit component together with explicit processing could occur on demand, that is when required based on specific learning situations. The hypothesis of implicit processing as a cognitive antecedent of explicit processing – in any phase of cognitive development and without the need to become explicit – could be justified by the adaptive nature of the implicit dimension itself.

According to bioeducational sciences adaptive knowledge can be either explicit or implicit, and the implicit learning (Stadler, Frensch, 1998) has an evolutive value which is expressed throughout life (Meltzoff, Prinz, 2002). Adaptation builds a continuous link between ontogeny and phylogeny that can be well represented by processes in epigenesis. This is particularly relevant as regards the dynamics of the relationship between implicit and explicit (Santoianni, 2010).

According to an evolutive model of implicit learning in phylogenesis this process would be characterized by unaware, nonverbal and prototypical processing, especially in the early stages of development when it is prevailing. Implicit learning would be the oldest form of learning, prior to the acquisition of the awareness typical of explicit communication acquired in phylogenesis. I.e. a process ‘at the root’ of the behavioral adaptive repertoire of every organism, constantly present in cognitive processing with specific functioning patterns (Kelso, 1995) which maintain its prototypical qualities in ontogenesis. Moreover, implicit learning may be interpreted as a form of highly specific knowledge (Frensch, Rünger, 2003) representing the structure of the environment, which can produce basic knowledge and for this reason can be used adaptively to solve problems and make decisions concerning new stimulating situations (Reber, 1989).

According to studies on parallel and distributed multiple memory systems, implicit or nondeclarative memory includes motor skill learning, perceptual and cognitive skills, adaptation-level effects, habits, simple forms of conditioning, and the phenomenon of priming. These studies localize implicit memory as depending variously on the striatum, cerebellum, amygdala, and neocortex (Reber, Squire, 1994). Neural components related to the automatic activation and regulation of implicit attitudes are identified in amygdala, the anterior cingulate and dorsolateral prefrontal cortices (Stanley, Phelps, Banaji, 2008).

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4 This systematization into classes wishes to be an experimental hypothesis, dynamic and revisable, which is based on an inductive analysis of Italian language and is liable to change depending on the various linguistic matrices.
In conclusion, the untraditional perspective that correlates explicit and implicit thinking can be referred to the gradual changing of the interpretative paradigm of the mind. The view of a situated, embodied mind (Clancey, 1997; Kirshner, Whiston, 1997, Anderson, 2007) – encompassing the concepts of non-linearity – can consequently also contemplate the presence of a non-traditional type of learning, such as implicit learning (Santoianni, 2007a). Implicit learning is to be now intended as an integral part of the situated, embodied mind: while having its own peculiar specificity, it is no longer foreign to the mind but it is inside the mind. Hence the problem becomes to justify the presence of implicit processes in relation to explicit processing – work in progress in education is now in search of an interpretative paradigm bringing together both dimensions.

**A complex/simplex approach to apply bioeducational sciences to education**

Cognitive behavior of each student is complex and may be then correlated to a plurality of aspects divided into a multiplicity of levels. In particular, we should be aware of the perceptual, processing and meta-reflective levels. The perceptual level refers to the ways in which information may access the cognitive system and is bound to individual perceptual preferences. The processing level concerns the ways in which the cognitive system selects and organizes the information. The meta-reflective level is the area of monitoring and management control of the cognitive system. These three levels relate clearly to explicit knowledge.

The implicit mind is instead still to discover. Also in this field of research it is possible to distinguish different levels, at least perceptual and sensory-motor. The processing level of the implicit mind is a much discussed topic. Theories of mind, theory theory, tacit knowledge and folk theories have attempted to explain the phenomenon of the development of ideas, theories and implicit concepts (Wellman, Gelman, 1997). These contents of knowledge would develop in a non-conscious way but subsequently would become aware (Hacker, Dunlosky, Graesser, 1998).

Anyway there is a research question that has not yet had a response, and may promote future research in the field. The question is: has the mind an implicit own processing level, not likely to become explicit? The cognitive construction of each student takes shape in the dynamic, synergic, and developmental interaction of the cognitive prism, in the learning personal history. In this sense, the simplex role played by the implicit mind in the construction of knowledge identities cannot be overlooked.

**On bioeducational adaptive learning environments design**

Educational processes may be heterogeneous, discontinuous and variable, even though they take place in pre-set environments. It is important to constantly consider the possibility of de-structuring, rethinking and re-designing learning environments. Knowledge processes are indeed not predictable (Santoianni, 2006a), depend on experience and maintain developmental and adaptive characters (Borghi, Iachini, 2002).

Also in the teaching and learning relationship there is no predictability, and so it is not possible to predict how knowledge processes will go on. Bruner (1996) advises against what he calls well-formedness, a shared way to pre-structure education suggested by the computational paradigm. Such unpredictability is reinforced by the continuous shift between individual understanding and collective representations, which contributes to trigger its dynamic nature.

The aspects which may define a learning environment as adaptive should be then summarised by these two crucial points: the dynamic nature of cognition, its unpredictability and its correlative role between individual and social. These aspects are to be considered in educational learning environments design and has to be linked to implicit learning research.
A bioeducational adaptive learning environment should be embodied (Anderson, 2007) and should involve the cognitive and emotional dimensions of thought (Orefice, 2001, 2003), both the explicit and implicit activation of knowledge, the conceptual and, at the same time, perceptual processing of information.

Mind education emerges from adaptive processes in which each cognitive system is expressed in its entirety. Modifiability terms of educational relations depend on contextual dynamic interaction that define from time to time adaptation between individual development and educational environments. Developmental pedagogy studies educational processes premises and opportunities, such as educability (Santoianni, 2010).

Learning environments, therefore, should be open and reproductive, self-generating, dynamic and developmental. Educational processes should let subjects interact with the learning environment in a monitored and self-oriented fashion, guided by explicit knowledge models and implicit knowledge strategies. Each context can be considered adaptive if what happens in it is not predictable, but to develop an educational adaptive learning environment the interaction between individual and environment must be reciprocal.

That is not only individual has to adapt to environment but also environment has to meet with individual. An educational learning environment copes with unpredictability of each adaptive situated interaction and with educational relation reciprocity – that is its modifiability and continuous “oscillation” of management control between system and user.

If knowledge can appear as an adaptive process, then also the educator’s role should. In this respect, his/her point of view should be situated, in order to be adaptive. This means it should be within the learning situation and evolve with it, constantly re-thinking the projects’ paths and modifying them if necessary. Mutual interactions cause the learning subject’s point of view to become situated and embodied, because knowledge understanding and representation processes can be of a correlative, and not only “cumulative” nature – correlation of more ideas, theories and concepts, both personal and interpersonal. Even more importantly, these processes appear to be dynamic and constantly evolving (Santoianni, 2003).

An adaptive learning environment is "open" to what surrounds it, to relations and experiences; it is "situated" in current knowledge society. For instance, this involves a necessary reference to pedagogy and technology possible relationship. Through focusing on interactive learning models like Adaptive Web Systems, student is involved in an adaptive relation of reciprocal transformation in which interaction range varies from full system-control to full student-control. This type of relation is implemented on line but may be transferred and generalized off line (Santoianni, 2010).

Educability implies that individuals become more and more competent, not only in responding to the environment, but also in constructing the environment, in evolving with it and in defining their own development objectives each time. An adaptive learning environment, in the perspective of bioeducational sciences, is an environment which fosters a competent, embodied, explicit and implicit approach, which the learning system constructs over time, dynamically and evolutionally.

Work in progress
Educational approaches sustain from a general point of view the educational processes, whether they are configured as long term achievements, as the education of the intellectual and social growth of the young, or the same educational processes are setup as short term goals, as adaptive learning environments design. The interlacement of several research paths shows in bioeducational sciences their own applicable implications: if we want the research to be of high quality, effective and productive for the Italian context, we have also to
think that the disciplines as education/philosophy, neuroscience, and the design of learning environments, cannot be isolated from the debate about education, but indeed they constitute nowadays an inescapable point of reference.

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New educational landscape and philosophy of education

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Abstract.
The author analyzes the state of today's educational landscape in close connection with the social, natural and technogenic conditions and justifies the necessity of a new approach to reflection on education as a process of person's gaining conscious self-sufficiency, independence and freedom in his/her tolerant, equitable and harmonious interaction with society and nature. The main attention is paid to the crisis state of society and education, the directions of overcoming the crisis through the development of education and its philosophical reflection. In the article there are substantiated the basic principles of modern philosophy of education and its development up to the global level: it should be developed on the basis of a modern ideological paradigm, provide reflection on education in the unity of the traditional and electronic educational spaces, substantiate a new goal orientation of education, differentiate education according to the new directions of pedagogy, etc. It is emphasized that the modern philosophical foundations of education are called to ensure its readiness to adequately respond to new challenges of modern time. Such response is provided by the transition of education from the linear to the network model, from reproduction of knowledge to the "production of new knowledge ", from the principle of "education for the entire life" to the principle of "education through life ". The ultimate goal is the formation of the responsible, moral, critically thinking individual with high innovative culture, the person included in the past, present and future culture of humanity.

Introduction
"The landscape of education" is understood by us as an educational space together with its technologies, communications and self-organization, as a field of interaction between all subjects of education which realize educational practices through the technologies at their disposal. The necessity of a new approach to reflection on education, its philosophical reinterpretation is conditioned by the increasing role of philosophical knowledge and the upbringing- and worldview-related components in the education of the person. This is connected with the further deepening of globalization and informatization, the crisis of the traditional foundations and principles of education, the development of pedagogical theory and practice in the conditions of nonlinear, variable, accelerated and crisis-like social development. Today there are required joint efforts of philosophers, philosophical schools and movements together with the representatives of other sciences, their productive communication in order to provide up-to-date reflection on education in the conditions of its changed landscape. At the turn of the century, a search was initiated for the new foundations of education [1]; and in today's Russia this problem is being actively discussed in the press (in the publications by V.M. Rosin, S.K. Buldakov, B.S. Gershunsky, E.N. Gusinsky, O. Dolzenko, V.P. Kaznacheev, N.S. Ladyzhets, N.V.Nalivayko, N.K. Pechenin, N.S. Rozov, L.A. Stepashko, Yu.I. Turchaninov, L.D. Filippov, etc.)

Let us briefly describe the main factors contributing to the changes in the educational landscape and its reflection. The accelerated, turbulent and unpredictable character of social development requires timely reconsideration of social values and priorities, taking into account the ongoing and expected changes. The rate of development of society and updating of information is so high that the life experience and knowledge of the older generation, including parents and teachers, no longer function as a reliable foundation for understanding the present and predicting the future. The person has no time to reflect on the causes and possible consequences of the changes occurring in the world; and this gives rise to uncertainty in his/her behavior and the fear of the future. One of the most complex
problems of modern education is the problem of human being in the rapidly changing world, the issues of advanced education (A. D. Ursul), continuity of learning throughout life.

No less important factor is the modern crisis of civilization. The society is increasingly losing its inertia and stability, experiences difficulties withstand the informational and physical pressures, descends deeper and deeper down into a critical region of change of civilizations. Of course, history does not have to seek our approval of the events that happened, and it is not to blame for how it is realized. However, according to the current predictions, the XXI-st century will be the century of sunset of the old geopolitical era, the formation of a new civilization or the death of civilization as such. The flourishing of the “consumer” society at the expense of depleting nature, certain regions and peoples, due to virtual assets and financial “bubbles” is nearing its end. The possibility of ending of the human history (caused by the very activities of the human beings) and the destruction of humanity really exists as a consequence of the excessive technological pressure on the planet, or as a result of actions of the destructive forces, a global solution by force of the antagonistic contradictions.

The destructive forces are rooted in the presence of “order” and “chaos” in the human nature (violence, murder, terrorism, drugs, corruption, etc.), as well as in the antagonism of social relations of the modern world, destructive actions of the subjects of global politics (desire for a unipolar world, establishment of a world order according to a certain “image and likeness”, hegemonism, separatism, unleashing of wars and international conflicts). Philosophy and science are not yet active enough in studying the problems of destruction and formation of the value systems and mechanisms for its neutralization (the only large-scale work on this problem is the book by Erich Fromm "Anatomy of human destructiveness"). Since both of these risks and the destructive factors really exist and are known to people, only one option is left: to discover ways and means to neutralize these threats through the development of science and education.

There is no alternative to the reduction of technetronic onslaught on the planet, including through the adoption of drastic restrictions on consumption, whether under the influence of beliefs or through the adoption of more rigid standards. However, no restrictions can stop the technological progress or, at least, bring together the speed of the biological, social and technological evolutions. Even today we are facing the depletion of natural resources, lack of fresh water, an increase of the number of man-made disasters and so on. Financially, the damage to the environment from the human onslaught on the environment has already reached more than $2 trillion per year and continues to grow faster than the gross world product. The concept of “sustainable development” does not change this, because it ignores the fact that the consumer society and ecological safety are not compatible in principle. In V. I. Vernadsky’s works on noosphere (“The Russian intelligentsia and the new Russia”, etc.), we can see the idea of saving the life on Earth through the mental control of the course of history, universal adoption of the principles of humanism and justice, through uplifting the human being and mankind to the level of intelligent understanding of the relationship with nature. This transformation involves purification of the spirit from the evil of boundless consumerism, rehabilitation of the humanistic essence of education [See: 2, p. 73-77]. Unfortunately, Vernadsky’s ideas about noosphere has been put into practice no more than halfway.

The influence of social conditions and systemic crisis of civilization on education and its reflection is manifested in several aspects. First, the problem of survival of humanity has now become not only a subject of scientific analysis and practical political actions, but also a complex subject of philosophy of education, the most important concern of educational practice related to constructing an image of the future. The learners are to understand the possibility and necessity of optimal forecasting and designing the future. In human learning, the role of philosophical knowledge, its epistemological component is increasing. In the introduction to the book “The social construction of reality” by Berger and Luckmann, E. D.
Rutkevich formulates the main theme of their work: “... how the human being creates social reality and how this reality creates the human being ...” [3, p.4]. The phenomenological sociology of knowledge, the authors of the book being among its adherents, not so much focuses on the study of specialized forms of knowledge such as science, but on the “everyday knowledge”, the reality of the “life world” preceding any theoretical system [3, p.4]. To teach the youth to adequately evaluate the past and the present from the positions of today’s values, to analyze the key factors of social changes and the possible consequences of their impact on the development of society, to envision and construct the future, to create new social reality – these are highly important tasks of education. In the West, this problem has been recognized from the end of the last century, some approaches to its solution have been outlined. The Russian education has also started to recognize this problem [4] and began its solving through the introduction of a new academic discipline, the “project activity”, the studying of which fosters mastering the skills of creating ideal structures and modeling the social processes.

Secondly, the total crisis of society poses before education an urgent task of ensuring the priority of its worldview-related and upbringing functions in the hierarchy of educational objectives. Already in the ancient times, Plato noted that it is exactly upbringing that provides either the Good or its opposite. Transformation of knowledge into the main source of value and into the social capital has contributed to absolutization of the social and state significance of education and underestimation of its personal value. On the agenda today there is put an issue of overcoming the market-conditioned deformation of the person, which, according to Herbert Marcuse, has been turned into “one-dimensional being”, and of strengthening the orientation of educational process towards the personality development, formation of the freedom of spirit (John Dewey).

Rapid spiritual degradation of the society and the person can be surely considered as a global problem of our time. Aggravation of inter-ethnic, territorial and regional conflicts, the growth of political extremism and religious fanaticism, anti-social behavior of people are the results of not only deepening of the economic and political contradictions, but also a consequence of neglecting the “spiritual education”. We are increasingly beginning to realize that without the true intelligentsia, without high culture and spirituality of the country there cannot be any decent future. It is no coincidence that among the 100 major issues of concern for the Russian people, the first two places are occupied by the questions: “who is the chief thief among the corrupt officials” and “where is Russia going” [5, p.3]. One can credibly argue that these issues are of concern not only for Russians. It is known that in most communities, together with the values, ideals and symbols that are fundamental for an ethnic group, nation or state (they are often sacred), there have been adopted the Western (“the culture of absolute freedom”) and the Eastern (“the culture of order”) values in various combinations. As it is demonstrated by the historical experience of the last century, the policy of implanting a world order “in the image and likeness”, imposing the values of the leading culture to other ethnic groups and peoples does not promote human progress, but leads to further deepening of the civilization crisis. Only the voluntary dissemination of the universally significant values (life, health, freedom and dignity of the human being, etc.) on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while using high geo-cultural authority of the donor community can provide conflictless and successful introducing of these values into the national value system, their mutual enrichment and their “germination” in the national soil. The increase of philosophy’s attention toward the upbringing-related aspects of education is to create highly moral elite, a spiritual foundation for the strategy of overcoming the total crisis, surviving of humanity and securing sustainable development of our civilization.

Third, the contemporary globalization has influenced all aspects of human life and activity from economy to culture, including education; has had a significant impact on the entire educational environment of the planet in all its dimensions. The essence of this phenomenon is sufficiently deeply revealed in the works of domestic and foreign philosophers [6, p.54-63].
It is important for us that globalization has led to the challenge of finding effective ways of integration and internationalization of education, formation of the world educational space with uniform standards and criteria for evaluating the educational products, ensuring democracy and equality of educational systems, preservation of their national identity. As the subjects of research, there are increasingly considered the problems of "global education and training", "global education strategy", etc. [7, p.39]. And this raises the question of creation of a global philosophy of education, which will overcome the boundaries of different cultures, worldviews and schools of thought on the basis of a unified conceptual apparatus of philosophy and pedagogy, help education to regain its original task of formation of the person included in the past, present and future culture of the entire mankind. All this, taking into account the educational programs of the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, will help translate the national educational traditions and mechanisms into the language of international communication, expand and enrich the international network space of educational institutions, accelerate the attainment of the goals of global integration of education.

Fourth, the informatization of society actualizes the problem of achieving the adequateness of the education level to the scientific and technological progress as one of the most important in the philosophy of education. Informatization reduces the tendency of encyclopedism and fundamentalism in education, does not eliminate social stratification, and does not overcome inequality in the accessibility to knowledge and information resources. However, the information technologies allow creating a unified information-educational environment, collections of training materials, educational portals, online tutorials, web courses, implementing open and distance learning, significantly expanding educational opportunities, facilitating the realization of the principle of "education through life". To solve these problems, there has been created in Russia the Department of Science, Technology and Education of the Government of the Russian Federation. Today, in our schools and universities there are successfully being introduced Internet and other electronic technologies, a system of open education with the unity of intramural, extramural and distance forms of learning [8, p. 126-127]. Children are learning to independently find information on the Internet and make sense of it. They develop their creativity, the ability to work with large volumes of information, to operate successfully in a highly competitive workforce market. At the same time, the electronic technologies do not incorporate the worldview-related and upbringing dimensions of education. That is why, the teacher and the school should remain the leading actors in the formation of personality regardless of which type of training system – the distance or the classroom one – is used. It is the school and the teacher that are called to give the student the basic knowledge in natural sciences and humanities, to form the world outlook and basic virtues, lay a foundation upon which there will sprout vocational education, organically combined with high cultural level and morality of the person.

The crisis of the traditional foundations and principles of education, the necessity of reconsideration of the essence, content and structure of educational theory and practice require a special attention of philosophy of education.

First, there becomes insufficient the traditional humanistic interpretation of education as a process of self-improvement of the person, its preparation for entering the life which is essentially not known to anybody now. In the conditions of increasing world population and the aggravating environmental and social problems, depletion of natural resources and development of new technologies, it makes sense to define the essence of education as a worldview-related process of person’s acquiring conscious self-sufficiency, independence and freedom in his/her tolerant and equitable interaction with society and nature in order to achieve harmony of these relations. The entire educational space must be built on the basis of biocentric philosophy, awareness of the role of the human being as an equal component of the unified socio-natural organism and must be oriented to renewal of the style of scientific
thinking, the formation of a new understanding of the world and a new mentality based on a new worldview paradigm and modern scientific picture of the world.

**Second**, there takes place the process of further differentiation of the theory and practice of education: besides general pedagogy and its history, there are actively developing the social, age-related, correctional, industrial, subject pedagogy, ethno-pedagogy, the TIPS-pedagogy (Theory of Inventive Problem Solving), etc. This trend requires differentiation of the philosophy of education itself in order to achieve adequacy of its reflection. A.P. Ogurtsov rightly notes that "philosophy in the education system ... should provide methodological introduction to the profession ... which should be differentiated and should take into account the specifics of the engineering, natural-science and humanitarian higher education institutions. There are still no such studies" [9, p.22]. Let us add that there is no scientific research offering recommendations of the philosophy of education for the individual types and directions of the pedagogical science and practice.

**Third**, the complexity and unpredictability of the world development is forcing teachers and students to work together to find answers to the problems of achieving harmony in the "person - society - nature" system with the adherence to the principle of unity of training, upbringing and development. The classical subject-object relations in education are replaced by the relations of equal partnerships as the main mode of relations in the cognition of surrounding reality.

**Fourth**, the needs of innovative development of the society fundamentally change the educational practice: the state, public, school and university subjects of education increasingly complement the traditional educational field with the electronic one and consider as a goal of the educational process the formation of not only the educated and brought up person, but also the critically thinking individual with a high innovation culture and the desire for self-improvement, the ability to produce new knowledge, with the advanced skills of thinking, understanding and creating.

The philosophical reflection on education must take into account all new trends and phenomena of educational practice. M.V. Zhuk emphasizes that today education as a process "... turns into navigation among the resources and practices, forms the skills of their individual and collective expansion. In the process, there are actualized the problems of knowledge and information – the traditional and innovative ones, the ICT, the IT technologies of training, orientation of education on the research and development of practical technologies, solution of training and real problems, the introduction of technologies of corporate training" [10, p.156]. There arises another problem of reflection on education to ensure the efficient work of teachers in the new conditions for the development of electronic educational resources, which in turn requires attention to the training of all pedagogues, education managers through their advanced education in the system of training and retraining.

In the changed circumstances, the philosophical *foundation of education* should be built using the progressive ideas from various directions of modern philosophy and science, including some ideas of postmodern philosophy. In its pure form postmodernism cannot serve as a basis of reflection on education due to underestimation of the worldview and upbringing aspects of education. However, the categories of this philosophy correspond to the challenges of nonlinear world, are closely connected with the instruments and technologies of the information society, acceptable and useful for the enrichment and development of philosophy of education. Among those ideas we can mention the idea of non-linear thinking and the network structure of the world, the idea of education as production of new knowledge, the idea about the need to rely on postnonclassical science, the theory of self-organization, the theory of dissipative structures, synergetics and others. The modern pedagogy takes these ideas positively and actively enriches its substantive and
methodological arsenal by them [11]. One of the founders of the theory of network structures, Manuel Castells substantiated a position that, in the conditions of information age, the distribution of "network" logic largely affects the progress and results of the processes associated with manufacture, daily life, culture and power [12]. As applied to education, this idea was developed in the works of A. Toffler, J.F. Lyotard, I. Ilyin, V.A. Emelin, A.P. Ogurtsov, R. Stichweh, N. Luhmann, M. McLuhan and other Western and Russian scientists.

The philosophical concept of postnonclassical education, its nonlinear explications and the laws of existence and development require increased attention to the organization and reflection of the network model of education in today's information space. In this model, knowledge and the ways of its acquiring become universally available for everyone and at any time, both at school and outside it; and the individual memory is complemented by the unlimited memory of electronic devices. But we should not forget about the world outlook and upbringing function of education and should not allow excessive "robotization" of consciousness, should prevent student's escape from reality, the substitution of deep knowledge by the surface erudition as inevitable features of any electronic or distance learning [13, p.42]. According to N.V. Gromyko, Internet reduces the activity-related characteristics of the person, blurs the line between knowledge and information and suppresses interest and ability to independent discoveries: the learners become more erudite, but less knowledgeable [14, p. 55]. Note that the recent studies have not revealed unambiguous superiority of the education quality in the electronic educational space compared to the conventional one [15, p.72]. Considering the processes of computerization of educational institutions, the initiative to create digital Europe and the national electronic educational spaces as undoubtedly important, we emphasize that the future of education and society is inherently dependent on achieving the organic unity of reality and virtuality through the science-based integration of traditional and electronic educational spaces. The study of effective ways of such integration should become dominant in the philosophical reflection on education [16, p. 106-107].

As it has been shown, the crisis state of education is largely due to misunderstanding of the dialectic of its development in the new social and natural conditions, certain lagging behind of the philosophical understanding of the rapidly changing reality, theory and practice of education. The adequate philosophical understanding of the changed cultural and educational space requires further development of philosophy of education up to the level of a postnonclassical meta-philosophy, the essence of which we will try to describe in the following way:

- it is developed on the basis of a modern worldview paradigm, new scientific picture of the world and new style of scientific thinking, the doctrine of the network structure of the world, the poly-paradigmal character of education; it should take into account and achieve a synthesis of all modern philosophical, pedagogical and scientific theories and practices of education in the conditions of crisis and uncertainty of the development of the society and its social-cultural environment;
- it extends the humanistic interpretation of education as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills, preparation for work and life in the society to its understanding as a process of person's gaining conscious self-sufficiency, independence and freedom in his/her tolerant and equitable interaction with society and nature;
- it substantiates the goal orientation of education as the formation of the integral personality with a new world understanding and new mentality, new style of scientific thinking, with a broad scientific outlook, creative thinking, the skills of forecasting and constructing the future according to the optimal scenarios and the abilities of continuous self-development in the complex and rapidly changing world;
- it understands the object of reflection (education) as a complex self-organizing non-linear triune (training, upbringing, development) system in a rapidly changing world, in close contact with all sides of social being and consciousness;
– it carries out the reflection of education in the unity of reality and virtuality, traditional and electronic educational space;
– it distinguishes the following priority subjects of reflection in the hierarchy of educational values: the world outlook and upbringing function of education, the network education model, the advanced and continuous education;
– it studies the ways of self-realization of the person’s potential in the cognition of the world, the ways of education’s transition from transferring ready knowledge to the student to mastering, together with the teacher, the ways of searching for new knowledge in the informational and existential space, from the reproduction of knowledge to the production of new knowledge, from the principle of "education for the entire life" to the principle of "education through life";
– it is differentiated in accordance with such branches as the school, university, age-related, correctional and other philosophies of education;
– it considers the content and the methods of training, upbringing and development as a network, multivariate process of the equal-partners cooperation of the teacher and student, taking into account their individual characteristics and using the capabilities of computerization and informatization of the educational process.
– it substantiates the need for decentralization, democratization and humanization of the management relations in education, the transition from the state-public to the public-state character of education management with the aim of empowerment of pedagogical talent, encouragement of the initiative of pedagogical, parental and educational collectives in ensuring the variability of education, the creation of an adequate education-upbringing space for each educational institution. Without creating a unique educational environment, which takes into account both the existing potential and the future mission of the person, a good half of teacher’s efforts will be in vain.
– it has as an ultimate goal the creation of a global philosophy of education, overcoming the boundaries of different cultures, world outlooks and philosophical schools on the basis of a unified interpretation of the fundamental concepts of life and consciousness, world and human being, good and evil that are equally acceptable to the North and South, East and West, Muslim and Christian worlds; this will foster education’s regaining its original role of a mover of social progress through the formation of the personality included in the past, present and future culture of mankind.

Thus, the profound social transformations and the systemic crisis of the society at the turn of civilization change require “purification of the spirit”, the creation of such educational systems that would help slow down the process of degradation of the society and the person and revive spiritual values. This will foster preparing the generation of people to the uncompromising struggle for neutralization of the destructive factors and actions, negative influence of people’s consumer psychology on the society and nature. It seems to us that the considered foundations of the reflection on the modern landscape of education will help understanding of education as a process of person’s acquiring conscious independence and freedom in his/her tolerant and equitable interaction with society and nature in order to achieve harmony in the “man-society-nature” system. These foundations will expand the search for new ways of self-realization of the individual’s potential in the world cognition using the capabilities of computerization and informatization of the educational process, optimization of the ways of transition of education from its linear to the network model, from the reproduction of knowledge to the production of new knowledge, from the principle of “education for life” to the principle of “education through life”. They will strengthen education’s orientation to the formation of the responsible, moral, critically thinking, innovative personality, included in the past, present and future culture of mankind, the formation of the person’s readiness to ensure safe and sustainable development of civilization. These foundations will give back the hope of survival to the humanity.
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Rationality and surprise as a cognitive emotion in teaching and learning

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1. Introduction
The relationship between emotion and cognitive activities, such as inquiry, has always been a concern of philosophers.¹ In his paper “In praise of the cognitive emotions” (1977),² Israel Scheffler, a well known analytic philosopher of education and science, expounds on the role of emotion in the cognitive activity of teaching and learning. I restrict the teaching and learning that are dealt with here to the fostering and acquisition of rationality, which will later be made clearer.

In this paper, by critically examining Scheffler’s concept of cognitive emotion,³ I clarify the role of surprise as a cognitive emotion in teaching and learning. In line with Scheffler’s idea, I argue that surprise can play the role of a sensor enabling one to detect questions and criticism relevant to the content of the teaching and learning involved, and that, in this respect, surprise can help one teach and learn in rational life.

The backdrop for this research shows the importance of this investigation. In recent years, some philosophers are drawing attention to the relevance of emotion to rationality. Hookway (2000a, 2000b, 2008) focuses on the epistemic role of emotion, specifically doubt, in inquiry based on his study of the philosophy of Peirce. Slote (2010, 2013b), clarifying the concept of empathy with the emotional states of others, explores the connection between emotion and rationality. Holma (2012), mentioning Scheffler’s work (pp. 406–7), argues for the need to take emotion into account in educating for citizenship. Furthermore, philosophical studies of emotion, beginning with Rorty’s (ed.) (1980) anthology on emotion, have been flourishing,⁴ and some of these studies mention Scheffler’s work on cognitive emotion (e.g., Brun and Kuenzle 2008, p. 24).

Although Scheffler’s work precedes studies mentioned above, its originality has not been fully appreciated.⁵ One of the reasons may be that Scheffler’s argument regarding emotion, having its basis in his study of Pragmatism (Scheffler 1974), is condensed in one short paper, so despite its clarity, it is quite difficult to grasp his original idea of emotion. Another reason may be that Scheffler’s paper, focusing on the role of emotion in learning, was originally written in the context of philosophy of education,⁶ so the research on Scheffler’s

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¹ See, for example, Solomon (ed.) (2003).
² This paper is included in Scheffler (1991).
³ By “critically examining,” I mean two things: clarifying key concepts of cognitive emotion, receptivity, and vulnerability, and their relationship in Scheffler’s argument; and, arguing for a unique role of surprise in teaching and learning by developing Scheffler’s concept of cognitive emotion.
⁴ Research on emotion today is being done from various perspectives. In order to gain a general overview of the present literature on emotion, refer to Deigh (2010), De Sousa (2013), Goldie (2007), and Solomon (ed.) (2003).
⁵ There is certainly some literature on Scheffler’s argument about cognitive emotion, but the research is rather an application of Scheffler’s idea than a critical exposition regarding his argument. For example, Yob (1997), after clarifying the meaning of the term “cognitive emotions,” discusses what she calls “emotional cognition.” Steutel and Spiecker (1997) center on what Scheffler calls “rational passions,” distinct from cognitive emotion, and go on to discuss the relationship between rational passions and intellectual virtues.
⁶ Scheffler’s philosophy of education belongs to analytic philosophy of education. See Curren, Robertson, and Hager (2003) for the detailed explanation concerning the movement of analytic philosophy of education.
idea of emotion may require some background knowledge about his view on teaching and learning. However, considering the large body of literature on emotion and considering that the theme of teaching and learning has been a growing concern of philosophers in philosophical branches including social epistemology and virtue ethics (cf. Goldman 1998, 1999; Siegel 2004, 2008; Slote 2009, 2013a), a critical exposition of Scheffler’s idea of surprise can, I think, contribute to contemporary studies concerning emotion and its relationship to teaching and learning.7

My argument consists of four parts. In section 2, I clarify rationality in the cognitive and moral realms. I then explain how this rationality is related to Scheffler’s view on teaching and learning and present an apparently strong criticism of this view. In section 3, after introducing some emotions related to cognitive activities, I focus on the concept of cognitive emotions, especially surprise as a cognitive emotion, and formulate it. In section 4, I demonstrate that the distinct role of surprise is to enable us to detect cognitive content relevant to the content of teaching and learning. I go on to articulate that the moral attitude of being receptive to surprise as Scheffler introduces may be necessary for surprise to contribute to teaching and learning. In section 5, I present the summary of this argument and the significance of this research.

2. Teaching and learning that places a value on rationality
We shall begin by clarifying rationality in the cognitive and moral realms. With respect to rationality, Scheffler argues,

> Whether in the cognitive or the moral realm, reason is always a matter of treating equal reasons equally, and of judging the issues in the light of general principles to which one has bound oneself. (RT 76)8

In this quotation, the term “reason” refers to rationality, and the term “reasons,” as Scheffler uses to explain rationality, refers to specific reasons for particular judgements and actions (RT 3; 62). Scheffler here makes two important points: first, rationality concerns treating reasons critically in light of relevant principles that one follows; secondly, rationality can be applied in both the cognitive and moral realms.

Scheffler denies that rationality here is a universal faculty of the mind, as some modern philosophers have assumed (RT 62), and argues that it is elaborated within developing traditions:

> It [rationality] is embodied in multiple evolving traditions, in which the basic condition holds that issues are resolved by reference to reasons, themselves defined

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7 Clarifying Scheffler’s consideration on surprise may allow us to see his idea of the relationship between education and emotion, which might make it possible to compare his thought with that of other scholars who consider education and emotion, such as Peters (2010a, 2010b).

8 With regard to Scheffler’s works, the following notation is used throughout the paper and, when I quote Scheffler’s texts, I maintain the original passages.
by principles purporting to be impartial and universal. (the square bracket added, emphasis original) (RT 79)9

Rational principles regulating one are formed in changing traditions in which problems are solved by reasons, while these principles are aimed to be as impartial and universal as possible.10 In this respect, rationality here stands in close relation to people’s concrete inquiries and practices.

Rationality can act in not only the cognitive realm but also the moral realm. For example, a rational person may be willing to evaluate reasons of others critically in light of relevant principles; she may be willing to respect the viewpoints of others and to treat others’ arguments and claims on equal basis with her own in rational discussion (RT 63); and, she may be ready to take responsibility for consequences of one’s actions as well as judgements (RT 29). In these ways, rationality is exemplified in both the cognitive and moral dimensions. How, then, is this rationality related to his view on teaching and learning? Scheffler famously presents an influential view on teaching and learning that places high priority on rationality. According to Scheffler, fostering rationality is a basic educational ideal:

Rationality, as I see it, is a matter of reasons, and to take it as a fundamental educational ideal is to make as pervasive as possible the free and critical quest for reasons, in all realms of study. (emphasis original) (RT 62)

Regarding rationality as a fundamental educational ideal is to see education as the activity that aims at students’ acquisition of rationality. In this way, students ideally learn to seek reasons on their own. This educational aim is said to be an ideal because this aim may never completely be fulfilled, but still plays a guiding role in educational activities, including teaching and learning (Siegel 2001, p. 144).

As an factor of achieving this educational aim, teaching is distinct from other ways of transmitting beliefs:

Beliefs can be acquired or transferred through mere unthinking contact, propaganda, indoctrination, or brainwashing. Teaching, by contrast, engages the mind, no matter what the subject matter. The teaching is prepared to explain, that is, to acknowledge the student’s right to ask for reasons and his concomitant right to exercise his judgement on the merits of the case. (emphasis original) (RT 62)12

9 Emphasis on the role of tradition may raise a problem concerning the objectivity of scientific knowledge. But I withdraw addressing this problem because, in order to make sure of Scheffler’s idea of rationality, it is enough to clarify that rationality here is embodied in developing traditions. Refer to Neiman and Siegel (1993) for the distinction of objectivity and rationality in science.

10 Scheffler considers principles not only in science but also in other fields of study, such as law and politics in democratic society (RT 79). The applicability of the idea of principles here to ethics, specifically moral education, remains open, however. For example, see Slote (2009) for a general overview of the discussion on moral principles in moral education. See RT (97–115; 136–45) for Scheffler’s view on moral education.

11 Some might suspect that treating others with respect is compatible with evaluating reasons of others critically because one may sometimes have to regard these reasons as unwarranted. I think that treating others with respect is a moral attitude toward others whereas evaluating reasons critically is a cognitive attitude toward others, and these moral and epistemic attitudes can be reconciled. For example, one can be critical to reasons of others and, at the same time, can be sensitive to the viewpoints of others and follow their argument as it leads. See Siegel (1997b) for more detailed explanation of this distinction.

12 The same idea of teaching is also seen in LE (ch. 3 & 4) and CK (ch. 1).
Teaching is distinguished, for example, from indoctrination or brainwashing in terms of its manner; in teaching, students have the right to ask for reasons and to evaluate them on their own. As Siegel (2001) clearly put it, “teaching, according to Scheffler, carries with it restrictions of manner, requiring acknowledgement of the student’s sense of reasons” (emphasis original) (pp. 143–4).

But isn’t this concept of teaching narrow? Admittedly, there are other forms of teaching: for example, teachers have a role of conveying information on subjects such as history and politics; however, given Scheffler’s comprehensive examination of various kinds of teaching (e.g., LE 60–75, RT 67–81), it is reasonable to think that what Scheffler argues here is that one of the principle aims of teaching is to enable students to acquire rationality through the manner of teaching above.13 This seems true because a job of education can be to initiate students into rational life.14

If this is acknowledged, what involves the acquisition of rationality? Scheffler gives a clear description about the learning supposed to be called for:

To learn to be critical while respecting one’s colleagues in discussion, to learn to recognize one’s fallibility, to commit oneself to following the argument on its merits and to take the consequences, to be sensitive to the standpoint of other persons with conflicting claims and different centers of experience, to learn to judge fairly and to take the responsibility for one’s own judgements—these are lessons of morality and character no less than cognitive virtues. (RT 64)

As one might expect from Scheffler’s idea of rationality, the learning for rational life is to become virtuous cognitively and morally. For example, students must learn to evaluate reasons critically while they must learn to be sensitive to the perspectives of others and follow others’ argument as it leads.15

Scheffler’s view on teaching and learning, however, may induce the following criticism (cf. Bailin and Siegel 2003): teaching and learning placing a high priority on rationality apparently makes little of one’s emotion affecting the process of teaching and learning.16 In his paper “Philosophical models of teaching” (1964), however, Scheffler observes that, while his focus is mainly on rationality, he has no intention to undervalue the role of emotion (RT 78) and, in his paper “In praise of the cognitive emotions” (1977), he examines a variety of emotions that can have important roles in cognitive activities. So, in the next section, let us consider the relationship between emotion and the cognitive activity of teaching and learning.

3. Cognitive emotions
In this section, I first introduce emotion related to cognitive activity and focus on cognitive emotion that is a subset of that sort of emotion and go on to formulate surprise as a cognitive emotion.

Scheffler examines “how cognitive functioning employs and incorporates diverse emotional elements—these elements themselves acquiring cognitive significance thereby” (PCE 3). It

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13 Refer to some articles in Marples (ed.) (1999) for the argument that there can be many aims in education.
14 See Siegel (2012) for philosophical exploration regarding education as initiation into the space of reasons.
15 Professor Michael Slote kindly suggests to me in our informal discussion that the similar point can be seen in Kant’s practical philosophy. See O’Neill (1989, ch.1) in detail.
16 One of the influential and persuasive criticisms against too much dependence on rationality in the theory of knowledge may be seen in Code (1991, 1993).
has been commonly believed in philosophy that there is dichotomy between rationality and emotion (e.g., De Sousa 2013, ch.1 and 8), and Scheffler also mentions: “cognition is sober inspection; it is the scientist’s calm apprehension of fact after fact in his relentless pursuit of truth. Emotion, on the other hand, is commotion—an unruly turbulence fatal to such pursuit” (PCE 3). Scheffler challenges this trite, doubtful statement.

Emotion related to cognitive activity is divided into two sorts.\(^{17}\) One is emotion generally in the service of cognition that includes “rational passions,” “perceptive feeling,” and “theoretical imagination.” For example, rational passions are emotions that motivate us to have a love of truth and a concern with accuracy in observation and inference.

The other is emotion, called “cognitive emotion,” the occurrence of which relies on cognitive content such as what is believed, expected, and predicted. Cognitive emotion is stipulated:

Now I propose, analogously, to consider an emotion specifically cognitive if it rests on a supposition of a cognitive sort—that is to say, a supposition relating to the content of the subject’s cognition (beliefs, predictions, expectations) and, in cases of special interest to us, bearing upon their epistemological status. (emphasis original) (PCE 9)

Specifically, cognitive emotion is the one that can arise only if there is some presupposition related to cognitive content affecting emotion. Let us consider the “joy of verification” presented as an example of cognitive emotion. The joy of verification is the feeling that one can have only if the result obtained in an experiment verifies what is predicted based on evidence (PCE 10). The reason this joy of verification is said to rest on cognitive content is that the following two presuppositions are required to say that one has this emotion: first, a particular cognitive content is predicted prior to obtaining some consequence; second, what is predicted is verified by an experiment. It follows from this, for example, that this joy of verification differs from the joy that one may have when one happens to win the lottery.

Another example of cognitive emotion is surprise. Surprise is a cognitive emotion only if there is a presupposition that “what has happened conflicts with prior expectation” (PCE 12). More specifically,

(1) **Surprise is a cognitive emotion only if one has some initial beliefs, and the initial beliefs conflict with new beliefs obtained from a cognitive activity.**

From this, surprise as a cognitive emotion is distinguished from surprise as a reaction to a novel, unexpected situation that one confronts, such as an unprecedented situation.\(^{18}\) The reason is that surprise caused, for example, by novelty or unexpectedness can arise even in the case in which nothing is considered or predicted in advance and in which there is no discrepancy between prior expectation and the outcome obtained. I shall call the surprise formulated as (1) “surprise as a cognitive emotion” if it is necessary to differentiate it from surprise merely as a reaction to novelty or unexpectedness.

Let us consider the relationship between cognitive emotion and rational life. Joy of verification is probably illustrated in the context of scientific inquiry such as the context of scientific inquiry such as the context of

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17 It is known that emotion has a wide range of diverse dimensions: duration, focus, complexity, physical manifestation, degree of consciousness, degree of development, and degree of action- connectedness (Goldie 2007, pp. 928–9). Here I categorize emotions in the way in which Scheffler describes them.

18 Surprise is often cited as an example of quite simple emotion: for example, a person may be surprised at an unexpected noise behind her. Scheffler here intends to delineate more intellectual surprise by showing surprise as a cognitive emotion.
observation and verification, whereas surprise as a cognitive emotion may likely occur not only in the scientific context but also in rational life. For example, one may become aware of new beliefs from someone’s questions and criticism and can be surprised at them because the content of the new beliefs obtained can be critical to one’s view and theory and, nevertheless, has not been recognized. Given that rational dialogue is a part of rational life, surprise as a cognitive emotion can occur in rational life.

Therefore, surprise can also occur in the context of teaching and learning in rational life. However, what unique role surprise can play in teaching and learning has not been clarified yet. In the next section, let’s consider this problem.

4. The role of surprise in teaching and learning

Scheffler’s argument about surprise as a cognitive emotion is mainly focused on how this surprise can contribute to learning. So, in this section, I first deal with the relationship between surprise and learning and go on to discuss the relationship between this surprise and teaching.

Scheffler describes the relationship between surprise and learning in rational life:

Receptive to surprise, we are capable of learning from experience—capable, that is, of acknowledging the inadequacies of initial beliefs and recognizing the need for their improvement. It is thus that the testing of theories, no less than their generation, calls upon appropriate emotional dispositions. (PCE 12)

This context of learning is presumed to be rational life, and “learning from experience” here means identifying the fault of one’s earlier beliefs and recognizing the need for their revision. Scheffler argues that being receptive to surprise as a cognitive emotion enables us to learn from experience. Here two questions arise: what distinct role does surprise play in learning?; and how specifically can receptivity to surprise contribute to learning?

We begin by making clear what it means to be receptive to surprise. Receptivity is seen as the attitude of openness to cognitive emotion (PCE 13–4). The receptivity, according to Scheffler, is neither a belief state nor an emotion but an attitude to acknowledge emotion as a cognitive emotion, that is, emotion triggered by change in one’s initial cognitive content. The receptivity can thus be formulated:

(2) Receptivity is the attitude of openness to cognitive emotion.

As the present argument concerns surprise as a cognitive emotion, by stipulation above,

(2.1) Receptivity is the attitude of openness to surprise as a cognitive emotion.

Note that it is crucially important that what receptivity acknowledges is cognitive emotion. Suppose, for example, someone has openness to any surprise that occurs in rational discussion. In this case, she can be surprised at any question and criticism and might end up being overwhelmed by a vast number of surprises and abandoning her initial view and theory. This means that there is a possibility that questions and criticism may all be trivial and irrelevant, and her initial view and theory might have later turned out to be significant in her academic field. This example indicates that being receptive to any surprise, that is, being completely passive to surprise, can be harmful for learning.

In Scheffler’s argument, however, as, by the stipulation (1), surprise as a cognitive emotion arises only if there is some conflict between initial beliefs and new beliefs obtained, what one notices by being surprised is restricted to the cognitive content relevant to the learning
involved. In this sense, receptivity can act as not only accepting surprise but also selecting surprise that can tell one something relevant to the learning.

From this, it can be seen that, in rational life, surprise can enable one to detect the cognitive content pertinent to the learning involved. For example, surprise can make it possible for one to become aware of the criticism given by others that may be critical to one’s earlier beliefs. The distinct role of surprise is thus to wake up one to the cognitive content that is pertinent to the learning involved on some occasions. In other words,

(3) Surprise can act as a sensor enabling one to detect the cognitive content relevant to the learning involved.

Let me note, however, that the statement (3) is different from the statement that surprise can enable one to clearly identify the weakness of one’s argument and to strengthen one’s earlier view and theory. Achieving these cognitive tasks calls for due consideration even if one comes to realize that one’s initial view and theory need to be modified in some way or other. Rather, surprise can be a means of making salient something that can matter to the learning involved so that one can later identify the weakness of one’s argument clearly and to corroborate one’s view and theory.

This role of surprise is congruous with rationality exemplified in both the cognitive and moral realms clarified in section 2. In this respect, surprise can help one learn in one’s rational life.19 The receptive attitude to surprise previously mentioned may be necessary for this surprise to contribute to this learning. As Scheffler observes, “Acknowledgement itself is a possible and a significant attitude, opening the way beyond the acknowledged circumstance” (PCE 14).

Accepting new, unexpected beliefs that conflict with one’s initial beliefs may sometimes be hard, however. Besides, accepting the fault of one’s initial beliefs may even render one depressed.20 Admitting these difficulties, Scheffler urges that receptivity to surprise involves vulnerability:

Receptivity to surprise involves, however, a certain vulnerability; it means accepting the risk of a possibly painful unsettlement of one’s beliefs, with the attendant need to rework one’s expectations and redirect one’s conduct. (PCE 12)

Scheffler calls “epistemic distress” the circumstance in which one’s initial view and theory need to be revised and in which their learning has to be reoriented (ibid.). In epistemic distress, one may have difficulty accepting relevant questions and criticism and finding it hard to pull oneself together to relearn (PCE 14). Vulnerability can be seen as the attitude to accept the potential instability of one’s initial beliefs.

Certainly, there are some ways to avoid epistemic distress. For example, one may have the attitude to give up considering reasons critically and predicting consequence based on evidence. This means that one loses curiosity for the truth, so this attitude is called “epistemic apathy” (PCE 13). Or one may reject any reason and evidence that can be critical to one’s own beliefs and avoid examining the validity of the beliefs. This means that one sticks to one’s beliefs even when the beliefs obviously need to be scrutinized, so this attitude is called “dogmatism” (PCE 14).

19 Compare this intellectual surprise with the role of emotional response, such as startle response, in Robinson (1995).
20 Confronting relevant questions and persuasive criticism may not be always painful but rather can be pleasant to some people such as academic experts or teachers.
However, if one avoids epistemic distress by persisting in these attitudes, it follows that one abandons one’s rational life. The reason is that, from the argument in section 2, in order to have rational life, one must be rational in the cognitive and moral senses: one must not only examine reasons fairly and critically but also have the attitude open to relevant questions and criticism; one must also take responsibility for one’s initial beliefs and revise them if necessary; but neither epistemic apathy nor dogmatism can meet these conditions. For this reason, the only way in which one learns without giving up one’s rational life is, it seems, that one may have to be ready for the instability of one’s initial beliefs and, if so, then vulnerability can greatly contribute to learning.

I draw a conclusion that the receptive attitude to surprise can help one learn in rational life in that the attitude makes it possible for surprise to play the role of a sensor enabling one to detect the cognitive content relevant to the learning involved. As a result, one can have the good chance of identifying the weakness of one’s argument and revising one’s view and theory. Vulnerability also can contribute to learning in the sense that this equips one to relearn by the instability of one’s earlier beliefs. Hence, being receptive to surprise, often involving vulnerability, can be conducive to one’s learning.

Interestingly, if the argument so far is the case, rational thinkers will experience surprise as long as they continue to learn. Scheffler gives us a clear explanation about the relationship between surprise and the continual process of learning:

To answer the question is to reconstruct initial beliefs so that they may consistently incorporate what had earlier been unassimilable. It is to provide an improved framework of premises by which the surprising event might have been anticipated and for which parallel events will no longer surprise. Critical inquiry in pursuit of explanation is a constructive outcome of surprise, transforming initial disorientation into motivated search. There is, as we have seen, no mechanical routine that guarantees success in the search for explanatory theory. Yet an emotional value of such search is to offer mature consolation for the stress of surprise and the renunciation of inadequate beliefs. (PCE 15)

It can be said that the process of learning in the most part of rational life constitutes the history of a sequence of surprises.

Let us finally consider the relationship between surprise and teaching. Being receptive to surprise, involving vulnerability, can be helpful to teaching. Recall that a role of teachers in rational life is to allow students to treat reasons fairly and critically to be able to conduct inquiry on their own. This means that, in teaching, teachers can be subject to questions and criticism regarding their reasons from students. If so, according to Scheffler, teachers have to satisfy some requirements:

The teacher is thus called upon to reveal, and hence, to risk, his own judgements and loyalties in the process of teaching others. In embracing this risk, the teacher is himself forced to a heightened self-awareness, and a more reflective attitude toward his own presuppositions; his own outlook is thereby broadened and refined. (RT 87)

It appears to me that the strength of these requirements allows for degrees: for example, university teachers would be required to satisfy these requirements rigidly whereas it might be enough for elementary school teachers to cherish students’ curiosity and wonders. The point here is that being receptive to surprise that occurs to teachers in relevant situations, for example, when they find students’ curiosity and wonder, can enrich the quality of the teaching content. Vulnerability may also enable teachers to cope with students’ various questions and wonders flexibly instead of teaching in a stereotyped manner.
Furthermore, while teachers may sometimes ask students for reasons, point out a defect in their argument, and request revision, they have to show respect for students who, recognizing the fault of their initial beliefs, try to relearn and to continue to learn. Considering the importance of emotional states in learning clarified in this section, the way in which teachers show respect might include a caring attitude toward the emotional states of students who strive to learn.  

Admittedly, Scheffler’s argument on the role of surprise is focused on the context of learning; still, by taking Scheffler’s view on teaching into consideration, I conclude that being receptive to surprise, involving vulnerability, may allow teachers to help students relearn and continue to learn.

5. Conclusion
I have discussed the role of surprise as a cognitive emotion in the context of teaching and learning in accordance with Scheffler’s argument. The distinct role of surprise as a cognitive emotion is to enable one to detect cognitive content relevant to the teaching and learning involved, and surprise in this sense can be conducive to teaching and learning in rational life. Being receptive to surprise, often involving receptivity, may be necessary for surprise to play this role, that is, to contribute to one’s teaching and learning.

This conclusion concerning emotion opens up further research to be explored. How emotion can be learned to arise in appropriate learning contexts will be worth examining (e.g., De Sousa 1990). How the acquisition of rationality and a caring attitude toward others can be related will also be explored more closely (e.g., Slote 2013b). The classical problem of the relationship between learning and the will power or the motivation will be reconsidered by referring to contemporary virtue ethics and epistemology (e.g., Roberts 1987; Zagzebski 1996).

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References

21 This caring attitude is slightly different from respect that one shows for others discussed in section 2 in that the caring attitude mainly concerns emotional states of others. This will open up further study for empathy and education. See Slote (2009, 2013a).


Homo mimeticus

In the Poetics of Aristotle there is a definition of the human being that perhaps has not yet been well considered in educational theory and practice, and that might be crucial in re-discovering the movements that could help us properly respond to the critical elements that are affecting modernity, and that rationality alone cannot face.

This definition calls into question a dynamism that according to Plato was an unavoidable movement for an appropriate understanding of, and subsequent accurate attention to, the educational process: the educational process that turns a human being into a beautiful, good and just citizen: mimesis.

My intent is to reconsider a definition of the human being presented by Aristotle in the Poetics to demonstrate if and how it can establish new paradigms for human coexistence; paradigms that can react to those needs that are hardly satisfied as long as human educability is placed within mere logical and rational coordinates.

We find this definition at the very beginning of the Poetics. Aristotle has just introduced poetics in itself and its forms. These are all mimesis; and can be identified through the means used to obtain mimesis, through the object of which they make the mimesis, and through how they make mimesis. After presenting examples illustrating the quantity and quality of the different mimesis, Aristotle describes the two natural causes that generated poetics.

The first of them contains the definition mentioned above.

«[...] mimetic activity [mimeîsthai] is instinctive to humans from childhood onwards, and they differ from other animals by being so mimetic [mimetikótatón] and by developing their earliest understanding through mimesis [dià miméseos]»¹.

Therefore, there is an activity – says Aristotle – that is in human nature, but also in the nature of other beings². This activity – though not exclusively human – is that something that makes humans different from other animals because of the intensity of such an activity in humans and for the earliest understanding they develop through it. Aristotle refers to it as mimeîsthai.

In the following pages, I will argue that, in Western countries, institutionalised paideia ignores, or at least underestimates (or sometimes hinders) this activity. It is difficult to hypothesise the causes for this. One reason may be that it belongs to other beings as well, therefore it is not considered as properly human; and so, the necessity to educate it in order to treat the humanity of man has been underestimated.


²Aristotle explicitly recognises mimesis in animals, as is exemplified in the case of birds. See Aristotle, The History of Animals, 8.12, 597 b 23-26; 9.1, 609 b 16; 9.49, 631 b 9.
Ignorance and/or negligence of how relevant *mimesis* might be in the educational process may have decisively contributed to separate human beings from this core aspect of their humanity and induce them (us) to fall into the present crisis. As long as the education of humans does not pay attention to the pedagogical implications of the definition taken from the *Poetics*, will there ever be a solution to this crisis?

This is what I would like to examine in this paper: re-think paideia starting from the definition of human beings in the *Poetics*, and ascertain the advantage human coexistence may take from a paideia built on a consideration of mimetic activity as *fundamentally* human, but requiring appropriate nourishment to reach its full intentionality.

I would like to ascertain if such an advantage needs an anthropological re-discovery: an immersion in the humanity of *homo* to recover the amplitude of human nature.

In this re-discovery, the educational action may find different principles than those that are now prevailing.

Aristotle’s anthropological statement is included in a much wider discourse concerning philosophy of art; but if isolated from the context, it is an essential definition of human beings that can be synthesised as follows: human beings are the mimetic animal par excellence, and their process of understanding (that distinguishes them from other animals) has a *fundamental* connection with such excellence.

Aristotle does not provide any clarification on *mimesis*: what *mimesis* means was probably commonly understood at the time. The common translation of the term as “imitation” appears reductive and misleading due to the superficial and external characteristics of the action it refers to, and to the sense of negativity it evokes. It seems clear that in no way did Aristotle associate such characteristics as superficiality and negativity with the *mimetic* activity.

Besides, because of human primacy over the animals (due to humans being the best *mimesis* makers), it is impossible to accept the idea of *mimesis* as simple *imitation*: many animals are much more *mimetic* than a human being in merely reproducing actions, external forms or places, and able to make astonishing and unique transformations.

But even if we refuse to solve *mimesis* as “imitation”, the comparison with the animal world makes it complicated to solve the enigma of human primacy: it is clear that not only animals, but also plants, follow harmonisation processes where assimilation can achieve a natural perfection that human beings could never reach. Therefore, human mimetic primacy is to be found in a much more appropriate understanding of what Aristotle sees as *mimesis* in human beings. And in order to get this understanding, it is necessary to search the *ratio* of *mimesis* in human life.

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Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, uses the word *hómios*, “similar”, to describe particular traits of the mimetic works referred to poetic features⁴. In the wider breath of the *Politics*, *mimesis* is more generically expressed with the traditional Greek words for likeness(es)⁵.

“Becoming similar” had already been used in the definition of the verb *mimeísthai* in Plato’s *Republic* (III. 393 c ss.).

In Plato’s pages, this activity is initially described as an activity in which a subject’s voice or gestures become similar to those of another subject. But in the subsequent examples by Socrates, *becoming similar* is extended to the capacity to represent any kind of thing, thus becoming similar to it. In the *Republic*, the effects of the *mimetic* capacity on the interiority of the subject are presented in various ways, also when there is no evident external movement involving the body or the voice. This is an internal mimetic activity that occurs before human artefacts and proves the profound human attitude to *become similar* and to structure interiority according to a process of assimilation, even when the subject involved is wholly unaware of it⁶.

**Giving humanity a sense**

The definition of *homo* in the *Poetics* (4. 1448 b) is very different from the one Aristotle proposes in the *Politics* and that is often reported as “a human is a rational animal”⁷. Deciding that a human is a rational animal and forgetting that he/she’s also the most mimetic one, or recognising the full presence of both qualities in humans, are two positions that envisage totally different educational perspectives because different are the aspects they aim at educating and feeding⁸.

If this natural human capacity to make the self and the other alike were properly cultivated since childhood, human coexistence would benefit from a new perspective, which can be seized if we analyse some of the essential distinctions between *mimesis* and rationality arising from Aristotle’s definitions.

A radical divergence is immediately perceived between the concepts developed under the two definitions.

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⁵ Halliwell points out that: «At Politics 8.5, 1340a, he claims that melodies and rhythms contain “likenesses” (*homoiomata*, 18) of qualities of character (*ethe*), and soon afterward that they are mimetic (that they contain *mimemata*, 39) of these qualities. The two terms are here clearly synonymous, and this is confirmed by the use of “likenesses” (*ta *homoia*, 23), in the same passage, as a compendious description of mimetic artifacts. The primary concern with music in this passage also reinforces tha fact that for Aristotle, as for other Greeks, the language of “likeness(es)” could be applied to much more than the visual media of painting and sculpture» (Halliwell, S., *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002, pp. 155-156).
⁷ Although not faithful, this is the translation commonly used for the description of man as *zôon lógon échon* found in two topics of Aristotle’s *Politics* (1253 a 9-20; 1332 b 5).
Unlike *mimesis*, rationality is a purely human trait. A human is not more rational than another animal; a human is rational and the other animals are not: if another animal were rational, this would be a human one.

Instead, *mimesis* is a connective power, an earthly relational energy that doesn’t belong exclusively to humans; though only in humans does it reach its utmost expression in *art*. Hence, both rationality and *mimesis* belong to humans, but – according to Aristotle – while the latter speaks of humans in continuity with other beings and what distinguishes humanity is only the intensity that characterises *mimesis* in human animals; rationality is based upon a radical difference: it *is* in humans and it *is not* in other beings.

This may be the reason for the simple choice that is so obstinately and seriously pursued in the Western world: education makes adults by developing rational capacity. And so, the education of a human being in schools has primarily become the education of one’s rationality. Children’s early understanding through *mimesis* has yielded to logical understanding, an educational effort led by the certainty that developing rationality means developing humanity. For in Western culture, an educated adult is one who has gained rational adulthood, not certainly mimetic adulthood. This latter can be imagined as mastering an intensified capacity to make oneself and the other alike, up to the paradox (for rationality, but not for *mimesis*) to invest our best energies in order to live the other in ourselves and to invest our best energies to become as much similar to the other as possible. This act fully satisfies our natural inclination for understanding and enjoyment of this similarity, as explained in the following pages where we will examine the *very nature* of *mimesis*.

### Critical aspects of mimesis neglected

Before Aristotle, Plato, in his *Republic*, had already mentioned the importance of providing us with the necessary antidote against the risks we could run if our mimetic nature were deprived of education. This antidote consists of an appropriate study of the nature of *mimesis*. Without this, one can find oneself in the unpleasant situation of being formed inside and influenced in one’s actions by any person who is able to master mimetic dynamics and wishes to exploit and use this power even to the most dehumanising end.

With modern sensibility and paying attention to the problems arising from a coexistence that, due to communication technologies and intense migrations, is becoming global, it is possible to feel that inattention to *mimesis* causes much more serious issues than those foreseen by Plato. In the Western world, what has been developed, especially in the educational institutions, is the essence that makes humans able to discriminate, against the essence that makes humans able to *being similar*, though this latter is a very – perfect and perfectible – essence of human beings.

Therefore, *discrimination* has been favoured to the detriment of *participation*. Can this have negative consequences on relationships among adults? Turning us away from what, in our

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9 Edmund Burke, explicitly inspired by Aristotle, tries to arise awareness on how attention to *mimesis* (in the text referred to as “imitation”) may favour the creation of a coexistence where people’s needs are all heeded (see Burke, E., *A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, Tourneisen, Basil, 1792, pp. 65-67).


nature, would drive us towards assimilation with any reality (and comprehension through assimilation) – can this turn us away from happiness as well?

These questions are too dense to be answered without sound evidence. But how can evidence be found?

I cannot introduce all the projects carried out by our Laboratory\textsuperscript{12} that have tried to turn what we were discovering around mimesis into practice. Guidelines have emerged that can orientate a qualitative experimentation and can, perhaps, provide teachers and operators with useful suggestions.

Research results are published and available in the MimesisLab website.

**A fundamental page for reflecting on human educability**

In order to examine the sense of an education considering the anthropological value of the mimetic activity, and to hypothesise the effects that it may have on the creation of a new kind of human coexistence, I deem it necessary to read the whole passage from the *Poetics* that presents the definition of the human being as the mimetic animal par excellence.

«Poetry in general can be seen to owe its existence to two chief causes, both of them natural. First, mimetic activity is instinctive to humans from childhood onwards, and they differ from other animals by being so mimetic and by developing their earliest understanding through mimesis. [Second], everybody takes pleasure in mimetic objects.

A practical indication of this is that we take pleasure in contemplating the most precisely rendered images even of things whose actual sight we find painful, such as the forms of the basest animals and of corpses. The explanation for this is that understanding gives great pleasure not just to philosophers but similarly to everyone else, though their capacity for it may be limited. Hence people enjoy looking at images, because as they contemplate them they understand and reason what each element is (e. g., that this person is so-and-so). Since, if one lacks prior familiarity with the subject, the artifact will not give pleasure qua mimetic representation but because of its craftsmanship, colour, or some other such reason»\textsuperscript{13}.

In my opinion, the passage above is so relevant for education that ignoring it in any action aiming at developing human understanding would be impossible. I chose to underline the word *understanding* because, together with “mimesis” and “pleasure”, is one of the crucial points of Aristotle’s passage.

The Greek verb recurring in the sentence is *manthánein* (and the related noun *mâthesis*) which, as Halliwell explains, contains the two meanings of *learning* and *understanding*\textsuperscript{14}.

In revealing the two causes that gave rise to poetry, Aristotle presents the mimetic activity under two dynamics, both driven by the intent to learn and understand.

\textsuperscript{12} MimesisLab – Laboratory for Pedagogy of Expression – was created inside the Department for Educational Design at Roma Tre University.


In the first cause, he presents this activity in the expressive form it takes when a child naturally makes the mimesis of somebody or something; in the second, it presents the activity in its impressive form, i.e. when people contemplate mimesis in a work of art.

What the two movements, expressive and impressive, have in common is manthánein. When we do the mimetic activity, we understand; when we contemplate a mimetic object made by others, we understand. This can be easily justified if the movement inside the subject is essentially the same; in other words, if mimesis is occurring: a process that can be defined of “as-simulation”. What Aristotle seems to argue is that understanding through as-simulation belongs to human nature. It is the mimetic activity in itself, the activity through which we make ourselves similar to any realities, objects and actions, that allows understanding. And understanding consists in a productive activity and in establishing a relation with objects produced by others through mimesis.

This productive activity is always done with pleasure and is partially comparable to the activity of a philosopher.

Learning and understanding are so crucial in this passage that it would be difficult to imagine more significant pages to reflect on education and find inspiration for schools and other educational institutions.

Here both, the object to be learnt/understood and the movement produced by those who wish to learn/understand, are briefly represented, together with the simplicity and pleasure characterising this process; and all this is formulated in an extraordinary simplification of spontaneous human actions, all described in the mimetic activity.

Aristotle seems to recognise the supremacy of understanding through mimesis, this being an activity that ensures fundamental learning (mathéseis prótas) and defines the object of contemplation that produces further knowledge.

Even if the first cause refers to childhood, it does not imply that learning dià miméseos occurs in infancy only: indeed, this way of learning might characterise early learning in general, and might therefore represent the fundamental basis to further learning.

This extensive interpretation of the first cause apparently allows a deeper clarification of the process developed by Aristotle in the second cause: where he does not feel the necessity to explain how human beings develop the early learning that allows them to recognise mimetic works.

The passage by Aristotle can be applied to school education and to any other educational activity involving an educator and a person to be educated (and it applies whenever a person tries to communicate a humanising message to another person).

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15 According to Valgimigli, the first and the second causes are, in fact, two aspects of the first cause, both representing natural love for knowledge, whereas the second cause is to be found in 4. 1448 b 20 ss. (Cf. Valgimigli, M., Poeti e filosofi di Grecia, Sansoni, Firenze, 1964, p. 589, note 1). Our reflection remains the same for both interpretations of Aristotle’s passage.

16 In Nicomachean Ethics (7. 1147 a 21), Aristotle refers to a sort of imperfect early learning when he describes the prōton mathónies as those who have early learning of something but not yet understanding, without referring specifically to childhood. The role of mimesis in the process through which human beings learn and understand virtuous actions (based on the Poetics, 4. 1448 b 4-10) is studied by Fossheim, H. J., Habituation as mimesis, in Chappel, T. (ed.), Values and Virtues. Aristotelianism in Contemporary Ethics, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2006, pp. 105-117.
A teacher, because of this natural human capacity that we all have since childhood, may use the teaching activity to induce an effective *mimesis* and favour appropriate learning and understanding. In other words, teachers can become intimately and expressively similar to what is to be taught. By means of the human natural excellence in mimetic activities, a teacher can generate a work – the lesson – where he/she becomes similar to the essence of what she/he is going to teach (and *naturally* expresses this assimilation). This way, the school lesson approaches the mimetic object – mimema/artwork – Aristotle describes in his second part, the object that pupils can contemplate and enjoy while learning and understanding.

It is Aristotle himself that authorises this comparison between the work of a teacher and that of an artist\(^1\): first, because the whole activity connected with *mimesis* aims at learning/understanding; second, because Aristotle’s assimilation of the actions of a child with those of any artist, even the greatest one\(^2\), implies the denial of the divine to justify artistic *poiesis* and resorts to an anthropological process\(^3\) involving all those who are interested in the learning/understanding practice.

**Catharsis in teaching and educating**

*Catharsis*, that Aristotle uses in his famous definition of tragedy (6. 1449b 24-28), is undoubtedly one of the most emblematic topics of the *Poetics*. Although Aristotle mentions *catharsis*, he doesn’t explain it, therefore much has been written about the meaning the word has in this passage, without agreeing a definitive interpretation\(^4\).

If we read this page without separating it from the other page we have examined (4. 1448b), and consider *catharsis* with a view to the aims of our study, we realise that here *catharsis* might represent a suggestion for the *function* of educating and teaching: indeed, *catharsis* certainly produces a process of understanding and learning.

The work of a teacher or of an educator can be compared to the work of a tragic poet, which is achieved if, by arousing pity and fear, it brings about the *catharsis* (purification, clarification) of these emotions.

A teacher and an educator, committed to explain a movement of the mind that can free from ignorance and favour a happy life, will be successful as far as they are able to bring about *catharsis*. In other words, as far as they are able to bring about an arousal and an improvement in the people to whom their work is addressed: the arousal of those profound and intimately mimetic feelings that make us recognise that we are part of humanity (interpreting “pity” and “fear” in their most extensive meaning); and the *poetical improvement* that makes possible, providing pleasure, any actual process of learning/understanding. Perhaps it is *only* a matter of arousing life in ourselves in order to re-arouse life in other people, improving feelings and emotions until they are again in harmony with what is *essentially* life, so that through *mimesis*, what is harmoniously alive and present in ourselves can live again in those who are before us.

\(^1\) According to Ricoeur, the *Poetics* is a reply to the *Republic* X: Aristotle considers mimesis as a *teaching* activity (see Ricoeur, P., *Tempo e racconto*, vol. I, Jaca Book, Milano, 2008, p. 62, note 8). Ricoeur himself explains the difficulties in translating *mimesis* as “imitation”. And in case this is the preferred translation, it is necessary to explain why and avoid misleading interpretations (see Ricoeur, P., *Tempo e racconto*, vol. I, Jaca Book, Milano, 2008, pp. 60, 62, 80).


A teacher that teaches, just as an educator that educates, can legitimately aspire to be humanity aware of its full expressive potential, be it rational or non-rational; and can be able to use it, with consciousness and intention, to the advantage of the humanity they take care of.

**The ontological/existential statute of the mimetic act**

We shall proceed speculatively and existentially towards the ultimate end of human mimetic act, that is, towards that end that fulfils the *mimesis* that, together with Aristotle, we recognised as intimately related to the dynamism of understanding/learning. We, thus, open to the reality of an act that is not just limited to the gnoseological sphere, but seems to belong to a larger place where one finds the energies to build on solid foundations, since they are real foundations, the human living of humans.

In order for this to become evident it is necessary to *look* at the ontological *sense* of the act that makes a *mimesis* maker at the moment when he/she acts and shapes the *mimema*. It does not matter, here, if the *mimesis* maker who is making his/her act is a child playing a game or an artist creating his/her work — and it is in this sense that the non-differentiation between the two acts, proposed by Aristotle, so far apart if looked under other aesthetic respects, shall be intended.

If we, therefore, look with ontological-existential sensitivity at the acts of a *mimesis* maker while he/she is producing the *mimema*, we can easily detect that she/he recognises a *something* as essentially *specific in something*, and he/she models the *alogos* which is available for her/his act (voice and body, in its plastic and dynamic possibilities, if we consider the child’s mimetic game; colours, sounds, plastic material, letters of the alphabet, words in the dictionary ... if we consider the artist creative act) to *make another something* — the *mimema* indeed — which has a similitude with that essentiality that had been recognised in the *something* that originated the expressive process. Mimetic activity appears under this light as the *manipulation of a material* that is other than logos, in order to give it a *form* that allows this *material* to pass from nothing (as logos) to being (as logos). The *form* thus created — the *mimema* — expresses a representation of *something*, not a representation of the *something* in itself, but of the universal that is recognised by the *mimesis* maker in the *something* he/she meant to express. It makes no difference, in this act voted to expression and understanding, if the *something* of which *mimesis* is produced is *something* material or *something* conceptual, what remains is the search for authentic essentiality: of what is substantial in the *something*.

Let’s take, for example, a little girl who is doing the *mimesis* of a sea wave at her teacher’s request (to reiterate; *doing the mimesis* is, in its most general sense, making oneself similar to someone or something — in the case of the example here proposed, imagination can help us and we can easily *see* a child in the act of generating her *becoming similar the wave with the movement of her body* —). The movement that the child produces — the *mimema* — will not be properly the *mimesis* of a specific wave, but rather the *mimesis* of what the child immediately recognises inside her as the *universal* of the wave. The word “wave”, of course, coincides in the child to a specific essentiality (other than the word “dog” or “fire” for example) that to her is “the wave”, and she will be immediately able to produce a body *mimesis* of this specific essentiality that to her is the “wave” and not something else; and she will generate, through this act of recognition inside herself, an essentiality distinct from herself (“wave” not “me”), yet held within herself, a movement that is properly a *mimaction*²¹. The mimaction the child produces — that is, her moving in a certain way — takes the same name of the

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represented entity (indeed, we can say that the child is doing “the wave”); and, furthermore, since this doing is exercised by the child modelling a material which is her own person, she can properly call “me” the universal of the entity which she is expressing: indeed the child may properly say: “I am the wave” while she is in the act of making the mimesis of the wave. This essentiality that the child recognises in her self as “wave”, must have been previously incorporated by the child through several meetings (or at least one) with the reality of the wave. Meetings that will have taken place both through an immediate contact with this reality, and through a mediated contact (for example, a mimema produced by another human being: a painting, a photograph, a movie, a music...), and will be able to deepen and evolve in the subsequent meetings that the child will have with the “wave” reality. And, certainly, the mimacton she produces and the process that goes from the recognition of the universal in the entity to the creation of mimaction – properly mimesis – cannot but play a fundamental role for the understanding/learning of the entity in question.

Nevertheless, every process of true learning/understanding is, in this light, a mimetic process.

If we consider again the child who is able to make the mimaction of the wave, we can assume as a matter of fact that if the child can act the mimesis of the wave (achievement that we must consider devoid of any extrinsic evaluation: there is, in fact, no other form except the wave itself that can be considered as paradigm of the mimesis; and, how “the wave” is in itself and for itself no one is allowed to know) this is a sign that to her the word “wave” corresponds to something she recognises in herself and can express, modelling herself to the universal of what she considers as “wave” and becoming herself “wave” in turn. And in this expressive act it is totally evident that the entity “wave” is freed from everything that is contingency in the wave: being a child in the flesh (and not a mass of water) that can effectively represent it.

It seems evident even with this simple example of the child playing the wave how much the mimesis can by itself alone explain about human specificity.

Making a direct reference to Aristotle’s Poetics (1448b ss.), Gadamer writes:

22 It is necessary to be clear about this recognition. About this concept, Manara Valgimigli writes an illuminating passage saying that the little girl who tightly holds her doll, and gives her a name, and lulls her and cuddles her, asks her questions and invents the answers, seems indeed to be imitating her mother, but actually is expressing and accomplishing in accents and movements and attitudes certain inclinations and dispositions which are building up and working in her little soul. Give a child, or two children, a reason whatsoever that generates in them a spiritual activity, and they will continue by themselves to imagine the story they prefer, and create and weave their own myth. Mimesis is imitation and creation; is the act of creation itself that complies with the created object, that adheres to it in an accomplished way, that is one with it in the flowing of life that lives in it. Adhering recognition between imitation and imitated object does not imply a previous or special or partial knowledge of the imitated object; it is on the contrary the recognition of a life process in its perfect development or rather of a life rhythm to which a soul tends as towards an own integration, and thus rejoices when it is recognized as closed and complete [...]. All our exclamations of joyful recognition before a work of art [...] reveal nothing but a new act of life which revealed itself fully and freshly; or also of a life rhythm which we saw turn and incarnate and close following its own law, which we felt and recognised as the same law that opened in our soul the subsequent intervals and marked the expected beats, until the rhythm touched its final point and closed its arch. The object of mimesis is not an acquired knowledge; it is not the particular, the single, the episode, what was and is not anymore, what is anywhere outside ourselves but not in ourselves; it is, on the contrary, the universal: and, besides, not an abstract universal, an idea, an aspiration a symbol, but a concrete universal, at the top of its concreteness; a universal that divides and multiplies recreating itself in thousands of ways and movements and life fragments, which is life itself in its innumerable radiating and refracting from the inexhausted fecundity of the spirit (cf. Valgimigli, M., *Introduzione*, in Aristotele, *Poetica*, Laterza, Bari, 1966, pp. 27-28).
«When we know something as something, this clearly means that we recognise it, but when we recognise something, we do not simply know it for a second time after previous acquaintance with it. Recognition is something qualitatively different. Where something is recognised, it has liberated itself from the uniqueness and contingency of the circumstances in which it was encountered [...] thereby it begins to rise to its permanent essence and is detached from anything like a chance encounter. [...] Aristotle is quite right to perceive the essence of mimetic representation, and thus the work of art as well, in such knowledge. From here he arrived at his famous distinction between poetry and history, according to which poetry is the “more philosophical” of the two because history only recognises things as they actually happened, while poetry on the other hand relate how they might have happened: that is, according to their universal and permanent essence. Poetry thus participates in the truth of the universal».

The child can be considered as taking part in the “universal truth” when this “freedom from the casualty of happening” also lives in her creative act of *mimesis* making. What evidently differentiates the two – the child from the adult artist – is the intentionality in acting the mimetic act.

And thus, it is as if the child participated in the universal truth, but without the intentionality specific to the artist’s act. What the artist can do – we maintain – is what also those who chose to teach, or to educate, can do.

In a passage from the *Convivio* (tr. IV, par. X) Dante recognises the necessity of *making oneself similar* so that the artist can accomplish his/her work, but adding the ineludible presence of *intentionality* in one’s act aimed to produce the *mimema*:

«Poi chi pinge figura, [se non può esser lei non la può porre]. Onde nullo dipintore potrebbe porre alcuna figura, se intenzionalmente non si facesse prima tale quale la figura esser dee ».

Therefore, Aristotle distinctly understands that *mimesis*, rather than being imitation of a particular, is, in its true essence (that which concerns the poet’s *making* and the child’s *playing*; but why not? – still we insist – the teacher’s *doing of the lesson*) a *making* that captures the universal in the particular; and if it is reflection of something, it is reflection of the universal and not of the particular.

It is immediately evident how powerful this creative *mirroring* is, through which something – anything – is reinvented in a human shape, even if it has a very different aspect from that of a human being (let’s return to the example of the wave), and however participates of an essentiality that a human being can recognise in oneself.

In the act of *mimesis*, the catching of the universal becomes expression, which, perhaps, in some way, coincides with the catching itself, and that certainly enhances its comprehension. It’s hard to deny that this process has an ineffable charm: the child is, in fact, able to seize a specific essentiality in any entity she has somehow met before and, in the space of a

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moment, model her own body with a movement that is alike this essentiality; and the mimesis making is so surprisingly quick that it is almost as if this essentiality were already movement inside her – inside the child.

This process implies the adjustment of each part of her body to the specific of the entity she means to express. As Aristotle seems to suggest in the first of the two causes he identifies to justify the human ability to produce poetry, understanding/learning (manthánein) occurs through the making oneself similar; in the second cause he asserts that human beings, through the mimemas produced by others, intensifies their understanding/learning. Connecting the act of mimesis and the act of understanding/learning seems to open to a mutual influence between the two acts, almost as if the intensification of the first produced the intensification of the latter in a virtuous circularity: a process which tends to the essential in the entity through the existence of the individual subject. A process in which the subject offers his/her existence in order for something else to be and, in this act of expression of something else from oneself, the subject is likely to express oneself: he/she expresses his/her existence. What seems to be produced, through such a spiral movement, is an ontological fulfilment of existence itself. Under this light, the mimesis appears as the way through which existence makes evident what being is.

If the act of a human being is his/her existence, a human being shows the intensity of his/her being in the recognition of the essential he/she expresses. And this recognition is mimesis. Gadamer writes unambiguously: that mimesis is an act of identification in which something is recognised. But the use of one’s existence in order to achieve this recognition shows, in the actuality of life, what makes a unity of the self and the other from the self.

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24 In this regard, Orazio Costa Giovangigli, master of the Italian theatre, writes in a letter that he'll start by observing the essential importance, for the development of the superior individual animal, of the instinct of imitation. Through it, the baby, by imitating the adult, acquires the definitive character of the species, its habits and qualities. Man participates in this instincts of imitation; however, his/her attention is not limited to the individuals of his/her species, but goes to everything that can be considered individual, be it animate or inanimate, and exercises his/her instinct of “imitation” on every object of his/her attention. The purely animal imitation is exercised through repetition from “member to member” in an act or a series of acts and in the same way the baby-human (and after the adult human) who exercises in the imitation of objects (animals, objects, phenomena) doesn’t have identical members for imitation; however, almost without realizing it, and following another instinct which the author calls “mimic”, spontaneously overcomes this limit and continues to imitate, without correspondence of identical members (since identity is so far excluded), attributing to some of his/her body parts the role of others and of the most different shapes of the objects. In this way, through new and totally abstract actions and series of actions, he realises a new type of analogic imitation, which, for its new character, shall be called in another way. From “imitation” we move to “miming”. From simple repetition we move to a function which is at the same time interpretative and creative. It is interpretative because, it translates, rather than reproducing. It is creative because the choice of the expressive arts is not mechanically automatic, but is committed to the nature of the individual, his spontaneous movements with a specific psychic character (Quaderno XVI, 29/8/1966, private collection).

25 For first cause Aristotle uses the noun to it related: manthánein. He will directly use the verb when arguing about the second cause.

26 Gadamer’s reflection on mimesis allows a further understanding of what the mimetic capacity can represent for the making of humanity in a human being:
«The meaning of the word mimesis consists simply in letting something be there without trying to do anything more with it. The pleasure involved in mimetic behaviour and its effects is a fundamental human pleasure that Aristotle had already illustrated with the behaviour of children. The pleasure of dressing up and representing something other than oneself, and the pleasure of the person who
If a child does the wave, and, while making the *mimesis* of the wave, may say, with good reason – as we have seen just above: “I am the wave”; this is because the child in that act is the essential of the wave: she recognises the wave in herself, but so *in herself* that she can immediately show it through the self, allowing her interiority to become “wave” wishing herself as wave."""27

What is clear through the mimetic act seems to be nothing else but ontological *participation*. *Mimesis* makes alive and tangible participation in being that ontologically constitutes the entities; and letting it out of inexpression shows reality through the activity of human existence.

To recognise something is, then, to free this *something* of all the aspects that make up its contingency, in order to contemplate the universal in one’s interiority. The entity, in its incarnation in a subject that expresses it, far from lowering, is raised to its durable essence which finds expression and consequently is; while, in turn, the subject, in expressing the entities recognises his/her *existence* and becomes actual through that movement that harmonizes him/her with the world."""28

**Offering one’s own being for the being of the other**

We can easily detect how, in the mimetic act, the person offers, in some way, one’s self in a being for the other from the self; and how one realizes this activity through a *harmonization* between self and other: a process that becomes more *perfect* more it is intentionally sincere and deep. And as we have seen so far, this *becoming* self-other, started in the passage from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, is intimately connected to the process through which human beings understand/learn.

 recognises what is represented, show what the real significance of imitative representation is [...]. Every representation finds its genuine fulfilment simply in the fact that what it represents is emphatically there. [...] *Mimesis* is a representation in which we “know” and have in view the essential content of what is represented [...] the act in which something is recognised here is not an act of distinction, but of identification. However ineliminable it may be, and however we may emphasize it, the distance between the image and the original has something inappropriate about it as far as the real ontological meaning of mimesis is concerned. When the work of art carries conviction, the *paradigma* (to which, according to Plato, every representation is related as an image, and which it necessarily falls short of) is not present as such.” (Gadamer, H. G., *Poetry and Mimesis*, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 119)."""27

In this regard, it is interesting to see how Pirandello describes the creative act in his essay “*Per le ragioni estetiche della parola*”, which is the *Appendice* to the text *Arte e scienza*. He writes that he cannot deny the dog as an object, even if he admits it only exists inside himself since he knows about it. The dog will always remain an object, if not physical, then spiritual, an object that he contemplates inside himself, but he does not create: he cannot create it because he did not want it and it doesn’t want itself inside him [...] Then the author wonders when it will become creation. When he stops contemplating it as an object inside him, when it will start to want itself inside him, as he wants it for itself (cf. Pirandello, L., *Appendice (per le ragioni estetiche della parola)*, in *Arte e scienza*, in *Saggi e interventi*, a cura di F. Taviani, «I Meridiani», Mondadori, Milano, 2006, p. 774)."""28

In *Art and Imitation* Gadamer writes: «However there is more to recognition than this. It does not simply reveal the universal, the permanent form, stripped of all our contingent encounters with it. For it is also part of the process that we recognise ourselves as well. All recognition represents the experience of growing familiarity, and all our experiences of the world are ultimately ways in which we develop familiarity with that world. As the Aristotelian doctrine rightly seems to suggest, all art of whatever kind is a form of recognition that serves to deepen our knowledge of ourselves and thus our familiarity with the world as well» (Gadamer, H. G., *Art and Imitation*, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 99-100)."""
It's easy to imagine that each person accomplishes the *mimesis* of the same object with his/her own originality: since the recognition of the essentiality of the other from the self that takes place in each person is different, the expression of this recognition will be different, too.

What opportunities would be opened for the development of humanity through a serious exercise in the achievement of the *mimesis*’ *mimesis* that another human being expresses?

I think it is right to consider that if this practice were extended to every place of human life, and if this capacity were trained, human participation in humanity would be intensified.

I believe this offer of one’s own being to the *being for the other* of another person could have the power of re-founding the coexistence on a harmony that is the live result of the movement that radically expresses and researches, researches and expresses, the participation of each entity in the cosmos and accomplishes human beings in the act that is most specific to them.

Let’s linger a little on this action – becoming similar to another person while she/he is *existing for* the other – and perceive its sense again.

Let’s imagine, then, a person who is *doing the mimesis of something* and another person *doing the mimesis of the latter in the act of doing the mimesis of that something*; what it is possible to tend-to with this movement – where what is made is the *mimesis* of the other one’s *mimesis* – is not only the *something* such as the other recognises it in oneself, but also that mysterious place where the essential recognition of that *something* takes place in the other and in us. Through the contingency of a mimetic act it is, therefore, possible to move towards the *centre* from which the act of the mimesis maker is engendered; the same place where we recognise ourselves as *logos* makers. And if this research lives in a movement that never stops and that goes from one person to another, what will thus begin to live and express itself (i.e. begin to be) is the *participation* of human beings in humanity.

**A responsible choice**

Coming to the end of this paper I can argue that recognition of the centrality of *mimesis* in the educational process allows human edification to precede devoid of ideological basis, be it secular or confessional; and overcomes the bewilderment and uncertainty arising from any proposal that moves from a relativistic conception, be it explicit or implicit.

The *mimesis* formerly recognised by Plato as a link between what *is expressed* and what *really is*, and masterfully resumed by Aristotle, who recognised its positive paideutic value in the *Poetics*, should be nowadays resumed, and recognised as the existential dynamics that restore ontological coordinates to human relationship between self and *other* (be it another human or other than a human being).

This paideutic process centred on *mimesis* is for humans a source of pleasure since it constitutes the *specific* of our own nature.

Human beings, indeed, are born with the vocation to be in the image of the *other* in order to understand it/her/him; and a process of knowledge is started after this first understanding and is deepened through the *mimesis* of the *mimemas* that, again through a mimetic process, other human beings produce.

It seems to me that there is, therefore, sufficient theoretical evidence to start requalification projects of the educational action that can proceed without following monisms or relativisms since they are built on the re-evaluation of an anthropological dynamic that fully responds to the laws of human nature (the laws that belong to the whole nature), and which produces its
effect thanks to the commitment of human beings who take steps to understand the other and themselves.

A mimetic and rationally mature homo will have the habitus to use his/her rationality to intentionally build the other’s happiness, thus pursuing, with this act, one’s own happiness as well.

Any inhibition to the mimetic dynamism in the educational process exposes human being to the unnatural risk of using and exploiting the other human being: since the latter’s happiness or unhappiness is not recognised in one’s own self.

The sense of this proposal lies in giving mimesis the role it deserves in education. This recognition opens to an edification of coexistence that can benefit from a vast human dimension, capable of recognizing our humanity beyond our rational capacity29. What is now necessary is to simply reconsider the educational action in a way that is coherent with this other recognition.

29 Adorno wrote some intense passages, reflecting on the criticality of the mimetic moment of knowledge, and, at the same time, on the necessary and complex complementarity and conflict between rationality and mimesis (see Adorno, T. W., Teoria Estetica, Einaudi, Torino, 1977, pp. 91-95).
Bildung in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. Acute alienation.

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1. Introduction
The concept of formation – in German *Bildung*¹ – traditionally occupies a central place in Northern European discussions on science, education and culture. Originally the idea was part of the educational ideology of the progressive bourgeois class (Habermas 1962: 115) which synthesized promises for reason, freedom, autonomy and authority, i.e. *Mündigkeit* (Winkler 2012: 20-21). However, in the 20th century *Bildung* took on a conservative leaning and apparently showed itself to be compatible even with the authoritarianism of a national socialist state (Habermas 1986: 46). As such the idea of *Bildung* became an object of suspicion and critique, and this is still the case in relation to the modern society as we know it today (Winkler 2012: 26-27). Nevertheless, in spite of suspicion and critique, it is possible to recognize an element of truth in the original idea (Winkler 2012: 27-28; Habermas 1962: 193),² and to support this recognition with a conceptual substantialization one promising source is Hegel’s original conception of *Bildung*.

Recently attempts have thus been made to revive Hegel’s social and political thinking, combining *Bildung* with freedom. The leading idea has been to develop an idea of *Bildung* appropriate for the 21st century (Winkler and Vieweg 2012: 9), and for many of the discussions of *Bildung* in this context, Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* has been chosen as the main reference.³ This is quite understandable when the concept of freedom is the point of departure, since this is where Hegel makes his famous determinations of freedom, claiming that “it is the absolute goal of reason that freedom becomes real”, and that “the state is the realization of freedom” (*W 7*: 403). Of course starting the discussion of *Bildung* with freedom in this perspective points to certain ideological and conceptual possibilities and not to others. In particular for those with a traditional liberal concept of freedom, but also for Marx himself as well as for many Marxists, Hegel’s conception of freedom in this context has often been experienced as very provoking.

Making *Bildung* the explicit point of departure makes a difference in this respect. Consulting the index of Hegel’s works thus reveals his *Phenomenology of Spirit* to be the most extensive reference concerning *Bildung* (Reinicke 1979: 86-87), and just a quick glance at the list of content indicates that for Hegel *Bildung* must play an important role as a general

¹ The German term *Bildung* is very difficult to translate adequately into English. *Bildung* is a specific kind of formation, and the word can signify both the process of what in the US would be called liberal education and the normative goal for such an education, namely to acquire *Bildung* or to end up as an educated person. This is the spectrum of meaning I will stay within. Others, however, have chosen to translate the Hegelian concept of ‘Bildung’ to ‘culture’ (e.g. Stern 2002: 148), probably in order to acknowledge the collective aspect of the process as well as the ideal. These difficulties cannot be ignored when dealing with these matters in English. In Danish, however, *Bildung* can be translated almost directly into the word ‘dannelse’. Since I did the basic research on these matters for a chapter to be written in Danish for a philosophical history of ‘dannelse’ (Sørensen 2013a), for now I have restricted myself to a simple technical solution. In what follows I have thus used the German term, whenever I thought there might be a possibility of misunderstandings in English. In general, however, I have translated all non-English quotations into English, and this has been done without consulting published translations of the works in question.

² I have analyzed this idea a little more in depth in a chapter (in Danish) on Habermas and *Bildung* (Sørensen 2013b).

³ This is the case in Hopfner 2012, Vieweg 2012, Menegoni 2012, Zander 2012 and most of the other contributions in Vieweg & Winkler 2012.
philosophical concept independent of freedom. Apparently what we get here is a concept of Bildung closely intertwined with alienation – i.e. Entfremdung – and in such a perspective freedom might not reconcile itself that easily, neither with reason nor with the state nor even with society. In other words, in the Phenomenology Hegel seems to have a perspective much less offensive to traditional liberals and Marxists.

The point is that there seems to be a difference, at least in emphasis, between the reconciliatory mood of the mature professor Hegel teaching philosophy of law in Berlin in 1821 and the alienation experienced by the young Hegel completing his almost desperate writings about spirit in Jena 1807. Therefore, if one takes the latter work as point of departure, not only the connection between Bildung and freedom, but also the idea of Bildung itself come out differently. Since it is Hegel's concept of Bildung that I will pursue in this article I have therefore chosen to let my analysis be determined mainly by studies in the Phenomenology, whereas the Philosophy of Right will be largely ignored. As a result I will point to conceptual possibilities for social philosophy rather than philosophy of law or political philosophy.

Precisely in relation to a concept like Bildung, however, it seems fair to make one further displacement, namely to put some emphasis on education. This focus I believe will reveal further layers of the general philosophical meaning of Bildung and thus transcend what is merely educational. As the German philosopher and educator Willy Moog has noticed, for Hegel Bildung is a dialectical process of unfolding that can be recognized not only in the development of an individual consciousness, but also in the spirit and the absolute, i.e. reality as such. Hegel's thinking is an example of how the educational concept of formation can become so important to the philosophical concept that they become virtually indistinguishable from each other (Moog 1933: 72). In a philosophy that focuses on the development of consciousness as well as that of spirit and history, Bildung must thus be a philosophical core concept.

The emphasis on education makes it interesting that soon after the publication of the Phenomenology in Jena Hegel became rector of the new humanistic Gymnasium in Nürnberg, and this position he kept until 1816. From this period we have some less well known writings which explicitly discuss Bildung and relate it to educational matters. Some of these writings are speeches, notes, and reports that Hegel wrote as part of his work as headmaster, while others are philosophical sketches that served as notes for his teaching in the Gymnasium. These texts, however, were written at the hight of Hegel's philosophical maturity when he was working on The Science of Logic and the Encyclopedia, and they therefore deserve being taken seriously, especially when we are focusing on the concept of Bildung.

In the Nürnberg writings it is obvious that Hegel in higher education acknowledges the alienation of modernity, but also that education can somehow contribute to a reconciliation. For such an education also to become Bildung in the strong sense, the appropriation of classical culture is required. Bildung thus seems to be reserved for the upper strata of society, and this in turn makes sense of the conservative leaning noticed above. When the Phenomenology and the Nürnberg writings are brought together, not only must the connection between Bildung and freedom be interpreted differently, so must also an idea of Bildung for a long time associated with Hegel, namely that Bildung is the result of productive – or even manual – labor.

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4 For an excellent overview of Hegel's philosophy in an educational perspective in Danish, see Huggler (2004). Specifically in relation to Bildung, the main passages in Hegel's works and a number of comments in German are collected in Pleines (1983-86).
This being my frame of reference, in this article I first give a brief account of my general argument concerning Hegel’s concept of Bildung (II.), and then I add some details from the Phenomenology to support the argument (III.). I conclude with a few general remarks related to other interpretations (IV.).

2. The general argument.
Hegel’s concept of Bildung is often explained and discussed with reference to the introduction and chapter four in the Phenomenology of Spirit. Following some often quoted and therefore almost classical passages it is concluded that for Hegel experience, negation and productive work are the determining elements for the Bildung of the consciousness as conscious being, in German Bewußt-sein. In contrast to this, I argue that for Hegel Bildung cannot be achieved through production. To Hegel Bildung requires both alienation – Entfremdung – in a much wider sense than simply working with some material, and reconciliation only happens through the acquisition of classical culture. The first part of the argument is based on the most elaborate discussion of Bildung in the Phenomenology, which is found in chapter six on Geist (i.e. spirit). Here it is clear that it is alienation and the “devastating tearing apart” of the self that are constitutive for Bildung, not productive labor.

Bildung presupposes for Hegel not only the experience of alienation, but also the expression of alienation. Language is thus a necessary condition for Bildung. What further becomes clear in the chapter on spirit is that Hegel thinks of Bildung not as a phenomenon linked to the individual human being, but as something which is basically part of a collective development. Spirit is first of all realized as a people and a family, and as such spirit has political importance. For Hegel wealth, power and law can thus be represented as figures of the spirit, and they change their interrelationships in the historical development. This process drives alienation until the peak of devastating fragmentation and revolution, which is why I have chosen the term ‘acute’ to characterize alienation. Bildung is something that happens in relation to the spirit in this collective sense, and it does not emerge through production. Bildung is not primarily a matter of concern for an individual consciousness working with some material. Bildung is something inherently social, political and cultural. It is this idea of Bildung in a social philosophical context that I will elaborate a little further on in the next section. In the rest of this section I will just complete the general philosophical argument which includes a specifically educational aspect that I unfortunately can only indicate here.

Switching the focus to Hegel’s educational work with such an idea of Bildung as the general framework, it becomes clear that Hegel actually put a lot of emphasis on alienation in the Gymnasium. In his annual speeches as rector he thus payed homage to the traditional idea of Bildung (W4: 307), but he also wanted to open the minds of the students for new developments (W4: 314). This opening can according to Hegel only be achieved by confronting the students with the classical writings in Greek and Latin (W4: 319). The learning of language requires discipline, and since the classical languages are strange, they also break with conformity. The result of learning these unfamiliar languages is alienation. The content of the classical works, however, give you the instruments to reconcile yourself with reality once again (W4: 320-21). As would be expected from his reputation as the spokesman of the state, Hegel of course emphasizes discipline in general (W4: 334-35), but he is also very careful to spell out that the youth needs time by themselves to be able to develop the character necessary for granting them freedom and liberty (W4: 351-53).

5 Prominent examples are, for instance, Kojève (1947: 30 f.) and Heidegren (1995: 464).
6 This is an attempt of rendering in English the content of the Hegelian expression ‘Zerrissenheit’, which achieves a systematical role for his account of Bildung. It what follows I will also make use of expressions like ‘division’ and ‘fragmentation’ in order to transmit the experiential content of the term.
In his teaching material from the same period Hegel emphasizes that the *Bildung* should be both theoretical and practical. According to Hegel virtues to be cultivated in relation to science are the recognition of the limits of judgment, the importance of objectivity and disinterestedness (*W*4: 260). Practical virtues are first of all health which enable us to fulfill our calling. We should be faithful to our calling, since as part of humanity it expresses something universal and necessary (*W*4: 262-63). *Bildung* thus to Hegel also comprises what Kant would consider duties toward oneself. Only with these duties fulfilled in relation to ourselves, we are enabled to have duties in relation to others.

*Bildung* thus requires higher education, not just working with a material. In relation to *Bildung*, material work can at most create tacit knowledge, whereas *Bildung* in the full sense presupposes language and high culture. A close reading of the account of *Bildung* in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* thus negates many interpretations of Hegelian dialectics and philosophy of history in the slipstream of 20th century Marxism. The historical subject can never be the working class. The historical subject must have studied Greek and Latin in the Gymnasium, but that does not mean that *Bildung* for Hegel will lead to the universal realization of freedom in the state.

3. Some details from the Phenomenology supporting the argument.

This being the general argument, I will emphasize some details from the *Phenomenology* to substantiate the argument a little more. First negatively by showing that already the close reading of the first chapters demonstrates that Hegel does not credit productive labor with the capacity for *Bildung* (a.). Second positively by sketching how Hegel actually develops the idea of *Bildung* conceptually in the chapter on the spirit (b.).

**a. Formation is spirit - and it does not work**

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* the point of departure is "*Bewusst-sein*, conscious being, which in English normally is translated into ‘consciousness’. Conscious being is human being as distinct from the being of plants and animals. The *Phenomenology* is thus about human consciousness, and more specifically, how consciousness becomes conscious of itself, or perhaps even better, how man as conscious being becomes conscious of him- or herself as conscious. For Hegel consciousness only becomes real as "spirit", and here it might be helpful to think of spirit in the sense we use when talking about, for instance, the “spirit of 68”. The title of the book can thus be interpreted as referring to a doctrine of a spirit that as phenomenon appears for itself. To Hegel, however, the necessity of this development means “the road to science itself already is science”. For Hegel the *Phenomenology* is therefore “the science of the experience of consciousness” (*W*3: 80), which is also the work’s original subtitle.7

In the introduction to the *Phenomenology* Hegel explicitly links the concept of *Bildung* to the development that leads consciousness through a sequence of figures. That consciousness must be formed in this way is due to the fact that consciousness again and again in its investigation into a given bid of reality must experience the particular figure in question as untrue as it turns out not to be universalizable. For Hegel it is a "negation" when consciousness in this way makes an experience of the falseness of a specific figure. This experience immediately becomes an element – in German "*Moment*” – in a new bid for the truth about man’s conscious being, and consciousness now explores the content of the new bid. Each new bid thus contains the positive result of the experience that has already been made, namely the knowledge of the negated figure’s falsehood. "The series of figures which consciousness goes through on this road is [...] the detailed story of the formation [*Bildung*]."

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of consciousness to science.” (W3: 73)⁸ Consciousness’ experience of the truth about itself requires a formation, whose steps are analyzed in the seven first chapters of the Phenomenology. The truth, however, can only be known in what Hegel calls “the science” or in “the absolute knowledge”, which is also the title of the eighth and final chapter. Consciousness is only truly conscious being as spirit, but it is only truly spirit, when its formation has brought it to the absolute knowledge. It is the road thereto that is reconstructed in the Phenomenology of Spirit.⁹

An important step in this development is where consciousness is brought from being conscious of something that is different from itself, to also being conscious of it-self or being self-conscious. This is what happens in chapter four which accordingly is titled "Self-consciousness". Hegel takes hold of the situation in which consciousness is facing another consciousness. One consciousness thus has the other consciousness as the object and vice versa. From Spinoza Hegel has learned that all determination is negation (W20: 164-65), but consciousness is not just a subject perceiving or experiencing. In the previous sections Hegel has showed that consciousness is also a living and desiring entity. For Hegel consciousness is conscious being, and as such it is alive. This means that consciousness also negates by destroying or devouring its surroundings. Consciousness thus maintains its independence by the material negation of its surroundings, and therefore a real conflict must arise, when one consciousness is facing another consciousness.

Hegel thinks this conflict is realized in a necessary battle of life and death, which can only be solved by one consciousness abandoning the attempt to negate the other, and this means giving up its independence. This is where we get the famous dialectic of master and slave.¹⁰ The decisive moment – Moment in German – is the fear of the absolute negation, the fear of destruction and death, anxiety in itself. The fear of death, "the absolute master" shakes consciousness, and the necessary result is, for Hegel, that one of the consciousnesses shattered by anxiety chooses life, giving up sovereignty and thereby accepting the role of a servant or a slave. The service of a slave consists in working for another, i.e. in servitude. What is essential for the slave is the master. A slave is characterized by serving a master in anxiety, and it is in this service we again encounter the question of the Bildung.

Desiring is characterized by aiming at the “pure negation of an object”, which thus disappears. Work is for Hegel “inhibited desire, postponed disappearance” that “forms” – i.e. bildet – “the object-side” (W3: 153). The object will then have “form”, and for Hegel, it is important to emphasize that “the fear and the service as such, as well as the forming all are necessary”:

Without the discipline of service and obedience, the fear remains by the merely formal and does not expand itself to the conscious reality of being. Without the forming fear remains internal and dumb (W3: 154).

Crucial to Hegel is that the slave in this forming of a thing "comes to himself" (W3: 153). The working consciousness achieves a “conception of its own independent being”, and Hegel can therefore emphasize that without such forming “being cannot become conscious of itself ”(W3: 154).

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⁹ A thorough interpretation – in Danish – of the Introduction in the Phenomenology of Spirit is given by Jørgen Hass (1981). An excellent commentary to the entire Phenomenology is written in Swedish, namely by Carl-Göran Heidegren (1995), and for a reconstruction of the Phenomenology in the light of the absolute knowledge, see the Habituation of Jørgen Huggler (1999) – also in Danish!
¹⁰ See my 2012a, p. 69-73 for a little more conceptual details on this part of Hegel’s dialectics.
It has been common to highlight how Hegel associates the working with an object conceptually to the formation – i.e. Bildung – as such. One is assumed to form oneself through work, forming an object according to one’s own idea. In the forming of the thing one exteriorizes oneself – in German Entäußert sich – but afterwards one can recognize oneself in what has been formed. It is therefore assumed that when Hegel in this figure lets the truth of consciousness be in the slave, and consciousness through work is formed to self-consciousness, then formation – Bildung – must also be the result. As Moog concludes: “Work as a whole is the formation of intelligence.” (1933: 73)

However, on closer scrutiny one discovers that Hegel consistently fails to use the word “Bildung” in this context. Instead, he uses “Bilden” when he writes about the forming of things, and none of the two words occur in connection with his reconstruction of the development of consciousness in this passage. It might very well be the case that for Hegel the thing is formed according to the laborer’s idea and consciousness is formed through the work, but that does not mean that consciousness achieves Bildung.

In the Philosophy of Right Hegel explicitly characterizes Bildung as the “hard work” (W7: 345 (§ 187)) that leads to the liberation from desire, and through which the subjective will achieves the objectivity, which makes it possible for it to become “the reality of the idea”. However, as I will argue in the following section, this is not at all the concept of Bildung that Hegel develops in the Phenomenology. Here there seems to be a crucial difference between on the one hand the forming as an occupational shaping or processing of things and on the other the formation of consciousness. To maintain the awareness of this distinction, I will distinguish consistently between the ‘forming’ (Bilden) of a thing as productive manual labor and the ‘formation’ that conscious being according to Hegel must go through and achieve, i.e. ‘Bildung’ in the stricter sense. I will return to this question again in the concluding remarks in relation to some common misunderstandings, at least in my generation. Insisting on this distinction might nevertheless already here seem a bit forced.

b. Alienation and formation are inescapably intertwined

The most comprehensive philosophical reflections on formation – Bildung – in the Phenomenology of Spirit is to be found in chapter VI, “The Spirit”. The close connection between Bildung and alienation is noticed already by a superficial look at the chapter on spirit. The combination of both these elements thus constitutes the title of section VI.B., “The world of the spirit, which is alienated for itself. The Bildung”. Furthermore the subsection VI.B.1 named “The world of the spirit alienated from itself” contains the sub-subsection VI.B.I.a. with the title “Bildung and its realm in reality”. In general these sections and subsections of the Hegelian dialectics are notable for being among the most extensive in the book (Siep 2000: 189). Depending on the actual layout of the edition, section IV.B. normally covers between 60 and 80 pages. What I propose in this section is therefore only a very modest interpretation.

Hegel emphasizes as mentioned that man’s conscious being only becomes real as spirit: “Spirit is [...] the in-it-self-sustaining, absolutely real being.” (W3: 325) This means, for Hegel, that all previous figures can be considered as abstractions in which the conditions for realization of the spirit are analyzed. “Spirit is thus consciousness as such.” (W3: 326) As

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11 The same line of thought is also followed by Heidegren (1995: 464), Hartmann (1931: 36-37) and Nicolin (1955: 97-98).
12 Linking closely the forming of the thing with the formation of consciousness is so common that in the general index of Hegel’s Works one finds references to this passage in the Phenomenology under the heading “Bildung” (Reinicke 1979: 86). However, in the article the word ‘Bilden’ is indicated in full and not just as the ‘B’ referring to Bildung.
Ludwig Siep has emphasized this must mean that Hegel here will not ignore the factual order of the historical development (Siep 2000: 175). It is thus only in such a spiritual and historical reality that Hegel will talk about *Bildung* in the strict sense, and therefore it becomes important to examine which factors Hegel takes into account in this allegedly now real movement of conscious being. It is these factors that determine how formation is progressing and thus what *Bildung* is according to Hegel.

The importance of formation consists initially for Hegel in that it represents the opposite of "the spiritless universality of law". For Hegel only a universality, which has become, is real. That's why to be science the *Phenomenology of Spirit* must reconstruct the dialectical logic of the entire genesis of science. For the same reason the individual human being only has reality and validity through formation, i.e. *Bildung*; as Hegel puts it, "to the extent it has formation, to such a degree it has reality and power." (W3: 364) The individual's "formation and its own reality is therefore the realization of the substance itself" (W3: 365), where substance for Hegel refers to the essential, the universal, which is the truth of conscious being. With the entry of consciousness in what Hegel calls the “realm of *Bildung*”, we can thus sense the goal of the *Phenomenology*, the absolute knowledge, but this does not mean that the contradictions become less pronounced.

In the realm of *Bildung* formation becomes associated with a figure of consciousness, where consciousness not only has become exterior to itself, but also alien to itself. As often noticed, the figure has some structural resemblance with the unhappy consciousness of chapter four (Heidegren 1995: 466), but since the alienation of the spirit is also itself a real figure, Hegel now goes as far as to claim that "alienation will become alienated to itself" (W3: 366). For Hegel consciousness is here confronted with conflicts, contradictions and divisions which are developed in relation to objects, in relation to consciousness itself, and even in relation to the contradictions. As from the very beginning of the formation the basic contradiction is between the universal, which consciousness aims to propose, and the individual or particular, which manifests itself in the specific figure of consciousness. Consciousness believes in each figure to possess the truth about itself, but again and again the assumed figure shows not to be of universal applicability, and thus for Hegel of no reality in the strict sense.

As Siep notes, also in the spirit we encounter those contradictions which so far have driven consciousness from one figure to the next (Siep 2008: 420). Apart from the general logic, however, in the realm of *Bildung* for Hegel there is one crucial, real and material contradiction, namely the one between state and richness. Initially consciousness considers state power as good and richness as evil (W3: 367), but after a great deal of upheaval — i.e. unfolding of internal contradictions, change of perspective and various reconciliations — consciousness is brought on to consider the matter in the completely opposite manner. At first Hegel thus lets consciousness perceive the state as the universal, and consciousness therefore devotes itself into an “elevated obedience” by which the idea of the state gets reality as action. Such real state power, however, comes in conflict with the individual, for whom power is experienced as "the oppressive substance and the evil" (W3: 370), and instead wealth therefore becomes the good. As Heidegren has pointed out, historically it is this reversal that can be seen in the transition from the feudal world to the dawn of capitalism (Heidegren 1995: 232).

For Hegel, however, dialectics is brought onwards by a further differentiation. The result is two other figures, where the first figure considers both wealth and power as good, while the second considers both as bad. The first figure Hegel calls "the noble mind" in which consciousness is in service of both state and wealth. The noble consciousness is characterized by its “heroism in service”, which is the “virtue, where the individual human being sacrifices itself for the general good” (W3: 373). Here you get “the proud vassal”, serving the public with "honor" (W3: 374). In the second figure consciousness is “vile”, maintaining that there is “inequality” in both fields, just as the idea of “domination” always
implies “shackles and oppression”. In this figure consciousness is therefore “always poised to revolt” (W3: 372).

It is not until this stage Hegel introduces language. For the formation it is thus crucial that the conscious being in its noble servitude gets a linguistic expression, namely in what he calls the “council”. Here “different opinions about the common good” are presented, even though a council according to Hegel “still not [is] Government and therefore not truly state power” (W3: 374-75) For Hegel, however, it is language that really makes alienation and formation possible. Language is “the pure being of the self as self [...]”, only language “says I” (W3: 376). Language on the one side allows the dumb noblesse to transform the heroic servitude into “heroic flattery” and on the other it raises power to the “to spirit refined life”, the pure “equality to itself: The monarch” (W3: 378). Language thus makes possible the absolute monarchy, which aggravates the alienation experienced even more. Language allows the monarch to pronounce himself as the only name – the state, it’s me – and for the noble consciousness the sacrificial alienation therefore becomes extreme.

The result is “devastation” – my attempt of rendering content of the German Zerrissenheit – where everything that is universal, everything “which is called law, good and right” falls apart and perishes; “everything equal is dissolved” into “the purest inequality” (W3: 382). According to Hegel, however, it is precisely in this acute and absolute alienation that the truth of Bildung must be found. “The language of devastation is [...] the perfect language and the true existing spirit of this whole world of Bildung.” (W3: 384) Self-consciousness is elevated in its rejection to “the absolute equality-with-itself in the absolute devastation”. The “pure formation” is “the absolute and universal distortion and alienation of reality and thought” (W3: 385). In this alienated Bildung consciousness transcends both the noble loyalty of the servant and the vile meanness of the rebel. As divided, torn apart and fragmented consciousness has its existence as “universal speech and devastated judging”, which, however, expresses “the true and irrepressible”. The “consciousness torn to pieces” is a “distorted consciousness” (W3: 386), since it distorts “all concepts and realities”. The point is, however, that the “shamelessness to utter this deception”, “alternately furious and soothing, tender and mocking” is “the greatest truth” (W3: 387). For Hegel, this “the devastation of conscious being that is aware of itself and pronounces itself”, is a “scornful laughter of existence as well as of the confusion of the whole and of itself ”(W3: 389), but still it is the truth of Bildung.

In so doing, Hegel has said what he wants to say about formation in the Phenomenology of Spirit. Only once does he return to the question of formation, namely by the end of the analysis of the French Revolution. Here the point is to remind that the realm of Bildung was the “most exalted” step. The “negation and alienation” of Bildung is “satisfied”, and it does not assume the form of “pure abstraction”. Formation achieves its essence in the “interaction” as opposed to the absolute freedom in the revolution, where “negation is the meaningless death” (W3: 439).

In the Phenomenology formation is clearly conditional on a developed modern society, where it is possible through a refined language to relate both to oneself, to one’s surroundings and to the contradictions that arise for both in relation to themselves and to each other. Formation reaches its peak in the conscious recognition of the contradictory nature of existence. Bildung has only consciousness as truly alienated, that is, consciousness which is not only alienated from itself and its surroundings, but also from its very alienation. Educated is especially the one that has allowed him- or herself to be formed by exteriorization and alienation. It is such a consciousness that can utter the truth about the world of Bildung, the truth about the contradictions on which it itself is based. These contradictions are most evident in the elevated noble consciousness that considers both state power and wealth as goods, but also the low and vile consciousness gets involved in contradictions. The mean consciousness can very well through the devastation as a bohemian be allowed to utter the contradictions, but when it comes to a rebellious activity in absolute freedom, i.e. the
revolution, the result is just an abstract negation, namely death, and such an annihilation can for Hegel not be a bid of the truth about man’s conscious being. But neither is the true alienated formation — Bildung — the conscious being in its truth.

In spite of the contradictory nature of Bildung, it thus marks the highest possible aspiration of the spirit in the political process trying to balance the ideals of the state and accumulated wealth. Or, put in another way: Modernity is basically divided and fragmented, and it does not allow any political and societal reconciliation beyond Bildung. The truth of conscious being must be found beyond the realm of Bildung and therefore also beyond the real political realizations of the spirit. The Phenomenology of Spirit thus continues its progression from spirit through religion to absolute knowledge.

4. Concluding remarks: Formation requires education

Bildung as human formation requires the enabling conditions of alienation, fragmentation and freedom; put on the tip, alienation can be said to be the necessary condition of education. Formation is therefore not a conscious teleological activity aimed at an end, which can be determined in advance. As Gadamer says, formation is not a means to shape dispositions, which are already given (Gadamer 1986: 17). In formation, man must break with what is merely natural and through negation rise to universality.

Fulfilling such a task, however, might not be so easy. One of the constitutive ideas in social philosophy is the acknowledgement of the troublesome, sometimes even pathological, relation between man and society in modernity. This is most often expressed with the concept of alienation, and classical references to such an approach are Rousseau and Marx. However, as Heidegren emphasizes (1995: 226), precisely in relation to the German conception of alienation as Entfremdung, Hegel can be recognized as — with inspiration from Goethe — having renewed and developed the philosophical vocabulary, and as we know now, in the Phenomenology Hegel lets alienation get its main conceptual content by relating it to Bildung.

As mentioned in the introduction, however, it has been common to emphasize the close relationship in the philosophy of Hegel between the forced forming of things and consciousness' formation. One of the most striking examples is the famous lectures by Alexandre Kojève, where it is work that “forms slave consciousness” (Kojève 1947: 121). Work “liberates” and "creates a real world", which is "non-natural", "cultural", "historical" and "human". For Kojève it is simply "work alone", which "forms-or-educates man" (1947: 30-31)

With such an understanding of formation and education, Marxist readers of Hegel have been able to argue that the consciousness raising of the workers constituted consciousness in the strong Hegelian sense. Productive work thus gave the crucial raise in human consciousness, and therefore one could say that the working class is the subject of history, that is, the figure who brings the story of humanity to the final sublation of all contradictions. With such strong ties between Hegel and Marx, the big showdown with Marx's idealization of work is therefore also a showdown with Hegel's philosophy, and what is supposed to unite them, i.e. dialectics. The young Michel Foucault thus distance himself to dialectics denouncing it as “the working man’s philosophy “ (Foucault 1963: 767), and for an equally young Jacques Derrida “the independence of self-consciousness becomes ridiculous at the moment it frees itself by serving, that is, when it enters into work, that is, into dialectics.” (Derrida 1967: 28)
As I have argued above, however, there is not much in Hegel, which gives credit to attribute to the productive labor this importance. Negation is of course a necessary element in the formation of consciousness, but the forming of productive work is not the only kind of negation, and actually it is a rather primitive one, since it is non-linguistic. In the real formation – i.e. Bildung – it is the experience of the strangeness of Classical Antiquity that provides the negative breaks with the given reality. It is by the hard study of the classical works in Greek and Latin that one can develop the necessary alienation and divisionary fragmentation, and it is precisely through the very same works, in the midst of devastated despair, that one can find oneself again. It is thus alienation, which provides the negative component, and this happens in the experience of learning alien languages. It is hard work to overcome the distance to Antiquity through acquiring fluency in Greek and Latin, but it is not productive and, even less, manual labor. To Hegel a forming of consciousness might happen through productive labor, but this does not provide consciousness with formation – i.e. Bildung – in the proper sense of the word.

The subject of history has for Hegel obviously studied in the Gymnasium, while the worker, who in distress and anxiety is forming material things to his master, only achieves conscious being at a very rudimentary level, namely what today could be labeled ‘tacit knowledge’. One may consider it a necessary step in raising consciousness, but it can never sufficient. To get the Bildung necessary for living in freedom and taking responsibility, for Hegel the worker has to take classes in a high school or, even better, at the university. Hegel never was a democrat.\(^\text{15}\) For Hegel the best rule of the state must be aristocracy or even better, meritocracy, i.e. a rule by those best suited for such a role. The dialectics of Hegel cannot be taken to support the Marxist idea of the proletarian revolution, and therefore there is no reason to blame Hegel for the failures in this idea.

This, however, means that to Hegel there must a conflict in the conception of Bildung between being educated and having education. It thus seems that formation is so closely intertwined with alienation and fragmentation that formation as a process can never be brought to a close. For Hegel Bildung means achieving a state of mind, where consciousness, i.e. human conscious being, can still be moved by impressions, which are worth being moved by. With formation – i.e. being educated – one gets a still better capacity for judging correctly, but not a set of final judgments. There is therefore a sense of indeterminateness in formation, and with such an open concept of Bildung, one can hope to develop even stronger conceptual ties between freedom and formation in a contemporary perspective.\(^\text{16}\)

**Literature**


20th century is given by Vincent Descombes (1979); cf. also Bruce Baugh for a recent and an even more pronounced statement of this point (2003).

15 Cf. e.g. Honneth 2001, p. 127.

16 I would like to thank Carl-Göran Heidegren, Ingerid Straume, Jørgen Hass and Jørgen Huggler for comments to the abovementioned chapter on Hegel and Bildung in Danish (Sørensen 2013a), which in part has laid the foundation for this article. And without continuous conversations on dialectics with Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen, Arne Grøn, Dag Petersson, Per Jepsen, and Thomas Schwarz over the years, I would not have been able to maintain literacy in relation to the Phenomenology for so long.
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The semiotics of the teaching-and-learning event

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Abstract
Notwithstanding the increasing literature on semiotics in relation to aspects of education, there remains relatively little on teacher-student interaction with respect to curriculum or syllabus. There continues to be a tendency to regard the process of teaching as one of conveying objective truth, via language, into the subjective world of the learner: a view of teaching matter as objective and fixed, of learners as subjective and unreliable, of teachers as deliverers, and of language as vehicle. Thus the teacher’s subjectivity is not considered (or is considered as potential interference: the teacher requires skills, not judgment), and the student either ‘understands’ (gets right) or ‘does not understand’ (gets wrong) the concept being taught, the former occurring when his or her subjective world does not, in effect, interfere with his or her objective understanding. Meanwhile, that-which-is-to-be-learnt is reduced to inertness and is not regarded as open to interpretation. Overall, the subjective must be repressed so that the objective can be acknowledged, taught and tested. Strong semiotic perspectives may not be prone to the distortions and impoverishment that this subject-object divide breeds, depending on how the sign is conceived. If the sign is seen as merely a representation of an otherwise-existing entity, then the above account may not be unsettled radically. If, however, the sign is regarded not as a gloss on, but rather as a really existing element of reality, the subjective-objective bifurcation can be dissolved. That-which-is-to-be-learnt can now be regarded as a set of relations and associations, freed from the fallacies of both strong idealism (with its tendency to see all relations as produced within the mind) and strong empiricism (with its tendency to see objects as relating simply by virtue of their inherent qualities).

The problem of the sign as relation
There has been an increasing interest in recent years in applying semiotic perspectives to education, not merely at an applied level (as in the semiotic analyses of textbooks and other multimodal texts in Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, for example) but at a foundational level, grounded in the idea, developed most famously by C.S. Peirce, that life itself can validly be regarded as a form of semiotic engagement, with semiosis driving all human, and possibly all natural systems. (See, for example, Stables, 2006; Semetsky, 2010. Peirce’s Collected Papers have been published in a series of editions by Harvard University Press: see reference to Peirce, 1908 below).

To understand the teaching-learning event in semiotic terms is not, therefore, simply a matter of applying a form of applied semiotics to education, but of acknowledging approaches to the sign and semiosis at a foundational level. While the seminal influence of Peirce, writing in the Nineteenth Century, is undeniable, there are inevitably contestable positions within philosophical semiotics. Perhaps the most comprehensive introduction to philosophical semiotics, John Deely’s Basics of Semiotics (first published in 1990, but most recently updated in 2009), makes clear some of these tensions. Many arise from a dual source of most contemporary semiotics. Peirce’s semiotics, as a development of his pragmatism (or, to use his own term, ‘pragmaticism’) is at heart a logical system of universal categories arising from his earlier work on forms of syllogism, deduction, induction and abduction. Deely regards this as true semiotics, drawing on influences in scholastic realism that have been denied by the modernist tendency to focus on mind and matter, and thus on a bifurcation between ideas and independently existing external entities, rather than on the sign as the fundamental unit of analysis. Much modern semiotics, however, takes its inspiration (with Deely’s disapproval) largely from the structuralist tradition arising from Saussurean linguistics (Culler, 1985), which its detractors dismiss as overly psychologistic.
At the most fundamental level of all, much hangs on how the sign itself is conceptualised. For example, to Peirce and Deely, the sign is fundamentally triadic. Peirce’s early definitions of this triadism distinguished between sign as Representamen, Object and Interpretant: that is, the sign is effectively anchored in a real world, understood as sign system, but does its work in the world as it is interpreted, not merely as it appears as, say, a word on a page. This is a strongly realist view of the sign which invites a corresponding view of semiosis as, in effect, evolution. On the other hand, to Saussure the sign is effectively dyadic: as signifier (the word on the page) and signified (the mental representation prompted by the signifier). Although some would argue that developments of this tradition result in valid metaphysical insights (e.g. Stables, 2012), others, including Deely, argue that the structuralist tradition limits semiotics to narrow semiological analysis of human communication systems: fine for film studies, or for studying some aspects of education (such as textbook construction), but metaphysically inhibiting.

The answer to the question, ‘what is a sign?’ therefore has profound implications for questions including, *inter alia*, ‘what is learning?’ and ‘what is teaching?’ From this semiotic perspective, philosophy of education, and specifically philosophy of instruction, has a metaphysical basis, notwithstanding a general eschewing of metaphysical considerations within the analytic tradition of philosophy of education. Crudely, a view of the sign as a form of representation that stands for an object in relation to other objects has quite different implications for teaching and learning from a view of the sign as insubstantial but really existing and comprised of, rather than simply engaged in, relations. If the sign is seen as merely a representation of an otherwise-existing entity, then the tendency is to regard the process of teaching as one of conveying objective truth, via language, into the subjective world of the learner: a view of teaching matter as objective and fixed, of learners as subjective and unreliable, of teachers as deliverers, and of language as vehicle. Thus the teacher’s subjectivity is not considered (or is considered as potential interference: the teacher requires skills, not judgment), and the student either ‘understands’ (gets right) or ‘does not understand’ (gets wrong) the concept being taught, the former occurring when his or her subjective world does not, in effect, interfere with his or her objective understanding. Meanwhile, that-which-is-to-be-learnt is reduced to inertness and is not open to interpretation. The subjective must be repressed so that the objective can be acknowledged. If, however, the sign is regarded not as a gloss on, but rather as a really existing element of reality, free from specific attachment to a noumenal discrete entity (whether conceptual or material), the subjective-objective bifurcation can be dissolved. That-which-is-to-be-learnt can now be regarded as a set of relations and associations, freed from the fallacies of both strong idealism (with its tendency to see all relations as produced within the mind) and strong empiricism (with its tendency to see objects as relating simply by virtue of their inherent qualities). That-which-is-to-be-learnt has objective qualities insofar as expert understanding (which is under constant evolution) recognizes a concept as having meaning within a given nexus (as it regards schooling as part of a broader set of historically developed social relations). The teacher represents that expert understanding in an inevitably personal way. The student, particularly on first encounter with the concept, maps it onto his or her existing sets of relations in a way that is also personal but will almost inevitably seem more idiosyncratic and limited than that of the teacher. Neither teacher nor student simply gets the concept ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Rather, the encounter between teacher and student is a potential exploration of a new field of inquiry focused on that-which-is-to-be-learnt which itself is – albeit imperceptibly – modified by each such encounter.

Classical forms of idealism and empiricism have struggled to make sense of the reality of relations (Bains, 2006). In the former case, they tend to be reduced to subjectivism (that is, they are formed by the mind and are by no means inherent in the world); in the latter, to the inherent qualities of data (that is, they are independent of the mind). In each case, prior to relations stand certain kinds of object: the concept for idealism, the datum for empiricism.
Relationships between these objects are conditions purely of mind for the idealist, and of matter for the empiricist. In both cases the approach is essentialist. The metaphysics is of substance (as prior to process), and of presence, insofar as the object is at heart stable and perspective free.

To regard the sign as relation, therefore, is to make a metaphysical, as well as a superficially instrumental move. To some, it is also a counter-intuitive move, as ‘sign’ is a singular noun, thus referring *prima facie* to a discrete entity, whereas ‘relation’ always implies an object that allows for the relationship. Indeed, signs are generally understood as representing objects, whether material or psychological. The supporter of the sign-as-relation position can only counter this by responding that language has its limits, set by the dominant paradigm (in this case, the metaphysics of substance and presence), and that proposers of alternative paradigms must always struggle against this linguistic hegemony. Clearly, signs relate to other signs, which are conventionally designated as physical or psychological objects. However, the weakness of this position, while it serves very well for many regular purposes, is that it makes ontological assumptions about that which lies beyond the phenomenal, and therefore beyond the verifiable, thus effectively confirming a dualistic position that cements the mind-world bifurcation identified above. Undeniably, ‘sign as relation’ is *prima facie* paradoxical; however, so are many ideas that people can make sense of, albeit often not ambiguously, such as ‘equality of opportunity’ or ‘equality and diversity’ or ‘sustainable development’. In such cases, relative clarity must be achieved through example. To see the sign in general as relation is analogous to regarding the electric charge as having greater experiential reality and force than the positive and negative poles on which it depends. Indeed, this is the direction, I would suggest, that physics has suggested we follow. Quantum mechanics (physics at the smallest, sub-atomic scale) reveals a universe of layered ontologies in which analysis of any entity does not reveal that it merely consists of small pieces of that entity (as slices of pizza might constitute a pizza) but that at each ontological level the nature of reality – perhaps even the physics that can explain it – varies. One might argue that quantum physics itself is hampered by a metaphysical commitment to ‘particles’ that locks it, unwittingly, into a legacy of Aristotelian substance metaphysics, though this goes beyond the remit of the present paper. Tantalisingly, recent biological research on stem cells also suggests a universe in which entities can only develop in certain contexts: the stem cell takes its meaning from the cells around it as a word takes its meaning from the sentence and discourse around it. To adopt such a position on the sign in general is to take a metaphysical stance, in favour of process over substance (see Whitehead, 1929), and of absence over presence, insofar as whatever essence the sign can be said to have cannot be manifested other than as difference, as shifting contextualization (cf. Deleuze, 1994).

Drawing therefore on both the Saussurean insight that the sign has life only within a sign system, and the Peircean insistence that signs gain or manifest their iconicity, symbolism and indexicality only in use, this paper will proceed on the basis that the sign only has status as the perceived centre of a network of associations, not because of any one-to-one relationship with a pre-phenomenal entity. Although following Peirce’s pragmatic inclinations, the argument goes further than Peirce in denying an element of Firstness in which entities have qualities: a concept Peirce inherits from Locke, albeit Peirce attempted to move away from the strong mind-body dualist legacy inherent in Locke’s account of Impressions vs. Ideas (Locke, 1690). On the present account, the sign can be regarded as a feature of an event, and thus inevitably relational, rather than a representation of a discrete entity. It will focus on a particular context for the sign: that which intervenes between teacher and student as that-which-is-to-be-learnt (what some might prefer to refer to as the learning object in a more essentialist way): the curriculum item, such as ‘gravity’, ‘quadratic equations’, ‘Calabria during the second world war’ or ‘the life of the Buddha’. The implications of regarding that-which-is-to-be-learnt as relation for the roles of teacher and student will be considered, in contrast to those roles as developed under a more essentialist, substantive conception of the sign.
Substantive vs. relative conceptions of the sign: implications for teachers and learners

In this section I distil the key implications of the contrasting views of the sign above for understanding of subject matter (‘that-which-is-to-be-learnt’), learner (‘student’) and teacher, showing how a difference in the core construal of the sign has the potential to make a considerable difference to theories of learning, pedagogy and instruction.

1. Teaching and learning on a substantive view of the sign

On this view, the sign:
- relates to either a material entity, a conceptual entity, or a conceptual entity implying certain material entities;
- has reality in and of itself, even though it may depend on other entities;
- and can therefore be understood or misunderstood.

Thus that-which-is-to-be-learnt:
- has considerable stability and enduring value;
- can be learnt and taught about more or less in isolation: that is, the curriculum can be atomized and stepped and progress against curricular elements can be validly measured;
- can be fully understood or completely misunderstood, and can be understood without personal exploration and application.

Also, ‘student’ and ‘teacher’ are each substantive entities, as conceptions implying material entities. Thus both teacher and student:
- have considerable stability and enduring value: certain intelligence, character, strengths, weaknesses and potential;
- can be understood primarily as persons in their own right;
- and can both be understood and misunderstood, and can understand or misunderstand that-which-is-to-be-learnt.

On this account, the teacher, as expert, has certain qualities and dispositions that allow her to both understand and convey the subject matter to the student. The student, however, has more limited qualities and dispositions, at least as concerns capacity to understand the subject matter. As the subject matter ‘is as it is’, however (that is, its essence is beyond interpretation), the teacher is responsible for clearcut judgements in two areas: firstly, selecting subject matter for which the student is cognitively and emotionally ‘ready’ (so far as the teacher is free to select subject matter) and secondly, in introducing the student to that-which-is-to-be-learnt in a way that allows the student’s existing dispositions to embrace the qualities or dispositions of the subject matter concept. This has two significant implications for the teacher which differ (see below) from those arising from a view of that-which-is-to-be-learnt as relation. The first is that prior to teaching anything, the teacher has to ask himself whether or not the student is ‘ready’ to tackle the topic in question; this is a rather more demanding question than whether there is any aspect of the topic in question that might interest the student, since the former implies stage developmental theory (such as that of Piaget or Kohlberg) and a view of actually existing potential (as per Aristotle but contra Locke). The second is that if the student can, to most intents and purposes, either grasp the concept (get it right) or fail to grasp it (get it wrong); certainly, students can respond to the subject matter in ways that are inappropriate. The direction of travel is Teacher communicating (in the sense of instructing) subject matter to Student who then understands/does not understand dependent on developmental readiness. There is no central role here for two-way communication between Teacher and Student.

It is perhaps the fear of ‘getting it wrong’ that often inhibits students – even in higher education – from sharing their honest initial responses to that-which-is-to-be-learnt, thus
limiting classroom communication and encouraging teachers to fall back into traditional forms of transmisssional teaching. The alternative account resolves this problem.

2. Teaching and learning on a relational view of the sign
On this view, the sign:
- only makes sense in relation to its context, spatial and temporal;
- has no firm reality in itself other than as experienced; (note that this does not imply that only human beings experience, and that ‘experience’ here is construed broadly, not in the thin sense implied in Lockean empiricism);
- and can therefore never be fully understood or fully misunderstood: that is to say, complete understanding of what makes a concept mean something in any one place and time is a logical possibility but is beyond the bounds of even the greatest expert, while the novice can access something of relevance to the concept, however idiosyncratic and naïve this may seem to expert others.

That-which-is-to-be-learnt:
- always gains its salience from its historical and temporal context, and is always open to interpretation: for example, it is possible to interpret differently the proposition ‘2+2=4’ depending on whether one is ready to accept that ‘2+2=5 for higher values of 2’, or 3 for lower values; in a broader context, it is often, if not always, a matter of interpretation as to whether an entity is single or multiple; mathematics is itself a sign system rather than the ultimate set of logical operators that underpins all sign systems;
- can never be taught or learnt in isolation: the greater the effort to atomise the curriculum, the more reduced the opportunities for learning;
- and can never be fully understood or fully misunderstood, but merely increasingly explored.

On this account, both teacher and student:
- are in transition: living implies learning and learning disrupts identity;
- are themselves relational;
- and can never have either full understanding or no understanding of that-which-is-to-be-learnt.

Here, neither teacher nor student nor subject matter has fixed identity. Thus hard and fast assumptions do not hold about the teacher’s expertise (relatively high in relation to the student – usually – but never absolute), the student’s lack of expertise (again, relative only) or the essence, including the level, of that-which-is-to-be-learnt. There is thus nothing that is potentially beyond, or indeed fully within, the potential grasp of the student, just as there is no topic on which the teacher, or any other expert, can have the last word. This means that the teacher’s task is not first to evaluate the developmental readiness of the child, but rather to find ways of encouraging the student to explore the relations that constitute the subject matter, using professional judgment in a more flexible way to make best guesses about activities that the student might find interesting. The direction of travel here is quite different: Teacher introduces Student to subject matter via Student’s initial responses to it, which prompt Teacher to guide (not instruct) Student in further exploration of that-which-is-to-be-learnt. This requires a level of relative, but not absolute expertise of the teacher, and it requires, rather than prevents, two-way communication, of the sort that Dewey, for example construed as both educative and supportive of democracy (Dewey, 1916).

Licence to experiment: towards a richer empiricism
This argument presents a metaphysical choice underpinning conceptions of teaching, between classical ontological realism (i.e. the belief in entities, rather than just, say, forces at the noumenal as well as phenomenological level) and a form of fully semiotic realism, that recognizes the sign as really existing, but inessential, external relation: the sign as feature, or
aspect, of the event where the event is process as experienced. This form of ontological realism is bifurcated through the classical Idealist and Empiricist traditions. It has certain implications for the aims, dynamics and responsibilities of teaching. This contrasts with those aims, dynamics and responsibilities from a fully semiotic perspective.

From this semiotic perspective, both idealist and empiricist accounts are prone to two fallacies: the Correct/Complete Understanding Fallacy (CCUF), and the Meaningless Sign Fallacy (MSF). According to both CCUF and MSF, teaching is about moving students from the darkness of ignorance into the light of understanding. However, on the semiotic model proposed here, committed to the law of the included middle, darkness and light are more subtle gradations. Exploration of a concept, even pure play in relation to it, always deepens understanding in some way (cf. Peirce’s idea of musement [Peirce, 1908] which can be read as a sort of cerebral play). As soon as play loses its grounding in real possibility, it comes to a halt. Children really do learn through play though, as sets of relations constantly overlap, the focus of their play will tend to drift away from the focus the teacher intended; this focusing is the primary challenge for teachers in relation to play-based learning, not to stop play losing touch with reality, for it cannot do that. MSF is a fallacy simply because no sign is without meaning: as Wittgenstein (1967) argued, there can be no private language. CCUF does not deny that a God’s-eye view (a view from Nowhere: Nagel, 1989) would allow us to see all the relations together that constitute a sign as relation, but no single human being, or even expert group, can have such a complete or correct understanding; it remains, as Peirce argued, a logical possibility only. This view allows us to regard teaching as progressive but never certain, and brings rich communication back as a central element of the teaching-learning encounter.

Finally, the semiotic view proposed here allows for a richer, more experimental and ambitious empiricism, wherein the experience that defines the empirical is taken to be the full gamut of human experience rather than the narrowly defined data that are the results of scientific observation under the narrower construal of empiricism that tends to dominate contemporary discourse. That is, it encourages forms of encounter between student and that-which-is-to-be-learnt which are rejected as risky or insufficiently determinate in prevailing orthodoxies. An example of this might be historical re-enactment. Effectively pretending to be from the past and acting out what one imagines former people may have done does not seem scientific, and thus not empirical in the narrow sense associated with the empirical sciences. However, all understanding of the past involves some element of imaginative recreation (we simply were not there!), and on the semiotic account proposed here, such recreation can be regarded as an alternative, if inevitably indeterminate, form of valid empirical enquiry. There follows an example of the potential value of this from my own experience.

In November 2012, I accompanied an archeologist and a pagan priest around the complex of ancient stone circles and other monuments at Avebury, near the more famous Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England. This was a guided walk organized by the National Trust, a large charitable organization with huge following in the UK that preserves sites of cultural and historical interest for the public.

Avebury was built and largely used in the early days of agricultural settlement of Southern England: roughly the 2nd to 4th Centuries BCE. Thus there is no documentary evidence whatsoever concerning its significance as a set of monuments. There are, however, various empirical methods that can be used to shed light on what might have gone on, principal among which is archaeology. What made my tour of the site so compelling, however, was the relationship (sometimes tense) between the warden, as promoter of the archaeological account, and the pagan, who had many interesting, and superficially quite plausible accounts of what the stones meant for ancient peoples. What is of concern here is the means by which those accounts are developed. They arose from the enactment of rituals that drew, as faithfully as possible, on knowledge of pagan ritual in Britain as far back as any record does
exist. Thus our pagan expert and his friends had conducted ceremonies to mark the seasons, marriage and death at various times and in various settings around the site. This allowed for the generation of several hypotheses about the stones which seem worthy of more rigorous scientific exploration. It seems unlikely that such huge stones were placed as they have been by accident. They too must draw their meaning from their contexts. The pagans noticed, for example, how the light illuminated certain stones and put others in shadow only at certain times during the year, and that these times often coincided with those of ancient rites according to tradition. This was possible only because of the arguably unscientific desire to experience the ‘magic’ of the stone circle in a spirit that was simultaneously playful and respectful. At one point on our walk, the pagan disclosed that he is also a member of a historical re-enactment society, and that his role as a pagan priest was conducted in much the same spirit. He explained compellingly that one has a much more intense sense of being in a medieval battle, for example, if one dresses for the part, and re-enacts what one can of the original scene with others, notwithstanding the no blood is spilt and that the basis for the activity is little more than conjecture.

Historical re-enactment has had a little, but very limited support as an educational strategy (Auslander, 2013, is a rare exception). However, while it should not be confused with other forms of empirical investigation, it may have considerable value as a means of encouraging students to explore that-which-is-to-be-learnt as a sign that makes sense only in terms of the relations that define it. Like religious ritual, ability to engage in such reverential play is not determined (though it is modified) by age, expertise or cognitive potential, but is equally open to all to experience.

Afterword: a brief further illustration
In my room recently I noticed a glass of water on the table. Suppose I did not know what this was. The following remarks might be made about how the glass of water made sense to me:

1. It is possible, feasible and desirable to do certain things with it, and not others: for instance, it is more satisfactory to bring it to one’s lips and tips its contents (slowly) into one’s mouth than to put it sideways onto the bed cover; as a small child I might have discovered these things by solo experiment, and/or by adult guidance;
2. What it is is a matter of convention, not essence: a glass is not just any piece of glass but a vessel; in this case, it was plastic, but this is not confusing if one is used to the conventions around glasses of water;
3. Though an everyday concept, the glass of water is a complex artefact: not just glass; not just a glass; not just plastic known as glass; not just water; not identical to other glasses of water; however, the level of complexity is irrelevant to my capacity (or even a small child’s capacity) to understand ‘what a glass of water is’.

In short, it is meaningless to consider any glass of water as a thing in itself. Rather, it is defined by a set of spatiotemporal relations incorporating a series of conventions including those of manufacture as well as use. Furthermore, ‘a glass of water’ is a complex concept. However, what determines the point in a child’s life when she understands what a glass of water is (which is the same as understanding what to do with it) is not a matter of developmental readiness according to any stage theory, nor even of a hierarchical set of mental operations, but is rather a matter of cultural exposure. Finally, nobody with any awareness of a glass of water has no understanding of it and nobody has complete understanding; none of us could ever guarantee 100% that we will not be poisoned by what lies temptingly before us. However, repeated exposure to, and experimentation with, glasses of water (including almost inevitably knocking them over and making ourselves wet, particularly when we are young) lead to a working understanding that this concept, the object ‘a glass of water’ has some stable value, even though it may well no longer be made of glass, but rather of plastic.
To teach according to the present argument would require an educational paradigm shift from teacher judgmentalism (assuming things to be right or wrong and children to be clever or stupid) to teacher judgment (as concern with what it is most appropriate to explore next). Such a change rests on a metaphysical shift from regarding the noumenal world as comprising discrete objects to a more minimal ontological realism which does not deny the ubiquity of process (and thus of the energy and forces that power it) but construes all the sense we make as conventional, as in the Structuralist tradition, without denying that it may be evolutionary or progressive, as in the Peircean. At bottom, what we think of the sign determines what we mean by learning and, therefore, what we intend for teaching. In short, the debate about semiosis can determine the debate about teaching and learning. The most fundamental questions about education cannot, after all, be divorced from metaphysical considerations.

References
The subject and the world: Educational challenges

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Abstract
The paper explores the notion of the subject as an educational concept, as an alternative to other, more limited concepts such as the student or learner. Drawing mainly on the thought of Greek-French philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, the subject under consideration is a conscious, self-reflective subject that organizes and modifies itself in relation to a world of significations. In contrast to ‘environment’, the concept of ‘world’ presupposes a horizon of meaning which, in the case of the human being, is always socially instituted.

The educational processes involved in bringing forth this kind of subjectivity resonate more strongly with the concept of Bildung, rather than learning, especially since Bildung has an important social-historical – or worldly – dimension. Thus, through the awakened capacity for conscious self-modification (self-Bildung), the subject becomes a self-reflective agent in a socially instituted, common world of significations.

However, for Castoriadis, this kind of subjectivity is not readily available in every kind of social organization. Rather, to become a subject in Castoriadis’s sense means to be the product of a society that has instituted itself explicitly or autonomously. Differently put: self-Bildung and self-reflexivity presupposes a certain level of socially instituted reflexivity or self-questioning which for Castoriadis is historically associated with democracy, politics and philosophy.

In the second half of the paper, the discussion is extended to include the non-human realm and the world of the living being. Here, too, meaning – or proto-meaning in the case of the living being – is a constituent in the formation of a world. In this discussion, where Francisco Varela is an important source of inspiration, the thought of Castoriadis is complemented by contemporary thinkers from biological anthropology, phenomenology and neuroscience, notably Terrence Deacon. Contrary to traditional scientific divisions, these thinkers include concepts such as meaning, signification, normativity and purpose in the ontology (or sciences) of nature.

The aim of the paper is twofold: on the one hand to introduce pedagogical reflections into discussions in the theory of science where the natural and human sciences are read in co-extension. Such discussions are motivated by the prospects of a more holistic – but not necessarily harmonious – understanding of human and non-human nature. On the other hand, to develop a richer conceptual repertoire for discussing and exploring educational phenomena than what is immediately available. An important background, in both cases, is the possibility of ecological crisis, which poses new problems for educators. The continued existence of a life-world for human and nonhuman beings concerns the relationship between the innocent and the guilty, those who are living and those to come. On this background, the thesis of the paper is that discussions about education should be rich, complex, and critical. The outlined approach is one attempt in this direction. However, fusions of the natural and human sciences are sometimes used to evoke other kinds of reductionism, such as functionalist evolutionary ‘explanations’ of human behaviour. The works of Deacon and Castoriadis both refute this kind of reductionism.

Introduction
In contemporary, Western educational literature, a rather limited range of concepts is used to designate the human subject and its inner and outer world. Frequent terms in use are ‘the individual’, ‘the agent’, and more specifically, ‘the student’ or ‘learner’. The concept of the
learner has received critical attention by educational philosophers over the past years, in so far as it is central to a governmental regime of learning and management, diagnosed by Biesta (2004; 2006) and Simons and Masschelein (2002, 2008). In the (foucauldian) analysis by Simons and Masschelein (2008), the regime of learning is a managerial regime based on principles such as accountability and entrepreneurship (‘the entrepreneurial self’). Moreover, as noted by Rizvi (2008), there is a global trend towards “uniformity”, demanding a “convergence in thinking, accepting similar diagnoses of problems confronting educational systems with widely differing social, political and economic traditions” (p. 64). In a context of ‘total management’, policy makers tend to favour research programmes that describe and construct the context of learning – the learning environment – in such a way that its elements can, at least in principle, be accounted for (Weber’s Entzauberung der Welt). This is of course a simplification, but the tendency seems clear, for example in the pursuit of evidence-based practice.

On various grounds and through various responses, philosophers of education have resisted the attempts of policy makers to reduce the concept of education (e.g. Biesta 2006; 2011, Flint and Peim 2009). A rather common response, at least in the Northern parts of Europe, has been to invoke what seems to be the direct opposite understanding. Invoking concepts such as absence, mystery, negativity or otherness in education, inspired especially by Derrida, Lacan, Levinas and Heidegger, the appeal goes out to that which is not present, invoking a kind of pedagogy that, per definition, cannot be defined. I do not deny that this approach may contain some wisdom, e.g. in the context of teaching, but it is doubtful that it should be able to affect the dominant regime in any critical way. In the face of meta-analyses and evidence based practice, appeals to mystery and negativity can easily be both tolerated and ignored at the same time.

In this paper, I want to propose an alternative approach in response to reductionism, instrumentalism and excessive quantification. Instead of invoking absence, mystery etc., I seek to develop a conceptual repertoire that can be used to elucidate the human subject and its many dimensions: its inner and outer life, that is, its world.

Why would this be important? In the context of educational praxis, it is important if we think that concepts are central for our ability to reflect upon practices, and who we want to be as practitioners, somewhat in line with C. Taylor’s notion of ‘strong evaluations’ (Taylor 1986 a; b). A rich conceptual repertoire provides educators with resources for describing and recognizing their own motives – teachers’ reasons for being teachers – as something meaningful, and thus to describe and understand educational activities in a way that is worthy of recognition (in the normative sense of A. Honneth). This is also the basis for thinking of oneself as someone who … , that is, in terms of subjectivity. Moreover, an adequate conceptual apparatus is also important in order to question our practices in terms of their meaning. For these reasons, one of the greatest threats to a good education today is arguably the impoverished concepts offered for educators and teachers, which represents a major problem for the self-understanding of the sector.

However, in today’s world there are even more important matters at stake than education itself. In a global, ecological perspective, as I will argue, there is (also) a need to conceptualise educational activities in terms that invoke more complex ways of thinking about the aims and nature of education. In this larger picture, education involves present and future generations, relations of interdependence and solidarity as well as scientific and ontological complexity. A central concept in this connection is the world. The ‘world’ differs from ‘environment’ by presupposing “a horizon of meaning” (Adams 2012), thus drawing together various dimensions of the human and natural domains.

On this – admittedly broad – background, I will present a conception of subjectivity, inspired by the philosopher and psychoanalyst Cornelius Castoriadis, which sets the subject and the
world into a larger (ecological and ontological) perspective. In the following sections I argue that, in the philosophy of education, attention should be given to the role of the ‘radical imagination’ that forms the world, the subject, and the world of the subject. Such a perspective enables us to capture and describe processes that transcend functionality, and thus to imagine more productive figures of thought for pedagogical reflection than the arguably reductionist concepts of the learner or the social entrepreneur. Whether this approach is able to affect the dominant regime of management more effectively than other approaches is of course doubtful. Its merit, if any, would rather be to introduce educational questions into a more complex, trans-disciplinary setting where the discussion may be widened rather than limited.

In Search of a Subject

The concept of human subjectivity is discussed in various traditions and contexts – phenomenology, social psychology, social philosophy (Mead, Honneth) and psychoanalysis.\(^1\) Objects of study range from individual consciousness, selfhood and the world (phenomenology) and intersubjective relations and the formation of identity (social psychology and social philosophy). In psychoanalysis – after Freud abandoned his attempts to found psychoanalysis as a natural science – his followers have resisted an excessive focus on inner drives and processes (which Freud saw as internal economy) and turned their interest toward intersubjective relations, culture and society. Many psychoanalysts – and social theorists with an interest in psychoanalysis – have also taken an interest in cultural and political issues, such as the studies of fascism in the twentieth century and the enduring Latin American tradition of socialist psychoanalysis. In this respect, psychoanalysis stands out from mainstream contemporary Western psychology, which generally takes little interest in the social (and political) institution. The traditional topic of psychoanalysis, the subject, is seen to co-exist with specific social-historical forms. At least, this is a key idea of the Greek-French philosopher and psychoanalyst Cornelius Castoriadis (1922 – 1997), expressed in the following lines:

Subjectivity, as agent of reflection and deliberation (as thought and will) is a social-historical project; its origins, repeated twice with different modalities in Greece and in Western Europe, can be dated and located. The nucleus of [the individual and of subjectivity], is the psyche or psychical monad, which is irreducible to the social-historical but susceptible to almost limitless shaping by it, on condition that the institution satisfies certain minimal requirements of the psyche (Castoriadis, 1991:144).

This passage needs some unpacking. Let me start at the easy end, and clarify what Castoriadis refers to as the ‘minimal requirements’ of the psyche that lets itself be ‘almost limitless’ shaped by the social-historical. I have already mentioned meaning, which I see as a central aspect for understanding and reflecting upon education. The contention was that meaning enables us, as teachers and scholars, to recognize ourselves as someone who ..., and reflect upon our activities and motives in substantial ways. Meaning is also the ‘minimal requirements’ of the psyche in the quotation. The important point is that, in the social ontology of Castoriadis, meaning is not something that individuals can produce for and by themselves; it is the work of the social-historical that exists before, and independently of the individual. The social-historical institutes itself, in each specific case, as a society – and the

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specific kind of instituted meaning is what makes society a society.\(^2\) A society is thus a form, held together by what Castoriadis refers to as “the institution of society as a whole”, namely “norms, values, language, tools, procedures and methods for dealing with things …” (Castoriadis 1997a: 6).

There is … a unity of the total institution of society; and, upon further examination, we find that this unity is in the last resort the unity and internal cohesion of the immensely complex web of meanings that permeate, orient, and direct the whole life of the society considered … This web of meanings is what I call the ‘magma' of social imaginary significations that are carried by and embodied in the institution of the given society and that, so to speak, animate it (Castoriadis 1997a: 7).

While a society needs meaning in order to exist as a society – as itself – the psyche also needs meaning in order to become socialized (as an individual). However, as already mentioned, the psyche is unable to produce meaning by itself. A necessary requirement for its being shaped by the social-historical is thus that the latter provides sufficient meaning for the psyche.\(^3\)

A further premise of the quotation in question (p. 5) is that the subject is the product of a specific social-historical project, whose origins, “repeated twice with different modalities in Greece and in Western Europe, can be dated and located”. This statement relates to Castoriadis’s theory of individual and collective autonomy, which will not be central for our discussion, here, but plays a key role in his oeuvre. Suffice it to say that the notion of subjectivity employed by Castoriadis is strongly attached to the capacity for questioning the social institution (in the wide sense referred above), and that this ability and interest for questioning – asking for reasons, grounds, legitimacy, validity and so forth, while at the same time realising that there are no ultimate grounds – is historically connected to the creation of democracy, politics and philosophy in ancient Greece, and again in early Western modernity. The important point for our discussion, however, is that subjectivity is not independent of the social institution, whether or not we regard the project of autonomy a specifically Western invention. The psyche needs social-historical meaning in order to form itself as subjectivity, or more generally, as a person.

We see that the subject, for Castoriadis, is something more than the socialized individual, which for him is simply a specimen or fragment of the social: the subject it is a reflective consciousness that emerges from a specific kind of socialization process, namely the kind of socialization (Castoriadis uses the term paideia) that aims at a radical kind of questioning and self-reflection (or, in Castoriadis’s terms, individual and collective autonomy). Above all, the subject is that which reflects. In the essay ‘The State of the Subject Today’ (Castoriadis 1997b), Castoriadis explores this kind of subjectivity. The context for his discussion is psychoanalysis, but the ideas can also be applied to pedagogy/education – a connection Castoriadis also makes in other essays (1997c). Castoriadis asks, in the context of psychoanalysis: Who hears the interpretation and experiences all its modifications throughout the treatment? This question, he argues, only makes sense if one regards the subject as “emergent capacity to gather meaning and to make something of it for herself – that is to say, to gather a reflected meaning (the interpretation offers no ‘immediate’ meaning) and to make something of it for herself by reflecting upon it […]” (Castoriadis 1997b: 139). We should of course be careful not to confound, e.g., the interpretation of

\(^2\) Consequently, a social institution that loses the ability to provide meaning ceases to exist as such. The fall of empires and disappearance of civilizations for no apparent (external) cause springs to mind.

\(^3\) According to Castoriadis, there is a certain element of violence in the socialization process. In order to give up its unsocialised, monadic, psychotic, yet pleasurable state, the psyche has to accept the meaning offered by social-historical.
dreams with an educational setting in general. Importantly, the educational setting usually has an ‘immediate’ meaning independent of the ‘reflected’ meaning of a dream. Even so, this notion of subjectivity can tell us something important about education (or pedagogy), namely that the continued existence of meaning – although it is a socially instituted phenomenon – depends on it being invested (in psychoanalytic terms, cathected) by the person(s) in question. In other words, education as meaning-making is also a process of subjectification in a particular social-historical reality. A social-historical setting that has instituted itself reflexively offers a kind of meaning for the psyche that enables questioning of the world of the psyche and of itself. This is what Castoriadis refers to as a subject: a socialised psyche that not only accepts, but also reflects upon meaning.

Such a subject, and the educational processes that lead up to it, cannot be described through the categories of learning and development alone, even though these concepts of course also play important roles. The notion of reflected meaning (“to make something of it for herself”) resonates more closely with the concept of Bildung as conceived by, e.g. Wilhelm von Humboldt – or rather, its postmodern re-interpretation as self-Bildung (Løvlie and Standish 2003). This kind of meaning, according to Castoriadis, “is not contained in our words like medicine in a tablet” (Castoriadis 1997b: 140). By reflecting, interpreting, accepting or rejecting the offered meaning, the subject manifests itself (ibid). Again, a quite precise characterization of the subjectivity which is the means and ‘end’ of a Bildung process.4

The subject is, at once, the setting, the means, and the aim of Bildung.5 In the words of Castoriadis:

This subject, human subjectivity, is characterized by reflectiveness (which ought not to be confounded with simple ‘thought’) and by the will or the capacity for deliberate action, in the strong sense of this term (Castoriadis 1997b, p.143).

For Castoriadis, reflective subjectivity is essentially a process, not a state “reached once and for all” (Castoriadis 1997b, p.128). The singular human being enters the process of psychoanalysis – and the Bildung process – and thus becomes the subject of that process. This means that the aims of the process are something that is worked at – and worked out – by the subject in question, and this, in turn, is one of the things that make the subject a subject.

Furthermore, the way I have discussed Bildung here puts it in relation to what Castoriadis calls ‘the project of autonomy’, and as such, it is not determinable. Castoriadis describes his notion thus:

In terms of the project of autonomy, we have defined the aims of psychoanalysis and pedagogy as, first, the instauration of another type of relation between the reflective subject (of will and thought) and his Unconscious – that is, his radical imagination – and, second, the freeing of his capacity to make and do things, to form an open project for his life and to work with that project (Castoriadis 1997b, p. 132).

The subject of pedagogy, thus understood, is a who, not a what. The subject is a beginning; someone who sets in motion social processes (movere) whose results are undeterminable (cf. Arendt 1989). For, to move and begin means to create – imagine – something which is

4 To talk about an end to the Bildung process is, of course, an abuse of terms. Ends, in this context, must be seen not as expressions of temporality (finalities), but rather as ideals.

5 Castoriadis does not use the term Bildung in the meaning used here, but he uses the term paideia (paideia in the “true” sense), which is a paideia aimed at subjectivity.
not already in existence; something which is not a specimen, aspect or part of something else, but rather, something new and hitherto unseen. Thus beginning and action involves a will, and above all, for Castoriadis, imagination. This brings us to another important concept: the concept of a world.

The Creation of a World
In order to understand the notion of a subject – as different from individual – it is important to see that it is not an atom bouncing about between other subject atoms, nor is it immersed in the social (as the subject’s ‘other’). The subject is, in Castoriadis’s thought, a ‘for-itself’, (pour-soi) which means that it creates a world, an Eigenwelt.

The notion of world can be used in several ways. The first thing we need to be clear about is that, in Castoriadis’s thought, the creation of a world is not a unique quality of the subject; it is a characteristic of the living being as such, including mammals, cells, bacteria and various organic systems (such as the immune system) – even societies. In Castoriadis’s words, “[e]ach living for-itself constructs, or better creates, its own world (I call ‘world’ in opposition to environment that which emerges through and with this creation)” (Castoriadis 1997b, p. 148). This world consists of an inside and an outside according to which things become ‘information’, ‘noise’ or nothing at all. ‘The environment’ can then be seen as an aspect of the world thus created – a world that in each case is unique (‘my world’, ‘our world’). 6

What does it mean that the living being is a for-itself, a pour-soi? According to Castoriadis, “the living being is for-itself insofar as it is self-finitary, insofar as it creates its own world, and insofar as this world is a world of representations, affects, and intentions” (Castoriadis 1997b, p. 148). The creation of a world entails that the living being represents the information to itself and brings it into relation (mise on relations) (p. 145). Central processes here are image-making (l’imager) and relating (le relier), or, from another perspective, staging (mise en scène) (p. 146). The creation of a proper world is closely connected to the aims of self-finitality and self-preservation. “First of all”, Castoriadis tells us, “the living being exists in and through closure” (p.149).

If an entity whatsoever is to preserve itself as it is – to preserve itself numerically (this dog) or generically (dogs) – it must act and react in an environment, it must give a positive value to what favors its preservation and a negative value to what disfavors it; and for all this, it must be aware of … , [that is,] of this environment (Castoriadis 1997b, p.147).

The living being represents the elements of its world to itself, and this representation, as we have seen, cannot be neutral or objective. That which constitutes information in a world is always information for this specific for-itself, and since the aims of self-preservation are always specific to the being in question, the elements that constitute the world and the environment are each time selected (ibid.). Castoriadis mentions the examples of a tree and a mammal, whose goals of reproducing themselves lead to rather different selections.

The living being, as an entity, cannot be ‘entered into’ from the outside; it can only be understood from within itself. This means that influences from the outside will be like a shock (Ge. Anstoss) to which the living being may react, but whose ‘results’ are uncontrollable and largely unforeseeable from the outside. This is not to say that the living being is autistic or

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6 At the same time, however, the world of the single living specimen is connected with the species as a whole. The one exemplar creates its own world, and is at the same time encased in the world of the species (Castoriadis 1997b).
closed off – it is a closure, but not isolated for that. The point is rather that the living being is a self-organizing unit whose modification – the modification of its world – can only come from, set off from, and be directed by itself.

So far, I have discussed the living being without distinguishing between the human psyche, the animal psyche or bacteria (who, of course, are without a psyche). This is not as irrelevant as it may seem – certain directions in psychology do in fact discuss human motives as if there were no other dimensions than the functional ones that have been described so far. The human being, it is said, lives and acts in order to reproduce itself, to pass on its genes, or at least, increase the chances of the reproduction of its own kin. For most scholars, however, and especially in education, there is much more to the human being than what can be said about the living being as such. Most importantly for Castoriadis, there is the defunctionalization of the human psyche, and secondly a stratification of psychical layers, where one psychical ‘Instanz’ can be in conflict with another. Neither of these complications figure in the animal psyche (Castoriadis 1997b: 152-3). The imagination of the animal psyche is repetitive, functional, and always related to a real referent (p. 162). The human psyche, in contrast, is capable of replacing organ pleasure with representational pleasure, and to invest in (cathect) objects that have no real referent, such as God, money or the nation (examples of what Castoriadis calls social imaginary significations). The psyche, whose ‘contents’ is representations, affects, and desires, can therefore be orientated toward, and invest its energy in objects without reference in what Castoriadis calls ‘the first natural stratum’: i.e. physical reality. This psychic investment, which Castoriadis calls sublimation, is a very important dimension of the socialization process.

The singular human psyche also brings forth private phantasms, in which it takes pleasure, such as daydreams or artistic creations. In “Psychoanalysis and Politics”, Castoriadis emphasizes this capacity as the most distinctive human quality: “What is most human is not rationality but the uncontrolled and uncontrollable continuous surge of creative radical imagination in and through the flux of representations, affects, and desires” (1997c, 127-8). The imagination is creative and radical in so far as it produces something out of nothing – ex nihilo. Thus the world of human beings consists not only of significations with references in the functional and the real, but even more importantly, of social imaginary significations, many of which have no ‘real’ referent (Castoriadis 1987, 1997a). These significations are products of the human imagination, which is ‘radical’, as opposed to the functional imagination of animals in general.

How does the human being create its world? Again, it is important to understand that the world of the subject is not just a product of itself. The world of the singular human being is first of all a socially instituted world of imaginary signification. Castoriadis calls these significations imaginary ‘because they do not correspond to, or are not exhausted by, references to ‘rational’ or ‘real’ elements and because it is through a creation that they are posited” (1997a: 8). And he calls them social “because they are and they exist only if they are instituted and shared by an impersonal, anonymous collective” (ibid). Examples of social imaginary significations are plentiful: from spirits, gods, taboo, sin, virtue to nation, party, capital, interest rate … but also the social imaginary signification of ‘thing’ or ‘tool, whose

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7 In Castoriadis’s ontology, everything that exists exists the way it does because there is support in what precedes it, like layers or strata of historical and natural existence (Castoriadis’s ontology of magma, which cannot be elaborated here).
8 Notably evolutionary psychology inspired by biology.
9 The imagination for Castoriadis is not only an asset of individuals; the imagination of the social-historical in fact holds a more important place in his thought. Terms used in this connection are the radical imaginary and the radical anonymous collective.
‘thingness’ or ‘toolness’ does not exist outside or independently of the social institution (ibid 7-8).

Recalling that, for Castoriadis, the magma of imaginary significations is a web of meanings, we can now see why the process of sublimation is central for the society’s existence. The social individual, who has accepted and cathected the meaning offered by the social institution, is the foremost embodiment of the institution of society as a whole. Education – or the kind of education dubbed schooling – is of course instrumental here, but it is important to note that this socialization cum embodiment happens anyway, since, for Castoriadis, the definition of an individual is to be socialized.

More interesting for our discussion is the fact that Castoriadis sees a similarity between how a society creates itself as a form and biological organization. Both are organized as more or less open or closed forms (1997a, 8). As Castoriadis points out: “Both social and biological organizations exhibit an organizational, informational and cognitive closure. Each society, like each living being or species, establishes, creates its own world, within which, of course, it includes ‘itself’” (Castoriadis 1997a, 8-9). Subjectivity consists in a reflective relationship towards this process of closure, more precisely to put it into question and modify itself (a capacity that, as we have seen, must also find support in the social). Therefore, the world of the subject is a reflective world and not merely a conscious world. Castoriadis provides an illustration, “two images for the reader’s consideration”:

The for-itself may be thought of as an enclosed sphere [...] whose diameter is approximately constant. And it happens that this sphere is somehow or other ‘adjusted’, each time, through an indefinite number of dimensions, to an indefinite number of other spheres. Human subjectivity is a pseudoclosed sphere that can dilate on its own, that can interact with other pseudospheres of the same type, and that can put back into question the conditions, or the laws, of its closure (Castoriadis 1997b, p. 169).

We have seen that the human subject, as defunctionalized and imagining subject, is capable of becoming self-reflexive. This subject has developed a capacity for deliberation, wilful action and putting itself into question, something that implies a certain “liability of cathexes” as the opposite of rigidity, or in other words: a reflexive form of socialization. Castoriadis uses as examples of ‘rigid cathexis’ a believer in Jehovah, Christ or Allah, a NSDAP member’s cathexis in the Führer or a scientist who doctors his data to fit his theory. The flexible kind of cathexis characterises, for example, the citizen who is willing and able to discuss the law which he in the meantime obeys, or a scientist who critically examines his results (p. 165). This – possibly quite rare – kind of subjectivity stands in a specific relationship with its world, by having the capacity to “put instituted objects into question” (ibid). Most of the time, however, conformity without reflection is the norm.

What has been said about the human versus the animal psyche shows us that the education of human beings carries a rather different mandate than the task of animal training – and for that matter, ‘learning’, which for Castoriadis (2007) is a biological category. As defunctionalized beings capable of self-reflection, goal setting and the creation of new social forms, human beings are capable of – and arguably deserve – an education that aims at freeing/releasing/realizing their creative potential. This would mean to strive for a world that is open, reflective and robust enough to stay open and reflective as well as subjects with the ability to think, question, seek truths, and not least, to questions their own selves. The task of educating a subject, as we have seen, invokes rather different connotations and

10 This is why autonomy, for Castoriadis, is always both individual and collective.
11 In other terms, the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy as conceived by Castoriadis.
responsibilities than those associated with the construction of an efficient learning environment.

The subject in nature
So far, we have considered human subjectivity in relation to societies and the world of the living being. I now want to widen the discussion to include the larger world of the ecosystem and future generations. This is partly a necessary response to the very serious ecological and socio-political problems brought on by changes in the global weather system, but also, in extension, an acknowledgement of the possibilities that emerge through the ongoing interchanges and approximations between the natural and human sciences. As noted by Adams (2012), the late work of Castoriadis, where he develops what she calls a “poly-regional ontology” of the living being and the idea of a creative physis, constitutes an opening toward an “ecological worldhood” beyond anthropocentric notions of autonomy and creativity. In the 1980s Castoriadis had frequent exchanges with Chilean biologist Francisco Varela, whose biological theory of autopoiesis is well known. There are both overlaps, intersections and differences between the works of Castoriadis and Varela. In this context, I simply want to point out their connection, and what I see as promising developments in contemporary, transdisciplinary fields that combine, for example, ontology, systems theory, neuroscience, biology, semiotics and anthropology. One such candidate is biological anthropologist Terrence W. Deacon. In his ambitious work Incomplete nature from 2012, subtitled How mind emerged from matter, Deacon develops an understanding of nature that incorporates phenomena that until now have been considered to belong to totally separate realms of knowledge, such as normativity and intention. His account aims to explain all aspects of human and non-human forms of existence, and not leave out (‘black-box’) any (human) phenomenon.

For the present discussion of subjectivity, it is interesting to note that Deacon argues that directedness, intention, purpose (teleology) and similar concepts are not only compatible with, but co-emerge with, physical systems. Moving further, we may try to rethink education – the aspect of education that is concerned with meaning and subjectivity – on this basis. This would mean, among other things, that the introduction of neuroscience in the human sciences should aim at more complex modes of understanding than resorts to functionalist explanations connected, especially, to the survival of the species (a dominant trend, not only in evolutionary biology). There are, as Deacon and Castoriadis observes, a whole range of phenomena that do not serve the survival of (the human) species, sometimes au contraire, but that still have evolved and significantly constitute us as species.

For centuries, philosophy has been haunted by a reductionism that trivialises its objects (reality and the human being) as well as philosophy itself. As I have argued with reference to Castoriadis, there is much more to the human being than its functionality. Then why is it, Castoriadis asks, that philosophers almost always start their investigation of being and reality by referring to the physical and concrete – statements such as "this is a table [bang!]" – instead of starting with the imagination, such as a dream:

Why could we not start by positing a dream, a poem, a symphony as paradigmatic of the fullness of being and by seeing in the physical world a deficient mode of being, instead of looking at things the other way round, instead of seeing in the imaginary – that is, human – mode of existence, a deficient or secondary mode of being? (Castoriadis 1997a: 5).

At this point, we are able to see how two forms of scientistic reductionism can be read as two pages of the same schema: first, when meaning-oriented subjectivity and corresponding

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12 One of their dialogues has been published in Castoriadis 2011.
Educational practices are reduced to the biological *living being*: ‘the learner’; and second, in the tendency to explain human life forms in physio-material terms, e.g. in terms of genes, neurons, often with reference to the reproduction of the species. In both cases, the radical imagination is left out of the picture; the kind of imagination that is *not* functional, that does *not* further the survival of the organism or the species, but, on the contrary, produces phantasms and social significations that are good for nothing except themselves (and the joy we may find in enjoying them).

I will not try to sketch out the implications of these ideas for education, but my contention is that they could be far-reaching. What seems certain, at this point in history, is that ontological and epistemological reductionism has proved itself harmful. There are clear signs, however, that many scholars working in the human and natural sciences are aware of this problem, and are trying to overcome scholarly limitations in order to understand, and approach ourselves and our condition as minds in matter (Deacon 2012; Thompson 2007). As I have argued, here and elsewhere, we need to think of education in the largest perspective possible, for political and moral reasons (if not out of philosophical curiosity). The subject and its world is but a speck in this landscape.

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Character education and the disappearance of the political

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Introduction

Character education, for many years a deeply unfashionable idea due to its “historical associations with various forms of religious and moral indoctrination of the young” (Grace, in Arthur, 2003, p.x), is definitely back on the agenda in English education policy. There has, for some years, been policy interest in and support for a range of initiatives that promote a form of character education in schools.

Many such initiatives have been subject to criticisms from theorists and practitioners concerned with issues of social justice, who express worries about the political assumptions behind them, either in the sense that they are seen as inherently right-wing or conservative, or that they are, as part of the “therapeutic turn”, recasting social problems as individual problems.

While I have some sympathy for these criticisms, my focus in the following discussion is not on the alleged, explicit or assumed ideological assumptions behind current character education programmes, but on the way in which they displace the idea of political education and, through their language and approaches, avoid any genuine engagement with the very concept of the political in all but its most superficial sense. In exploring some of the points raised by critics of character education, I defend the need for a more robust and radical conception of the political as a basis for a form of political education.

Katherine Ecclestone, one of the most prolific and rigorous critics of recent versions of character education, points out that this new trend is broad enough to encompass theorists of different political persuasions. It can no longer simply be written off as a project of the conservative right or the religious lobby, and has attracted supporters from across the political spectrum, as reflected in the following statement from the think-tank Demos, whose influential Character Inquiry was published in June 2011: “There is growing interest in the political and policy importance of a certain set of personal attributes – in particular emotional control, empathy, application to task, personal agency, an ability to defer gratification – that might be summarized as ‘character’. [...] While the terminology differs – in different cases, terms such as emotional resilience, social and emotional skills, or life skills, might be used – the central, and perhaps growing, importance of character is being recognized across intellectual disciplines and across the political spectrum.”

Similarly, Learning for Life, an umbrella organization that coordinates the work of a number of bodies developing character education projects in the UK, in expressing a concern that too much emphasis in the education system has been placed on competitiveness and future employment prospects, states: “A reinvigorated conscious focus upon character education in schools is a necessity, if a proper balance is to be restored to the educational process.”

Criticisms of Character Education

In spite of their allegedly broad appeal, many recent initiatives in the field of character education have been the target of rigorous criticisms from philosophers and others. I now turn to a discussion of some of these criticisms in order to address the important conceptual and political issues that they raise.
Dwight Boyd, writing in a North American context, has criticised an approach to character education that he claims “has now achieved the status of a movement in the U.S.” (Boyd, 2011, p. 147), arguing that “there is a highly conservative nature to almost all contemporary character education discourse” (ibid). The programmes he has in mind, which draw on the work of Thomas Lickona, one of the most influential theorists in the field, are those that defend a list of “essential virtues”. Boyd refers to the “epistemological arrogance” (ibid, p. 150) typical of these programmes, which strive at consenseus over items on such a list, thereby ruling out disagreement and, in doing so, promoting a kind of “willful difference blindness” (ibid, p. 152) that ends up propping up the status quo. A central flaw in such approaches, Boyd argues, is their conceptual confusion between “the good” and “the right”. Boyd notes that “it is the contrast between the work done by ‘the good’ versus ‘the right’ that is so critical to liberal political theory, particularly in its aim of addressing the inevitability of difference and conflict among citizens” (ibid). In failing to acknowledge this distinction, and consequently blurring the distinction between the good person and the good citizen, such character education programmes end up being “discursively productive of a very conservative political perspective that serves to protect the status quo of social relations-...,” ignoring or hiding difference or conflict.” (ibid, p. 162). Thus “by ignoring these deeper, more insidious social conditions [of systematic oppression faced by women, members of the working class, or those in racialized and sexually marginalized groups] this movement becomes politically conservative by default, if not by design” (ibid, p. 148).

Boyd’s solution is to offer a more “left field” approach to character education which assumes the Rawlsian distinction between the right and the good and focuses on the central political virtue of justice, adding the important perspective offered by Iris Marion Young’s work on the oppressive relations between relationally defined groups in order to articulate specific virtues required to address the oppression of racialized and other marginalized groups.

I find Boyd’s analysis persuasive and am sympathetic to his argument that in a society such as the US, where issues of oppression on the basis of class, race and gender are so deep-rooted and pervasive, educational interventions concerned with democratic citizenship need to have a far more rigorous and central concern with issues of justice, and a social ontology more akin to that of Young than to that of Rawls. Yet at the same time, I am concerned that the conceptual distinction between the right and the good that Boyd regards as so indispensable to a robust approach to character education, glosses over some of the political tensions within the liberal project itself.

Projects for character education in English schools, such as those developed and supported by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Values founded at the University of Birmingham in 2012, may seem on the face of it less politically worrying than the US programmes that Boyd discusses. While the Jubilee Centre website also makes prominent reference to the work of Thomas Lickona, many of the educational programmes developed and promoted by the Centre are explicitly concerned with the virtue of justice. However, statements such as the following, from the Centre’s “Framework for Character Education in Schools” - “Schools do and should aid students in knowing the good, loving the good and doing the good. Schools should enable students to become good persons and citizens, able to lead good lives, as well as ‘successful’ persons,” suggest that there may be a similar conflation here to that which concerns Boyd, overlooking the central tenet of liberal theory that “the ‘good citizen’ is a distinct role, not to be confused with the more general one of ‘the good person’” (Boyd, 2011, p. 154).

In fact, as I discuss below, the conceptual distinction that Boyd defends opens up more tensions and questions than it resolves. The way to address these tensions, however, is, I suggest, not by a theoretical debate conducted within the academic discourse of political philosophy, but by bringing them into the classroom. Without a more radical conception of just what “the political” means, and without engaging children in debates about how political
aims, ideas and values are intertwined with, yet importantly distinct from, moral values, there is no hope of engaging children in the pursuit of a more socially just and less oppressive society.

The problem identified by Boyd in his criticism of character education programmes is very different from that identified by critics such as Katherine Ecclestone, who argues that “discourses of well-being and character both recast virtues and moral values as psychological constructs that can be trained without requiring moral engagement.” (Ecclestone, 2012, p. 476).

Yet both critics are concerned with the wider political issues behind problems that advocates of character education often claim to be addressing. As Ecclestone argues, contemporary initiatives in the field of character education are explicitly linked to the positive psychology movement and its focus on boosting and measuring subjective well-being. For example, the recent “Positive Education Summit” held at Wellington College in 2013 and co-sponsored by the Jubilee Centre, was aimed at “highlighting the benefits of placing character and wellbeing on the timetable.” Reflecting the general tenor of such projects, the statement issued by the organizers of the summit, who included Martin Seligman, the guru of positive psychology, and James O’Shaughnessy, a former adviser to David Cameron and one of the engineers of the UK government’s recent “happiness index”, announced “We are calling on all schools to embrace positive education and introduce explicit character education into the curriculum.” (see http://lightsandcolors.com/pes/the-summit/)

Analysing this discourse, Ecclestone explains that “emotional and psychological well-being” is an umbrella term that “draws in an extensive set of ‘constructs’ seen as amenable to development. These include resilience, stoicism, an optimistic outlook, an ability to be in the moment (or ‘in flow’), feelings of satisfaction, being supported, loved, respected, skills of emotional regulation, emotional literacy (or emotional intelligence) as well as empathy, equanimity, compassion, caring for others and not comparing yourself to others” (Ecclestone, 2012, p. 464).

She argues that “the revival of an old discourse of ‘character’ incorporates concerns with morals and virtues within a psychological depiction that embraces all the constructs of well-being within a more inclusive set of ‘capabilities’, and hopes to find ways to measure them.”

Ecclestone is careful to point out that “Unlike earlier discourses of emotional and psychological well-being, the new discourse appears to encourage moral and political questions” (ibid, p. 270), and includes advocates with liberal-Left and communitarian sympathies. Nevertheless, the overwhelming therapeutic tenor of most educational interventions premised on such approaches inevitably, according to Ecclestone, “psychologises moral dimensions to well-being and character in a social project that aims to engineer them through state-sponsored behaviour training,” (ibid, p. 465), encouraging a diminished view of the subject positioned as in need of such interventions. Ecclestone argues, powerfully, that “We need a political and educational challenge to a social project that hopes to engineer emotional and psychological well-being and character whilst avoiding civic engagement in the political questions this raises. The problem is that if the human targets of therapeutically informed behavioural interventions accept their underlying emotional determinism, they are in no fit state to engage in these questions.” (ibid, p. 477).
My concern is that there is no clear conception, either within the theoretical literature or within current educational policy, of just what a “political question” is, or what the very realm of “the political” consists in and what it means to think about political questions and moral questions. My suggestion is that, as with the challenges raised by the conceptual distinction between “the good” and “the right”, we try to bring such questions and challenges into the heart of education. How can children be expected to play a part in political life if they don’t understand what “political” means, or what kinds of questions can be described as “political”?

The political and the moral

Boyd, in defending a “left field” approach to character education, cites the work of Ben Spieker and Jan Steutel, which draws on Joseph Raz’s notion of the capacity for a sense of justice, in support of his argument that “critical, reasonable engagement of difference and conflict” is an essential component of character education in a pluralistic liberal democracy. Spieker and Steutel argue that the virtue of justice, on the Rawlsian conception, is a distinctly political virtue and as such, “although there may be overlap with the character traits of a moral person in general”, they are different as they do not depend on any “grounding in a particular comprehensive doctrine” (Boyd, 2011, p. 157). Yet Boyd’s discussion here glosses over the contested nature of these very distinctions, which have been the subject of a great deal of debate within political philosophy. Bernard Williams, for example (Williams, 2008), has defended what he calls a “realist” conception of political philosophy against the Rawlsian normative, “moralist” conception, arguing that Rawls’ conception of justice is itself moral. Similarly, Susan Mendus, discussing the related distinction between “the right” and “the good”, points out that “it seems optimistic to suppose, as Rawls must, that different conceptions of the good will not spill over into (or even arise from) different conceptions of the right” (Mendus, 2006, p. 236). Disagreements in politics are, she says, “not simply disagreements about the highest ideals but also about what justice consists in and requires” (ibid).

This central debate in political philosophy is often framed as a conflict between two competing answers to the question “What is political philosophy?”, which are seen as reflecting two philosophical traditions, one of which considers political philosophy to be a special branch of the more general area of moral philosophy, while the other sees it as an autonomous discipline (see Larmore, 2013). This conflict is echoed, yet not addressed, in a great deal of the character education literature, which often seems to assume one or other of the two opposing positions in the debate, and often simply elides the two.

Many proponents of contemporary character education initiatives in Britain draw explicit links with citizenship education, as in James Arthur’s claim that “character education can be understood to be a specific approach to moral or values education and is consistently linked to citizenship education” (Arthur, 2005, p. 239), and such calls often invoke the notion of “civic virtues”. Yet not all arguments for an education in civic virtues can be interpreted as belonging to a republican or Aristotelian tradition - the tradition most closely associated with the view that “political philosophy must proceed within the framework of the larger enterprise of moral philosophy” (Larmore, 2012, p.9), nor do they necessarily accept the Aristotelian idea of the political life as the “highest, most comprehensive form of human association since its principal aim is to promote the ultimate end of all our endeavours, the human good itself” (ibid, p. 8). In fact, as Eamonn Callan noted some time ago, “An antipathy to talk of civic virtue runs deep in the liberal political tradition” (Callan, 1998, p. 211). Liberal theorists, Callan explains, have often been suspicious of “virtue-based politics” due to the worry that it will impose “an illiberal character standardization on citizens” (ibid), thus undermining “the dissent and individuality that a free society will properly welcome” (ibid). Yet Callan himself, along with several other theorists, has defended the idea that “for people whose fundamental political orientation is democratic – including those who are quick to add that the only democracy worth having is liberal – a wholesale renunciation of civic virtue cannot possibly be appealing” (ibid). Callan, along with other theorists such as Patricia White (see White,
1998, 1983), has argued that civic virtues are necessary in a democracy, and has developed an account of liberalism as “a politics of virtue” depending on the understanding that “justice as reasonableness” is necessary for free and equal citizens (ibid). Likewise, Kymlicka (2001, p. 294) claims that “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its ‘basic structure,’ but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens”.

One does not have to be a republican or a communitarian to accept, with Patricia White, (1980, p. 149) that “democratic politics is a moral matter”, and that it therefore makes little sense to have “a privatized moral education, on the one hand, [...] and on the other a political education concerned only with a descriptive element of the society’s political institutions” (ibid). Yet to argue for a conceptual and practical connection between moral education and political education is not to endorse the kind of psychologically-oriented forms of character education typical of recent initiatives that elide citizenship education and character education. Nor should the acknowledgement that moral and political philosophy both “have to do with the principles by which we should live together in society” (Larmore, 2013, p. 1), and that therefore, as White points out, moral considerations play a role in political argument, lead us to overlook the importance of the distinction between political questions and purely moral questions.

Yet what is remarkable in current calls for a form of character education seen as part and parcel of citizenship education is not their confusion over these basic issues to do with how to conceptualize political thought, political theory and, correspondingly, political education, but their complete expunging of the language of politics from their rhetoric. The notion of “the political” has, it seems, been displaced by this emphasis on “citizenship” and “character”. The word “political” rarely appears in the various statements and proposals issued by the Jubilee Centre, and when it is used in work by academics writing on citizenship and character education, such as James Arthur and Andrew Peterson (see e.g. Arthur, 2003), it is generally done so in the context of “political participation”, as if what is important is that children be prepared for participating in something already defined as the political system; not that they engage in meaningful thought and discussion about just what such a system is, what it should be, what participation in it consists in or why it may be valuable.

We need, I argue, to bring back a focus on the political, and an attempt to get children to see political thinking, argument and action as a particular form of human engagement concerned with particular kinds of questions. Charles Larmore (2013), attempting to move beyond the opposition between the so-called “realist view” associated primarily with Bernard Williams and Raymond Geuss and the “moralist” view associated primarily with G.A. Cohen, defends a view of political philosophy as concerned with “the problem of how people like us are to live together”. What I want to suggest is that for educational interventions in this area to have any real political significance, what is important is not that proponents of various approaches to character education resolve their philosophical disagreements, get clear on the distinction between the good and the right, or identify themselves as Aristotelians or Liberals. What is essential is that the political - understood as that whole realm of human enquiry and experience that touches on the question of “how people like us are to live together” – is brought back into the classroom as a live issue.

For children in schools to develop any genuine understanding of the meaning of the political, they need to understand not only how moral questions can be conceptually distinguished from political questions, but how they interact. This may seem paradoxical, but Larmore explains the point well when he argues that “the characteristic problems of political life include widespread disagreement about morality”, and are as such a distinct realm from moral philosophy, “yet it cannot determine how these problems are to be addressed except by reference to moral principles understood as having an antecedent validity.” (Larmore, 2013, p.5).
I suggest, then, that children need to be given opportunities to think about what “the political” means, and that in providing such opportunities, educators need to be prepared to embrace the complexity suggested by the above discussion. Yet acknowledging this complexity and adopting a perspective like Larmore’s is not sufficient for this task, for Larmore is afflicted with the “state fixation” (Miltrany, 1975, p. 98) typical of many liberal theorists, and thus his perspective is narrowly focused on the existing framework of liberal democracy. I explore this issue in detail below.

**The absence of the political in character education**

One way in which the political is written out of character education programmes is, as Ecclestone notes, in their failure to address the moral and political context of notions such as courage and resilience that are a central feature of many such programmes. To illustrate this point, I turn to an examination of the notion of resilience. As Ecclestone explains,

> Influenced strongly by positive psychology and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), resilience is one of several, inter-related constructs that comprise ‘emotional well-being’ [...] In interventions based on this understanding, resilience is a foundation for a broader set of desirable social and emotional competences. More recently, it has become a key construct in a politically endorsed revival of an old discourse around ‘character building’ (Ecclestone, 2014, p. 196)

Yes while Ecclestone is keen to show how the notion of resilience in such interventions is premised on a narrow psychological-behaviourist approach, and to promote a more critical perspective, what I want to argue here is that the space in the curriculum allocated to such programmes of personal and citizenship education can perhaps offer opportunities for directly engaging in discussion of “the political” as described above, and thus bringing back a more meaningful form of political education. One way into this, for example, is to ask students: Are there things we shouldn’t be resilient to?

The UK Resilience Programme, a version of the Penn Resiliency Program developed by Martin Seligman, was piloted in 22 schools in England in 2007 and has since been taken up by dozens of schools (see [http://www.howtothrive.org/thrivingschools/penn-resilience-program](http://www.howtothrive.org/thrivingschools/penn-resilience-program)). The Thinking Minds website, one of the key resources for the programme, states: “Put simply, resiliency refers to the capacity of human beings to survive and thrive in the face of adversity.”

While I share Ecclestone’s worry about the way such ideas are framed as “psychological constructs that can be trained without requiring moral engagement” (Ecclestone, 2012, p. 476), my suggestion is that we take such “moral engagement” into the school itself, and try to engage children in a real understanding of the political realm and political discussion as involving basic moral questions. As a way into this endeavour, the question “Are there some things we shouldn’t be resilient to?” has clear echoes of Martin Luther King’s idea of “creative maladjustment”. In his 1967 speech to the American Psychological Association, King said:

> There are certain technical words within every academic discipline that soon become stereotypes and cliches. Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word in modern psychology. It is the word ‘maladjusted.’ This word is the ringing cry to modern child psychology. Certainly, we all want to avoid the maladjusted life. In order to have real adjustment within our personalities, we all want the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurosis, schizophrenic personalities. But I say to you, my friends, as I move to my conclusion, there are certain things in our nation and in the world which I am proud to be maladjusted and which I hope all men of good-will will be maladjusted until the good societies realize. I say very honestly that I never intend to become adjusted to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic...
conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism, to self-defeating effects of physical violence.

As an aside, I think that the fact that Martin Seligman’s Penn Resilience Training Program is now offering resilience training to soldiers in the US army at a cost of $125 million is enough to prompt the question whether there are some things we don’t want people to be resilient to. My general point, though, is that asking children to reflect on this question seems like a good way to prompt them to engage in genuine political discussion, and to go on to think about what this question implies, both in relation to their own experience and in relation to wider normative moral questions about how society should be organized. However, this kind of questioning can only carry a powerful moral and political impetus if our political systems and institutions are from the outset conceived as essentially malleable.

Thus my call for the political to be brought back into moral and citizenship education is not a call to reintroduce the kind of “political literacy” advocated by Bernard Crick, who argued, in his call for political education in schools, that “a person who has a fair knowledge of what are the issues of contemporary politics, is equipped to be of some influence, whether in school, factory, voluntary body or party, and can understand and respect, while not sharing, the values of others, can reasonably be called ‘politically literate’”. (Crick and Porter, 1978, p. 7).

There have in fact been some recent calls in the UK for a revival of this kind of political literacy. For example, in April 2011 The Independent reported that the President of the National Association of Schoolmasters had told their annual conference that “Youngsters should receive compulsory lessons in political education before they leave school”, as it would “give them a grounding in democracy and encourage more to vote in later life”, going on to claim that “An impartial education in politics would increase participation in elections with electors voting armed with a knowledge and understanding of party politics rather than a reliance on spin and media prejudices,” (Independent, 2011). Likewise, Harrison Jones (2013) complains: “Why is it compulsory to learn about shape theorems, textiles and gymnastics, but not the political system under which we live? Secondary school pupils leave education without formal teaching in such basic things as how the British political system operates, an overview of mainstream ideologies - alongside their (apparently) corresponding UK parties, and the mechanics of different voting systems.”

Such calls for political education in schools refer to voter apathy and low turn-out at elections. But what they have in common with contemporary character education programmes is that they see the political system as simply that – the system which we have. A similar perspective is implicit in the principles of effective citizenship education set out by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, namely that “citizenship should develop social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.”

Quotes such as the above give the impression that the problem is children’s lack of factual knowledge of central aspects of the existing political system; yet this begs the question of whether children even know what “political” means. My suggestion is that this is the more urgent educational task, and that if it is to be undertaken in a way which will encourage children to engage with political ideas, debates and processes, it must embrace both the idea of political questions as being basic normative questions about, as Larmore says, “how to live together in society”, and an understanding of political arrangements as essentially malleable. This requires far more than an idea of political literacy and a grasp of the institutions and mechanisms of democracy.
Patricia White, like some other earlier advocates of political education (see e.g. Wringe, 1984), is careful to point out that educating children for the kind of democratic dispositions she defends does not imply being “blindly committed to the arrangements of any particular democratic state” (White, 1980, p. 149). Yet this view seems somewhat lacking from current character education programmes - perhaps unsurprisingly in a climate in which mainstream political debate is dominated by the discourse of no alternative.

Adopting a more robust conception of the political as a basis for political education requires that educators concerned with social justice be willing to entertain the idea that a reality characterized by radical problems of poverty, growing inequality and impending ecological disaster may require radical political solutions. Central to this approach is a view of our political structures as malleable and of politics as an ongoing process of engagement with moral questions, rooted in human experience, as to how to shape and organize society.

The absence of such a perspective from contemporary character education programmes is evident not just in the way in which citizenship is framed, as discussed above, but also in the way in which political issues are discussed within curricular resources on specific virtues. For example, the Jubilee Centre project, “Knightly Virtues”, which has been run in 65 primary schools across Britain, involving over 3250 students (see http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/417/projects-development-projects/knightly-virtues#sthash.KEOvivAe.dpuf), includes a supplementary pack on the story of Rosa Parks, designed “to explore in greater depth the virtues of courage and justice.”

The emphasis on the personal character of Rosa Parks in the presentation of and questions about her story suggests a view of the political as something out there and given, with the important questions being questions for the individual: “What do you think were the different virtues displayed by Rosa Parks?” “What do you think you might have done if you had been on the bus?” The image of Rosa Parks as an individual with particular character traits, acting on her own, is in fact reinforced by many standard narratives about her, which ignore the well-documented fact of her involvement with the influential Highlander Center, that provided education and leadership training for civil rights activists. As Morris (1984) comments, the educational activities that Rosa Parks participated in at the Highlander Center were part of a process that theorists of collective action and political movements define as “cognitive liberation” (see McAdam, 1999). Although Parks’ involvement with the Centre and with the Association for the Advancement of Colored People is mentioned in the Jubilee Centre material, the focus on the question of her individual character, and the very framing of the question “Can an individual change society?” shifts the emphasis away from these kinds of collective political movements and the hope and belief they embody that the political system can be radically changed.

This narrow view of the political in which it is implied that radical social change is less feasible than the cultivation of personal character strengths is supported in the work of academics involved in the Jubilee Centre, such as Kristjan Kristjansson, who has responded to the objection often raised that character and virtue education are individualistic notions. These criticisms, he argues, generally have as their target “US-style character education of the 1990’s and current positive psychological virtue theory” (Kristjansson, 2013, p. 279). While acknowledging the primacy of “inward gaze and personal achievement” in such programmes, their position, Kristjansson argues, is that

the question of individual versus societal reform is a chicken-and-egg one – we need to start somewhere and, for developmental and pragmatic reasons, it is more feasible

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1 I leave aside the disturbing question of why “The Knightly Virtues” are considered educationally and morally valuable in 21st Century Britain, and why Rosa Parks’ story is included as a supplement to the “great stories of knights and heroes” that form the core of this educational programme.
to start with the individual child, student or classroom than the whole school system of society at large (ibid).

This argument seems to me at best naive and at worst disingenuous. Firstly, as even a cursory understanding of Marx’s theses on Feurebach indicates, the “pragmatic” solution proposed here by no means escapes the complex social and political questions raised by this issue. Crucially for educators, if one genuinely believes that radical social change is necessary to overcome urgent social problems of injustice, inequality and oppression, then surely an essential part of such an approach is convincing people that such change is both possible and necessary, and creating a climate of public political discourse where ideas about what and how to change, and why, are openly debated and argued for. An educational approach that puts all pedagogical emphasis on individuals and their character traits mitigates against this, both reflecting and feeding into the dominant policy discourse that views the system as here to stay and individuals as to blame for social problems.

The Political Imagination
Taking the educational stance that “the political” is a central and distinct form of human engagement, bound up with moral questions about how we are to live together, and that any political system is inherently malleable and subject to change through collective action, will perhaps do something to discourage the kind of apathy remarked on by commentators. The approach to political education that I am defending here requires a flexibility and openness on the part of educators, that acknowledges that the question of what form our society should take is not fully decided, that the kinds of crisis facing us today demand radical solutions, and that perhaps a way to encourage the articulation of and participation in such solutions is to foster imaginative political thinking about the kind of society we want.

In the context of calls for civic education, Dewey is often cited as a democratic thinker we need to heed more. John Covaleskie, for example, in calling for “a deliberate and deliberative effort to foster the virtues of character and intellect that democracy requires of its citizens” (Covaleskie, 2011, p. 168), argues that we need to take seriously the obligations implied in the idea of a public developed in Dewey’s work. But what is often overlooked by such advocates of democratic civic virtues is that an important element of Deweyan Pragmatism is, as commentators like Paul Goodman and Richard Rorty have noted, its utopian aspect (see Rorty, 1999). As Goodman remarks, “in a climate where experts plan in terms of an unchangeable structure, a pragmatic expediency that still wants to take the social structure as plastic and changeable comes to be thought of as ‘utopian’” (Goodman, 1952, pp 18-19).

At first glance, one of the “Big Questions” posed on the Jubilee Centre’s website: “How does the power of good character transform and shape the future of society?” certainly suggests that proponents of this approach are hardly concerned with simply preserving the political staup quo. Yet, as discussed above, the assumption here is that individuals can learn, through appropriate pedagogical interventions, something called “good character”, and that this in turn can lead to social improvement. What is lacking, I have argued, is an educational engagement in the moral and political questions about just what such improvement consists in, and a willingness to consider that asking such questions might lead us into political ideas that appear, in the sense described by Goodman, “utopian”.

Developing the ability to imagine, discuss and defend – or object to – different political ideas demands that we encourage children to understand political questions as fundamental questions about how to live together in society, to see our current political structures as essentially malleable, and to engage with the intertwining of moral values and ideas about how to organize society. What this requires, I suggest, is a kind of “politics of imagination” (Bottici and Challand, 2011); an appreciation of the critical role of the imagination in political thought and action.
This conception of politics, which is prior to “the bifurcation between the two classically opposed ways of understanding the task of philosophically reflecting on politics – namely the ‘normative’ and the ‘realistic’” (Ferrara, p. 40) has been articulated by Alessandro Ferrara, as follows:

Only a human form of association to which unlimited resources were available and which could equally satisfy all the ends striven after by all of its members could dispense with politics. The important role of the imagination becomes manifest here: by enabling us to project an image of the world, the imagination allows us to perceive certain ends as deserving more or less priority over others. (ibid, p. 40).

Ferrara insists that “we should be wary of equating politics with the ‘institutional’ and the *staatlich*; as many dictionary definitions of politics do. “For politics is also the locus where new values and new needs are articulated.[...]. Politics at its best is the articulation of reasons that move the imagination”. (ibid, p. 42).

I have argued that, to respond to Ecclestone’s plea for “a political and educational challenge to a social project that hopes to engineer emotional and psychological well-being and character whilst avoiding civic engagement in the political questions this raises”, we need to bring the political back into the classroom, and to do so in a way that offers real hope of radical social change through engaging children in an imaginative, intellectually challenging encounter with political ideas.

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Student partnership and the question of authority

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The notion of students working in partnership with their university teachers and lecturers is currently being strongly promoted by those with a policy role in shaping the future of British higher education. Partnership has been interpreted broadly to mean involving students in decision-making processes that relate to matters of both governance and education, including university procedures, curriculum design and delivery, and quality assurance.

In this paper, we will focus particularly on how the notion of partnership sits in relation to teaching and learning a subject discipline, rather than on partnership in matters of governance. First, we will outline arguments that have been presented for emphasizing a partnership role, and ways in which the idea has been adopted and used within the UK. Next, we will examine the complex concept of authority. We believe authority to be integral to both teaching and learning an academic discipline, accepting that relations of authority are by definition hierarchical rather than equal, and that they require obedience to somebody or to something. However, analysis of the concept of authority reveals that there are contradictory tensions in the role of the academic working in the context of a marketized higher education system. We will then argue that superimposing a model of partnership onto educational relationships hinders educators, who should acknowledge and continuously re-examine and re-work their own authority status as teachers and subject experts, and hinders students, by disrupting a process of recognition that should build, rather than assume, their authority through diligent learning.

First, let us look more closely at the ‘students as partners’ movement in the UK, and what is meant by it. Our point of departure is a paper entitled ‘The Future of Higher Education Teaching and the Student Experience’ that was published in 2008 by Paul Ramsden, then Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy. Ramsden intended his paper to be a reference point for policy decisions relating to teaching and the student experience for the following ten to fifteen years. He acknowledges global competition as a key threat, and proposes a solution to this threat in the form of a vision to establish UK higher education as ‘an engaged partnership between students and providers’. By way of elaboration, he claims that students should be ‘collaborators’ in institutional structures and processes relating to teaching and assessment and ‘central contributors to the business of enhancing the student experience’. He envisages students as part of a community of learners working with academics and ‘sharing responsibility’ to enhance teaching, assure quality and maintain standards.

Ramsden’s rationale for this partnership model is primarily market-driven. On the one hand, he argues, it will ensure future UK competitiveness by consolidating a special feature of the UK ‘brand’ that is encapsulated in the phrase ‘intimacy of pedagogical relationships’. On the other hand, it counters any notion of students as passive consumers of their education, which Ramsden recognizes as one of the most negative potentials of marketization.

Available at: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/consultations/paulramsdenteachingandstudentexperience [accessed 13 November 2013].
Whatever the merits or demerits of Ramsden’s claims, the conception of students as partners, heralded as the cure-all to improving the student experience and as antidote to a passive consumerist approach to education, has been adopted and promoted with zeal by UK higher education bodies, including the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which oversees qualification standards in UK universities, the Higher Education Academy (HEA), which is intended to improve teaching and learning throughout UK universities, and the Students’ Union (NUS), and consequently by many individuals within universities with a stake in advancing learning and teaching.

Universities have made extra efforts to step-up student representation in matters of governance and quality assurance, and the HEA in particular has promoted student partnership in curriculum design and delivery. In case there is any doubt about what is meant by student partnership here, let us give just one an example. A recent large funding project run by the HEA was entitled ‘Students as Partners in the Curriculum’ and the bidding criteria clearly specified that students should be treated as equal rather than inferior partners. Project teams were required to comprise representatives from both student and staff communities in almost equal number, and listed principles of working with students as partners included developing ‘shared purpose, values and principles’ and ‘joint decision making and accountability arrangements’.

The implication here is clear: that when it comes to making and evaluating changes to curricula, students and teachers should have equal status and equal say. Other projects and literature proceeding from the students as partners movement echo or even exceed this principle of equality by elevating students to leadership roles, such that students are identified as ‘co-designers of courses’, ‘pedagogical consultants’ and ‘strategy developers’.

Any understanding of expert authority of the teacher is negated. Be assured that we are not saying students should not be involved in educational matters or have a voice. We are saying that undermining the authority of the teacher to mitigate the impact of a consumer model of higher education is detrimental to both student and teacher when it comes to the main task of a higher education – learning and specializing in a subject discipline of choice. We hope to show that a rich grasp of the notion of authority is at the heart of a higher education, and that education is a process of recognition that builds authority in students.

**Authority: A protean concept**

Authority has traditionally been a central concept within the field of political theory where it has been used to understand and examine mechanisms of cooperation within societies, but it has been under-theorized within the philosophy of education. This is a pity because the concept is widely applicable and yet often confused with power, coercion and authoritarian modes which contrast authority with freedom. The issue of authority is also pertinent to the conditions academics find themselves in under circumstances where students increasingly regard themselves as consumers of education.

In relation to contemporary ‘flexible’ employment and management practices, Richard Sennett points out that shifting relations between workers and managers have created a workplace habitus where teamwork, and analogies with team sports and games, has become increasingly commonplace. The grounding idea is familiar: ‘skills’ like listening, teaching others, detachment, and facilitation are required where employees need portable skills to work with a rapidly shifting cast of characters ‘assembled to perform a specific, immediate

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task, rather than to dwell together as a village.” Authority, in political thought, fits the category of what William Gallie called an ‘essentially contested concept.’ There are various ways in which political philosophers have attempted to ground the concept of state authority: through security (Hobbes); by consent (Locke); participation in democratic will formation (Rousseau); appeal to fairness that all subjects agree to (Rawls). These are only some well-known varieties of how political authority is grounded in the question of political obligation. For some, such as Robert Paul Wolff, authority cannot be grounded at all, since it always and everywhere limits autonomy. Indeed, Wolff says, elsewhere that, ‘Claims to authority, the exercise of authority, and the submission to authority have no place whatsoever in any of the characteristic educational relationships of a university.’

It is tempting to agree, when we think in terms of education, perhaps a higher education most of all, to think in terms of the development of autonomy, rather than in terms of authority. This becomes all the more obvious when Wolff tells us that, ‘Authority is the right to command, and correlative, the right to be obeyed.’ Of course, when we construe authority in Wolff’s deontic, militaristic terms of issuing commands in return for obedience, it appears to us as an entirely inappropriate concept with which to view pedagogic relationships, especially (perhaps) in an environment where students are highly indebted by tuition fees which they incur in return for the possibility of higher earnings after graduation. Wolff defines authority in terms of command which he can dismiss as immoral if it is never legitimate for an autonomous person to command another. Wolff is quick to draw a common distinction between de facto and de jure authority, and proposes that the fundamental task of political philosophy is to give a deduction of the concept of legitimate authority:

To complete this deduction, it is not enough to show that there are circumstances in which men have an obligation to do what the de facto authorities command. Even under the most unjust of governments there are frequently good reasons for obedience rather than defiance…[A] man may be right to comply with the commands of the government under whose de facto authority he finds himself. But none of this settles the matter of legitimate authority. That is a matter of the right to command, and of the correlative obligation to obey the person who issues the command… Obedience is not a matter of doing what someone tells you to do. It is a matter of doing what he tells you to do because he tells you to do it. Legitimate, or de jure, authority thus concerns the grounds and sources of moral obligation.

Wolff’s defense of philosophical anarchism, and his dismissal of the exercise of authority in the educational relationships in a university, are only as good as the terms in which he seeks to define authority. Wolff’s command theory of authority falls into a tradition: the command theory of law, which includes Hobbes, Austin, and Kelsen, but the idea that authority concerns only commands and obedience misleads us. As Golstone and Tunnell explain:

It is wrong to define “authority” as “the right to command A to (not) do x,” because

commanding is only one type of activity that authorities engage in, and not the essence of authority. Not only do authorities decide that A will do x, they decide or rule or judge that something is the case. An umpire in a baseball game, for example, may issue commands, but he also decides or rules that a pitch is a ball, or that a base runner is out. If he *says* that a base runner is out, then the base runner *is* out; the umpire’s decision *makes* it so. When a spelling-bee judge declares a word to be spelled (in)correctly, then his decision is binding, even though he is mistaken. (His decision might be appealed, of course.) When a judge renders a verdict, which is clearly an exercise of authority, he is not giving commands, rather he is announcing his decision. When a judge pronounces sentence, he is doing just that, not commanding anyone to do anything. But when the judge tells the bailiff, “Take him away,” then he is commanding. Although both announcing decisions and commanding may initiate action, nonetheless announcing decisions must be distinguished from commanding A to (not) do x. The definition of “authority” as “the right to command” assimilates diverse modes of authority to one—namely, commanding.10

Wolff’s *de jure* concept of authority allows him to express his argument in terms of command and obedience, which are unlikely to appeal to philosophers of education interested in cultivating persons who would want to pursue a higher education. The authoritative tutor is not someone who commands obedient students in the seminar. Rather, as we hope to show, the authoritative academic cultivates an authoritative relationship of trust with students. Just as an umpire or judge has authority to make decisions (and sometimes might issue commands), an academic or teacher has authority to organize a course of study, holds a right to award grades, and a right to establish and apply a system of standards.11 But the academic does not hold this authority in her person, it is not the experience she has, her personal qualities, or her academic qualifications, which bring this authority. The authority of the academic ought not to be considered in causal terms which the command theory invites: your command causes my obedience. Rather, as Peter Winch points out, ‘Authority is not a sort of influence…but an *internal* relation. The very notion of a human will, capable of deliberating and making decisions, presupposes the notion of authority.’12 This is an interesting turn of phrase, because Winch is pointing out that participating ‘in rule-governed activities *is*, in a certain way, to accept authority.’13 The academic belongs to a particular culture. Or, as Michael Oakeshott puts it, the academic belongs to a certain manner of thinking and employs a particular language. Oakeshott draws a distinction between a text and a language in education, and these fit with a vocational and a university education, respectively. It is Oakeshott’s view that a vocational education concerns not how to use a particular language, but ‘how to use those products of … thought which contribute to our current manner of living.’14 Consider how far removed Oakeshott’s understanding of a university is from the perspective of an undergraduate student keen to acquire a university qualification which will maximize his future income. Oakeshott says that a university:

> is an association of persons, locally situated, engaged in caring for and attending to the whole intellectual capital which composes a civilization. It is concerned not merely to keep an intellectual inheritance intact, but to be continuously recovering what has

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13 Ibid., p. 99.
been lost, restoring what has been neglected, collecting together what has been dissipated, repairing what has been corrupted, reconsidering, reshaping, reorganizing, making more intelligible, reissuing and reinvesting. In principle, it works undistracted by practical concerns; its current directions of interest are not determined by any but academic considerations; the interest it earns is all reinvested. The hypothetical student here has little interest in attending to the intellectual capital that makes a civilization, and little care for any interest it earns in being reinvested. The academic authority of the educator rests on what Max Weber termed the 'traditional authority of the 'cultivated man', rather than the rational-legal credentials of the expert:

Behind all the present discussions of the foundations of the educational system, the struggle of the 'specialist type of man' against the older type of 'cultivated man' is hidden at some decisive point. This fight is determined by the irresistibly expanding bureaucratization of all public and private relations of authority and by the ever-increasing importance of expert and specialized knowledge.

The academic educator holds a sense of deriving authority from the intellectual discipline, the manner of thinking she seeks to introduce to her students. Her students, on the other hand, seek the expertise that brings increased employability in the labour market, while senior administrators and policy-makers involved in the development of the concept of student partnership hold to a command conception of authority.

Next, we will trace Hannah Arendt's development of the notion of authority within her essay 'What is Authority?' and how it can be related to higher education in order to advance the understanding of authority we wish to encourage. We focus upon Arendt's conception of authority for two reasons. First, her view of authority connects with action and participation in the world. Indeed, Arendt conceives of education specifically in terms of preparation for action. Secondly, parallels can be drawn between the 'child-centred', 'progressive' education Arendt attacked in 'The Crisis of Education' and an instrumental model of higher education encouraged by high tuition fees and a focus on employability. These forms of education provide insufficient insulation for the development of the student and resist the notion of authority on the part of the tutor.

**Hannah Arendt’s Conception of Authority**

Arendt argues that the concept of authority is misunderstood, for authority is not about less freedom or more orderliness. Neither should it be concerned with less student voice or more university teachers who have completed a teaching qualification and been awarded HEA fellowship. This simplistic view of authority hides important differences between tyranny, democracy, authoritarianism and totalitarianism in politics. Arendt points out that the lack of clarity over the concept of authority goes so deep that parents face a crisis of authority in raising children because of an absence of tradition that can be passed on to them. In the same way, university teachers may face a crisis in authority if they increasingly lack an ethical tradition to pass on to their students. A higher education that is oriented towards the future in terms of employability, happiness, and income will inevitably confront a crisis of authority. An inability to grasp authority, except in terms of freedom and orderliness, is a

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15 Ibid., p. 194.
result of the dominance of liberal and conservative political thought which conceal meaning in a focus on the functional level.\textsuperscript{19}

Authority demands obedience, so it is not surprising that the concept is confused with lack of freedom, or with power or violence. But authority is not concerned with external means of coercion; rather it is recognized. As Arendt says, ‘where force is used, authority itself has failed.’\textsuperscript{20} Neither is authority concerned with persuasion because persuasion ‘presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation.’\textsuperscript{21}

It is worth noting that authority explicitly rules out the co-constructive, egalitarian relations involved in students as partners. What operates in higher education is, to be sure, a relation of isonomy, or equality of reason in teacher and student, but against a backdrop of the teacher’s authority. Obedience occurs in a relation of trust. But this obedience is to the grammar of the scholarly lifeworld, not to an individual person.

\textbf{Freedom and the Passions}

Socrates’ execution by the state (for corrupting the youth of Athens) demonstrated to Plato that persuasion and reason cannot control the passions of the public sphere.\textsuperscript{22} A polis regulated only by free speech and reason will not sustain freedom, given the ‘crooked timber’ of humanity. Free speech alone is not enough, for what point is speech when nobody is required to listen? The liberal concept of free speech would not have interested the Athenians. Liberty needs people inclined to hear, and those listening others should also be free, with an open-minded, but critical, attitude, ready to use their own reason to form judgements. Not everyone, unfortunately, is subject to the force of reason.\textsuperscript{23} Authority commands an obedience to listen, but this obedience is not coerced. This suggests that authority involves trust, as Zdenko Kodelja explains:

> [O]bedience can be the result either of the use of coercive power or of authority. However, in the first case obedience depends on the person who possesses power, but in the second, just the opposite is true: it depends on those who recognize and acknowledge the authority of the person who has the right to command obedience….\textsuperscript{24}

How can freedom be preserved alongside obedience? For Plato there was no easy answer. Athens, as a direct, participatory democracy, had no experience of public authority. Law was determined there through the public use of reason by all citizens. So, Plato turned to the household for a model of authority.\textsuperscript{25} In the household he saw the authority of the despotic father who preserved freedom for his family. We may also, however, note that parental authority involves trust from the child. Political freedom for the citizen requires a force external to those in power. In \textit{The Republic}, Plato proposes that law has this function of an

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\textsuperscript{19} Hannah Arendt ‘What is Authority?’ in Hannah Arendt (1993) \textit{Between Past and Future}, London: Penguin, p. 103. It is hardly surprising that university managers, the HEA, and policy-makers are similarly focused on what happens to be ‘functional’.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 107.

\textsuperscript{23} In part the problem of authority in contemporary higher education comes from students and academic teachers who struggle to recognise the force of reason because their focal points of interest (love of a subject or future employment, for instance) bypass each other. Recognition, on all sides, of divergent interests would be a point of critical departure for developing more authoritative higher education.


\textsuperscript{25} Hannah Arendt ‘What is Authority?’ op. cit., p. 106.
external force, beyond the powerful. The democratic government, to maintain freedom, must operate within the rule of law, and can only alter law through due process. In order to force those many for whom reason is unpersuasive to follow the law, Plato provides the myth of hell: the idea of an afterlife that punishes the law-breaking bad for eternity. Thus, fear of hell reins in the passions of those unable to control their passions through reason.26

The student as partner, with an overriding fear of indebtedness and future underemployment, might be said to have reined in passion. Those of our students who arrive at university with overwhelmingly instrumental attitudes towards their studies are present in lectures and tutorials, and hand in their essays, but they do so while operating under a misconception of what their higher education is about. The intellectual passion of the academic and student working in partnership under an idea of mastery of a craft is dissolved in the acidity of instrumental higher education. What is required is some external force that will help re-balance attitudes back towards a deepening of intellectual understanding.

Authority of the Philosopher King

Plato argues by analogy. So when ill, we defer to the physician; in sailing, to the helmsman. In politics, we should defer to the expert in ideas and laws. The wisest, for Plato, hold the authority to rule because the ‘compelling element lies in the relationship itself and is prior to the issuance of commands’27. For Arendt, however, this is absurd – there is no expert in human affairs. Political matters, relationships between people, in a democracy, can only be considered through free and open discussion where the words of the speaker hold the power to persuade. Whoever best understands the situation is the person we want to listen to. This person, however, is unlikely to have the best grasp of all situations. Therefore, even when we listen to the speaker with the best understanding of the situation we should be inclined towards a sceptical attitude. The ‘expert’ who supports his authority through threats of violence, or hell in the afterlife diminishes freedom for the citizen or congregation, just as the threat of grades too low to impress future employers diminishes freedom for the real student or teacher. Teachers and students in higher education ought to incline towards scepticism, yet also incline towards listening to one another in the context of interpreting, understanding and judging the subject matter of their discipline. The skills involved here are empathetic and rhetorical: an openness to listen to others, sharing views about the good or justice. The seminar room, then, is a vision of the polis requiring:

Skill in explaining one’s own views, skill in listening to the views of others, skill in bringing the two into relation with one another in a way that highlights their strengths and diminishes their weaknesses, and skill once again in explaining the tentative synthesis that one has arrived at for the benefit of others (who are, of course, engaged in a similar exercise).28

Rome and auctoritas

The Romans had one centre of authority in Rome. Rome grew and developed, the Empire was built upon a central founding. The development of the Roman Empire meant that life and the world involved constantly keeping Rome in view as the founding idea. Auctoritas, Arendt tells us, derives from augere, to augment, and what those in authority augment is the foundation. Authority rested upon the wisdom of the elders who held the foundation in view

26 Ibid., p. 111.
27 Ibid., p. 109. It is the shared interest between student and academic teacher which is under threat. Shared interests will not be recaptured by treating students as partners. It is more likely that partnership (in terms of governance, assessment modes and course content) will throw divergent interests into sharp relief.
for all things to come.\textsuperscript{29} Ultimately therefore, authority rested on the founders who were no longer alive, with the ancestors rather than those who held actual power.

For Arendt, the political structure rests on the trinity of religion, tradition, and authority.\textsuperscript{30} It is maintained in attitudes, in ethics, rather than in ideas. \textit{Religio} means to tie back, in the sense that the present is ‘tied back’ to the past. Those in authority were those who could interpret the meaning of the foundations. Those in authority had to be old and plausibly connected with the foundation itself.

When the Roman Empire collapsed and the church filled the space vacated, it founded itself not as a community of believers, not in obedience to the commandments of God, but upon a foundation of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. The church drew its authority from the stories of the Bible and its ability to interpret these. The foundation of Rome was repeated in the Christian church. Upon becoming political, replacing Rome, the church altered its own self-understanding: it gave itself a foundation.

The fathers of Roman thought and culture were, of course, not Romans at all, but Plato and Aristotle, so the church adopted a Roman foundational authority and the Platonic problem of how to control the passions. Rather than the law, the church employed the commandments. Without justification the commandments required the threat of violence, the threat of hell, to ensure obedience. With this came the corruption of the elite as the political space was closed down. Where violence is used, authority is already dead. But fear of hell didn’t last. Once hell had lost its coercive power people no longer feared violating the notion of ‘good.’

We might ask whether the coercion of debt and redeeming employment is enough for students to fear violating the idea of studying well. We might go further still and ask whether the university teacher, stripped of the authority of the foundation, will be able to teach the students what it means to study well, what it means to inquire and study deeply.

\textbf{Revolution and Foundations in the Present}

By the early modern period, the time of Machiavelli, church and state were already thoroughly corrupt. Machiavelli attempted to re-establish the state (these foundation-based institutions). He wanted a new foundation, made in the present, rather than harking back to the past. But creating a foundation in the present, as in a revolution, for example, required a willingness to use violence. To think of ‘making’ or fabricating a foundation is to invoke a household category and to use it inappropriately in a political situation: a category relevant to the \textit{oikos} is applied to the \textit{polis}. Fabricating foundations (as Ramsden tries to do with student partnership) in order to build a world, does violence to pre-existing understandings of higher education.

To carry authority, the foundation must carry some respected presence in order to persuade people that it should be built on. The Roman Empire and the church had foundations in the past. This made it easier for it to command respect and to be considered as carrying the wisdom of the ages. For Arendt, the only successful, modern attempt at creating a foundation in the present can be found in the American Revolution. American citizens regard their Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as sacred documents, framed by the ‘Founding Fathers.’ It succeeded, she thought, because it emerged not out of revolution, but out of a war with England. The Constitution was not a document intended for the victors to rue the defeated. Moreover, it was a based upon a framework (Montesqueiu’s analysis of the English constitution) which already existed, so it did appeal to the notion of reaching back in time to the elders. A higher education constitutional arrangement founded on student

\textsuperscript{29} Hannah Arendt ‘What is Authority?’ op. cit., pp. 121-122.

partnership has to acknowledge the foundational idea of the university. This will mean passing authority from one generation to the next, but harking back to what is being passed on, not just forward to student employability or some other weak promise.

Regimes without political space are quickly exhausted; they become increasingly irrational. Real life is lived, Arendt maintains, in political space, and when that space is closed off, a person trying to act within it becomes ‘embarrassed’. She cannot be her self. The idea of meritocracy gave energy to education and to politics. The cost, however, has been the disappearance of the conservative notion of noblesse oblige. Those at the top of the social hierarchy no longer regard themselves as obligated in any way to those beneath them. Now we face a double problem. The concept of meritocracy is in crisis and this is coupled with a lack of a sense of responsibility. All feel a sense of entitlement. The poor feel entitled to social benefits given the patent lack of equal opportunity while the rich feel entitled to their wealth because of what they perceive is as deserved.

We are left devoid of political space: either tyranny or totalitarian government or an empty democracy without foundational structure, run by career politicians, or careerist academic managers in the case of the universities, who operate without real authority.

In relation to our higher education system we might suggest that in the 1960s in Britain, we had our own foundation in the present: the social-democratic expansion of the universities after the Robbins Report in 1963. While this system briefly opened up a moment in democratic political space this has since been closed down by a technocratic political class, administering a technocratic higher education. While Arendt hoped for the vita activa, direct participation in the political world, we do not even have representative democracy, and we do not have a politics where the wisdom of the ages is passed to us by elders with authority. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that the universities provided by a bureaucratic state lack a strong political aspect.

Our schools, colleges and universities have been undermined by this absence of authority. The idea that education develops judgement and practical reason where a ‘foundation’ of understanding is passed down through the generations is increasingly substituted by an instrumental training. Of course, many academics resist an instrumentalist view of education, but this does not prevent functionalist tendencies in policy change. Knowledge is taught, but its purpose is to provide material to test against. The purpose of this is two-fold: on the one hand to generate certificates and credentials (for future employees to take to higher levels of education and, eventually, to the labour market) and also to monitor the efficiency via ‘accountability’ of the educational institution itself. This knowledge is not regarded as good in itself. It is not the knowledge which is valued but the ‘skills’ techne developed in the person being trained or the function of using knowledge to police the educational institution. These skills will develop into a ‘skills-set’ of value to a business. The more productive these skills are, the more value attached, and the higher the wage paid to the owner of ‘human capital.’ The authority of a knowledge foundation that harks back to the past is displaced by the power of skills that are anticipated as useful in the future. In the case of accountability through performativity, the knowledge involved itself holds no authority, for its purpose is to test and monitor the value of the institution. Authority, or rather, what is taken to be authority, but lacks legitimization through recognition, clearly resides in the monitoring agency rather than the educational institution. ³¹

³¹ Rousseau tells us in Emile that the tutor must never allow himself to be seen as a servant to the student (or anyone else) because this fundamentally undermines the idea that education leads to autonomy. See, for example, John Plamenatz ‘Rousseau: the education of Emile’ in Journal of Philosophy of Education (1972), Vol.6 (2) pp. 176-192.
World Turned Upside Down

In the first of these purposes, generating future-oriented credentials and qualifications, the ‘purchaser’ in the labour market (the future employer) has an interest in pushing down the price of the purchase: pay less for more qualifications. In the second, accountability, there is an interest on the part of the educational institution in increasing the qualifications awarded. There is a ‘cost-push’ and a ‘demand-pull’ side to this equation. Employers demand more and schools, colleges and universities award more qualifications. The result is qualification or grade inflation.

But this is not the only result. For in the process of inflation, the currency is degraded and devalued, like a gold coin that has been snipped away at the edges until it is no longer valued as legal tender. The education involved here rarely carries the wisdom of ages, rarely harks back to the foundation, and rarely carries authority. Authority in education, then, is not directly about a hierarchy between teacher and student. Authority is not a curtailment of freedom. Rather, it is concerned with the passing on of culture through knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes and involves the trust of the student. Education is augmenting and building on the foundation of our world. Education, then, makes authority possible, and public education (resourced by revenues collected by the state from citizens) should attempt to open up political space in order to create institutional structures capable of carrying and building upon authority.

Authority demands obedience, yet is not power, violence or persuasion. It harks back to the past, to the foundation of culture. The deepening relationship with ideas in the past is not, however, familiar to the student as partner. For the student as partner does not identify with the notion of scholarship as craft, an apprentice working under a master. The student as partner stands between present and future, without reference to any foundation in the scholarly tradition. The student here holds more power, via vague notions of consumer sovereignty, but the authority of the academic teacher is weakened. In weakening the teacher’s authority, the possibility of the student acquiring authority is lost. The (supposedly) higher education received is one with an eye firmly on an imagined employer rather than ‘outmoded’ ideas. The authority brought through mastery is lost on students and staff operating in an unsustainable world of perceived high fees, high debt, employability, skills for work, and student satisfaction. Unsustainable, in part because of practical problems such as unaffordable debt write-downs by the Treasury, but also because of the forces that push higher education away from an ethical attitude to the foundation of intellectual mastery, and consequently loses its legitimate authority. Higher education (in the sense of authoritative, legitimate higher education rather than merely the hollow appearance) in the absence of political space, will be quickly exhausted. The idea of student partnership, where it undermines academic authority, removes the purpose of studying. Teachers and lecturers should not allow the concept of student partnership to be regarded as a panacea for the cleavage in interests between the academic and the student caused by high level fees and a shift in the cultural understanding of the goals of university study.

Formal criteria for the concept of human flourishing: The first step in promoting flourishing as an ideal aim of education

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Abstract
This paper takes Aristotelian eudaimonia as a prototype to construct five criteria for the concept of human flourishing. We propose that every conception of human flourishing should meet the following criteria: Human flourishing means ‘the actualisation of human potential’ (1), which entails a necessary reference to ‘objective goods’, in the sense that there are human capacities that are objectively good for a person, as well as certain external goods people need in order to live well (1a); and that in order to actualise human potential an ongoing developmental process (of these capacities) is necessary, which shows that ‘flourishing’ is a dynamic state (1b). Furthermore, to be able to say that someone flourishes, we argue that one has to look at a person’s life as a whole in a holistic sense (2). Finally, flourishing should be perceived as intrinsically worthwhile (3).

Although these criteria were derived from Aristotle’s work, and all conceptions of human flourishing hark back to Aristotle in one way or another, the paper concludes that Aristotelian eudaimonia itself is just one conception of the broader concept of human flourishing. Kant, for example, had a different conception of human flourishing, which certainly has aspects in common with Aristotelian eudaimonia, but is not interchangeable with it. An important difference between Aristotelian eudaimonia and other conceptions is that others (including more current ones) allow for many individual paths of human flourishing, whereas for Aristotle the boundary of these paths is lies in living a virtuous life.

Flourishing is the topic of an increasing number of books and articles in educational philosophy. It is being argued that human flourishing should be regarded as the most important aim of education. If this is defended, the first step should be to elucidate what is meant by human flourishing, and what exactly the concept entails. Formal criteria for ‘human flourishing’ can facilitate reflection on conceptions of human flourishing. First of all, it can help us to judge if an aim that is proposed as a conception of flourishing can indeed be interpreted as such. Conceptions of human flourishing that are being put forward as an aim of education should be able to meet the criteria introduced in this paper. Secondly, it helps to develop conceptions of flourishing as an aim of education. Finally, it might elucidate with respect to which aspects conceptions are similar and where their differences lie.

Introduction
The concept of human flourishing has been gaining popularity in the field of philosophy of education for some time now. Children should be equipped, at home and in schools, to lead flourishing lives, instead of or in addition to ‘merely’ living a happy life. De Ruyter (2004, p. 377) writes that flourishing is a ‘common denominator’ of what parents hope or wish for their children. Well-known proponents of making human flourishing an overarching aim of education are John White (for example 2011; Reiss & White, 2013) and Harry Brighouse (2006), amongst many others. Brighouse (2006) urges teachers, policymakers and parents to focus more on what is in the interest of children instead of for example politics or the economy. Both write that children should be broadly educated to be able to live flourishing lives, independent of their contribution to economy.

Virtually all academic writing on human flourishing refers to ancient Greek philosophy, especially to the work of Aristotle. In Aristotelian ethics, the highest good that everything aims at in life, if there is such a thing, is called eudaimonia (MacIntyre, 1967, p. 59). The
concept of *eudaimonia* refers to a state that combines ‘doing well, behaving well and faring well’ (ibid). Or, as Kristjansson (2007, p. 3) puts it, in order to live an optimal life we have to ‘balance and synthesise the demands of heart and head’. *Eudaimonia* has been mostly translated as ‘happiness’ (according to MacIntyre (1967, p. 59) a ‘bad, but inevitable’ translation), but is in contemporary discussion often referred to as human flourishing⁴.

We think that if it is argued that human flourishing should be an ideal aim of education, the first step should be to clarify what we mean by ‘human flourishing’, and what exactly the concept entails. Although many authors propose a conception of human flourishing with a specification of its characteristics, we have not found an elucidation of the inclusion criteria of a concept of human flourishing that does not immediately refer to the author’s own conception of it (as for example White, 2011; and Brighouse, 2006 do, but also Hurka, 1999; and Rasmussen, 1999).

Those readers who expect a full elaboration on the importance of embedding the concept of human flourishing in the goals of education will be left unsatisfied. This paper should be considered as a prelude to that kind of endeavour. We are convinced that it is of great importance to first set up a clear framework of the concept of human flourishing, by means of formal criteria, in order to contribute to the quality of substantive discussions about education for human flourishing, diverse as they are. If these discussions are being held without a shared framework – which is currently the case in a great part of the literature on flourishing and education - the contributions to educational practice will be too fragmented, and thus of too little importance.

To gain the clarity we need it is helpful to look into the roots of human flourishing and consider the relation between human flourishing and Aristotelian *eudaimonia*. Therefore, in what follows we take Aristotelian *eudaimonia* as an exemplar or prototype for the idea of human flourishing. From it we derive five formal characteristics. We will see that, although Aristotelian *eudaimonia* can be seen as the prototype or exemplar (see Gallie, 1956) of human flourishing, and although virtually all conceptions of human flourishing hark back, in one way or another, to Aristotle, some conceptions of human flourishing have diverged so far from Aristotle’s conception that they cannot be called eudemonistic or (neo-)Aristotelian. In other words, though formal criteria for the concept of human flourishing are best derived from Aristotle’s work, Aristotelian *eudaimonia* itself is just one conception of human flourishing.

Readers should not expect a thorough Aristotelian exegesis. It is not our main purpose to analyse Aristotle’s ethics and argue what we think he wrote that is so important for educational theory. We have looked into the roots of thinking about flourishing as a means to the goal of better understanding the concept of human flourishing, with which we hope to show that ‘human flourishing’ is not only a better translation of *eudaimonia*, but a substantive concept for which formal criteria can be listed that are independent of Aristotle’s and (neo-)Aristotelian ethics.

**Flourishing in Aristotle’s philosophy**

In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle formulated his notion of the highest good in a critique on Plato’s transcendent Idea of the Good. The highest good is a human good, a moral good, which should therefore not be the object of theoretical philosophy, but of practical philosophy (Aristotle, 2009, book I). In accordance with his teleological ontology Aristotle argues that the good is ‘that at which all things aim’, which is a ‘quite objective matter’ (Aristotle, book I.1; Annas, 1993, p. 41; and see criterion 1a.). There is general agreement that all things aim at eudaimonia; the state of flourishing (see criterion 3). However, it is much more difficult to define for humans what eudaimonia consists in (idem, book I.5).

A flourishing life, according to Aristotle, is a life filled with ‘excellent rational activity’. (Aristotle, 2009, book). In a sense, he makes an inventory of what men usually do in life to be
able to answer what men best should do (idem, book I; and see criterion 1). The best activities men can perform are virtuous activities, i.e. actions that express the virtues. Aristotle explains this as choosing the mean between two vices (excess and deficiency), which is always dependent on the situation and the involved person. For example ‘courage’ is a virtue, balancing between ‘rashness’ and ‘cowardice’; what in some situations is courageous, could be judged rash and irresponsible in another (MacIntyre, 1967, p. 66-67).

Virtuous activity needs to be trained. Only by performing virtuous activity continually, a person can inculcate the habit and become a virtuous man (MacIntyre, 1967, p. 64). This notion of training is characteristic for Aristotle’s theory. For Aristotelian eudaimonia, and for flourishing in general, a process of development is essential (see criterion 1b). Furthermore, for my flourishing, I should perform my own virtuous activity, it is impossible to let someone else do it for me (Annas, 1993, p. 37, Haybron, 2008, p. 157). Finally, this training of the virtues will go on until someone’s life has come to an end. For Aristotle, flourishing can only be judged by reference to a whole lifetime. We cannot judge it in moments of happiness; judgments of flourishing should be regarded as pertaining to the total of an entire life (Aristotle, 2009, book I.7; MacIntyre, 1967; and see criterion 2)².

However, virtuous activity is not all there is to it. It is possible, says Aristotle, to be a virtuous person without living a flourishing life, because people need external goods as well (Aristotle, 2009, book I.8). Examples of external goods are ‘good birth’, social relations, and beauty. People have to have a bit of luck as well in the course of their lives, it seems (see Nussbaum, 1986). Aristotle describes a combination of living a good life (i.e. acting virtuously) and having a good life (having opportunities, social relations, etc.), a kind of optimal functioning that we can describe as ‘flourishing’.

The concept of human flourishing

We are looking for formal characteristics of ‘human flourishing’, to contribute to the clarification of ‘flourishing’ as an aim of education. We propose, in accordance with philosophical literature, that the first characteristic of human flourishing is that it is best described as ‘actualising human potential’ (for instance in Aristotle, 2009; Kraut, 1979; Rasmussen, 1999; De Ruyter, 2012; and Huta, 2013). Furthermore, we propose two subcriteria that are necessary to fulfil the first criterion (1a. and 1b.) and two subsequent formal characteristics of human flourishing (2 and 3). These criteria have all been derived from Aristotelian eudaimonia. However, as has been said in the introduction, from comparing Aristotle with more recent conceptions of and ideas about human flourishing, we conclude that the formal characteristics are broader than the interpretation of and path to human flourishing that Aristotle had in mind, which shows that eudaimonia in itself is best considered a conception of human flourishing.

1. The actualisation of the human potential

For a human being, in order to say that she is flourishing, “we need to say what, in a relevant sense, a human being is”, which is not an easy task (Conly, 1988, p. 87, but see Nussbaum, 1992). But more importantly and extremely difficult, we should be able to spell out what it means to become the best version of ourselves that we can be. We state that the core of flourishing is that it focuses on this notion of optimising ‘the human being qua human being’; the actualisation of human potential (for instance in Aristotle, 2009; Kraut, 1979; Rasmussen, 1999; De Ruyter, 2012; and Huta, 2013).

When we say someone is flourishing, we mean that someone is functioning at a top-level; an optimal level. This ‘top’ is agent-relative; how well someone’s doing depends on her potential and the possibilities she gets in her life (see also Lawrence, 1993), although a certain minimal threshold is defined objectively. If someone is not or barely capable of actualising any potential (because of, for example, congenital disabilities or severe trauma during life), we will not say that they are flourishing human beings. How well someone (who is above this
minimal threshold) is doing in *developing towards* that optimal level can also be judged objectively, and people can, in that sense, be compared with each other on their level of flourishing.

De Ruyter (2012, p. 28) uses the term ‘optimiser’ for someone who develops herself in an optimal way. Flourishing persons, in her words, are “persons who have developed (and are still developing) their possibilities to the full” (Ibid, p.27). Developing in an optimal way, and in that sense to the full, should not be mistaken for ‘getting the most out of something (i.e. your life or a given situation)’, a phrase that is popular in our current society. Children are sometimes encouraged to become the ‘best’, which can be very confusing if the difference between becoming ‘the best version of yourself’ and ‘the best pupil in school’ has not been made clear. The notion of ‘actualising the human potential’ shows that human flourishing is not the same as happiness (in a subjective sense). To feel happy, someone doesn’t have to reach a state of personal excellence. For example the famous character Oblomov from the novel by Gontsjarow is quite happy living his life doing literally almost nothing, leaving a large part of his potential un-actualised. Unless it is argued that ‘doing nothing’ is what makes Oblomov the best version of himself he can be, we would not say that he has had a flourishing life.

1a. Objective goods

It is characteristic of conceptions of human flourishing to acknowledge the necessity of objective goods; things that can be called good for everybody (for example health and social relationships). When human beings are in the process of actualising their potential, they are developing capacities that can be called objectively good. For Aristotle, what is objectively good for us is the perfection of our natural capacities, our ‘human nature’. However, for the concept of human flourishing a broader definition of perfection is sufficient (see Hurka, 1993). It is a common denominator in most literature on human flourishing that objectively good human capacities are being developed (see for example Hurka, 1993; 1999; Kraut, 2007; Huta, 2011 and De Ruyter, 2012).

Referring to ‘objective goods’ is also a distinguishing feature between the concept of happiness and the concept of flourishing. Popular conceptions of happiness seem to centre on subjective feelings of well-being. In conceptions of human flourishing this is not the case (for example in Aristotle, 2009; Anscombe, 1958; Hurka, 1999, Rasmussen, 1999). We do not imply, however, that the concept excludes subjective assessments as part of human flourishing. Several authors argue that human beings do not flourish, unless they themselves know or feel that they do (De Ruyter, 2007, p. 27; but also Aristotle, 2009; Rasmussen, 1999; De Ruyter, 2004; White, 2006; Haybron, 2008; and Griffin, 1986). They make a plea for a ‘mixed theory’, a conception of human flourishing that acknowledges the importance of both objective and subjective goods.

1b. A dynamic state

Human beings go through a developmental process from babies with certain (genetic) predispositions to adults with an identity, social relations, and full-blown beliefs and desires. This notion of development characterises human flourishing (for instance in Aristotle, 2009; Lawrence, 1993; Hurka, 1999; Kraut, 2007; Huta, 2011; and De Ruyter, 2012). Development is necessary to actualise the human potential, because people cannot optimise themselves by pushing a button or drinking a magical poison. Nor can a person develop someone else’s potential; it is a personal process (Anns, 1993, p. 37, Haybron, 2008, p. 157). In other words: one has to do something in order to become a flourishing human being.

According to Kraut (2007, p. 140) there is a widely accepted framework for thinking about normal human development, which gives us ‘platitudes’ that help us determine what is good for us. There is no clear beginning or ending to the process of development. Only when someone dies, we can say that her development has come to a (sort of) ending. In this he
follows Aristotle, who also claimed that we can only judge whether someone has flourished at the end of his life. It makes sense that you can only see whether someone has reached her optimal state of being in life, if you look back on that life at the end of it and judge the complete development of this person. On the other hand, it does not seem odd to say that, for example, a child is flourishing. In daily life, many expressions of this kind are being used.

We think that, for the sake of conceptual clarity, it is practical to distinguish between ‘a flourishing life’ and ‘flourishing’ (e.g. De Ruyter, 2007). A flourishing life refers to the Aristotelian idea of flourishing throughout an entire lifetime. However, people use the verb ‘to flourish’ also in a somewhat more limited-time sense. Although it is never used to describe a moment, like with happy moments, people are judged as flourishing by looking at a certain time-slice of their life. For example, we can say that someone had a flourishing childhood, which gives her –no doubt- a large advantage for the rest of her life, but does not guarantee a flourishing life. Or think of a mother of two who is in a happy relationship, has a job that she thoroughly enjoys and is healthy. We would say that she flourishes even though we do not know the rest of her life as yet. Nevertheless, an educational perspective on human flourishing aims for the idea(l) of a flourishing life, and not for ‘flourishing school years’ or ‘flourishing young adulthood’, whatever might happen next.

To serve as a criterion for human flourishing, it is necessary that flourishing refers to a ‘dynamic state’. A ‘state’ because the human being is in a (reached) state of human flourishing; ‘dynamic’ because flourishing is characterised by its ongoing development; the flourishing human being does not stand still at her finish line. It seems that we make another division in the verb ‘flourishing’, we use it for two –related– states. Firstly, we use it when we see people who have just started to open up their bag full of potential, who are working hard to get where they want to be and are almost there, just like a flower that sprouts and is about to blossom. Secondly, we use it for those people who are already there, the people that are in full bloom; on this optimal level.

2. Life as a whole
To be able to say that someone is flourishing or has flourished, one has to look at her life as a whole (Aristotle, 2009; Annas; 1993, MacIntyre; 1981). ‘Life as a whole’ can be interpreted in a temporal sense, as referring to life from birth until death. We have shown in the previous section that ‘life as a whole’ in the temporal sense is one of the ways in which we use the concept of flourishing, i.e. in evaluating a person’s life as flourishing or not, but that we also use it in judging a long-term state in which a person is at his or her height of being at that period of her life. To distinguish it from the sense that we’re discussing in this section, we might call that ‘the entire life sense’.

There is also another way in which life as a whole can be interpreted, namely in a holistic sense, as referring to the whole of one’s life spheres. This holistic interpretation is crucial for ‘flourishing’. A judgment about whether someone is flourishing takes into account all life-spheres. In that sense it is about a whole life, rather than one or some of its parts. For example, when someone is a successful banker, has a booming career and makes a lot of money, but neglects his wife and three children, because he works for over 80 hours a week and is never home, we would presumably not consider him to flourish. We hesitate to attribute ‘flourishing’ to him, because he neglects a significant part of his life-spheres. He could be happy, though, in the subjective sense of feeling happy.

3. Flourishing is intrinsically worthwhile
Aristotle argues that all human activity aims at some good, and by asking what that ‘good’ is, he ends up at eudaimonia. Reversing the direction of his quest, he concludes that therefore ‘human flourishing’ is perceived as that-for-the-sake-of-which human conduct is done (Rasmussen, 1999). To flourish is for human beings not the only goal of inherent worth, but it is the most final end (Ackrill, 1980; Rasmussen, 1999). It is, in Aristotle’s terms, ‘complete’:
while many activities or virtues can be pursued for themselves, we also choose them because we believe that we will be happy if we do so. Flourishing is, however, in Aristotle’s view never chosen for the sake of persons themselves nor for the sake of anything else (Aristotle, 2009, book I.7). Thus, we do not strive to flourish in order to reach some other goal. It is always the other way around. Sometimes, for example, it is being argued that teachers should enhance the well-being of children in order for them to perform better at school exams. This is rather odd, if one believes that well-being is the aim of education (see for example White, 2011). Here it would be expected that performing to the best of one’s abilities means that one is flourishing or that performing well at schools contributes to a child’s (future) well-being. In the argument well-being seems to refer to something different than ‘flourishing’, which we are analysing in this paper, namely to a subjective sense of well-being. They probably mean something like feeling well or having self-respect, which are both deemed as important precursors for good performance. This shows the importance of our exercise to carefully analyse central terms in education.

However, it doesn’t always have to be taken as strictly as Aristotle suggested. Rasmussen (1999, p. 5) argues for example that it is possible that “some things can be done for their own sake and yet also done for the sake of something else”. He takes flourishing to be an ‘inclusive end’ (Ibid). For example, a person can take on a job, because she believes this will contribute to her flourishing, but at the same time does so because she can use the money.

We should add that activities that contribute to a person’s flourishing are not necessarily done in order to flourish. For example, when a person prefers spending time and money on eating nice food, he might do that just to enjoy nice food. Or, think of someone who engages in a romantic relationship; she didn’t do that so she could lead a flourishing life, but because she fell in love. The enjoyment of good food or a loving relationship might be constitutive elements of flourishing, but they weren’t done in order to flourish. Sufficient for the purpose of our formal criteria is therefore to conclude that (a) flourishing is an intrinsic good, and that (b) flourishing is worthy of striving for, so that (c) flourishing should be perceived as intrinsically worthwhile.

Flourishing in Kant’s philosophy
Five formal criteria for ‘human flourishing’ have been proposed for which Aristotle’s eudaimonia functioned as a prototype. We have said in the introduction that although eudaimonia has been used as an exemplar, it is in itself a conception of human flourishing. In this section we will give an example of a conception of human flourishing that differs a great deal of Aristotle’s, namely that of Immanuel Kant.

It has often been argued that Kant had limited or no room for a conception of human flourishing. For example Hill (1999) writes that Kant’s conception of happiness cannot be a conception of human flourishing, because happiness is not an important intrinsic goal of Kant’s moral rules, which is a criterion (3) of flourishing. We argue that this explanation is based on the mistake of taking Kant’s conception of happiness as a conception of flourishing. A conception of flourishing should not be sought in Kant’s ideas on happiness, but in Kant’s notion of the highest good. For Kant, the highest good conceivable is a combination of moral perfection and happiness (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 85; Stange, 1920, p. 98; Haybron, 2008, p. 36 and Denis, 2008, p. 85). This optimal combination of striving for moral perfection and feeling happy, which we recognize in Aristotle, could very well be a conception of human flourishing. Kant has an ultimate goal of conduct in mind, which is some kind of optimal state of being.

Can we really say that this optimal state of being is flourishing, i.e. the actualization of human potential? Denis (2008, p. 86) argues, following Engstrom (1996), that the similarities between Aristotelian eudaimonia and Kant’s highest good suggest at least a ‘rough’ conception of human flourishing. The following discussion of the formal criteria of human flourishing proposed above will confirm this suggestion. We have already shown that criterion
3 has been fulfilled, since perceiving flourishing as intrinsically worthwhile has been our starting point.

Kant puts great emphasis on development in his description of the highest good ‘of a possible world’ (Denis, 2008). He sees the full development of characteristic human capacities (see Kraut, 2007, p. 140) as our ‘destiny’ and as necessary for realizing a state of optimal being in the whole world (Denis, 2008, p. 91). Kant sees some kind of threshold for human beings to reach in order to flourish, yet is at the same time convinced that human beings are always on their way towards that threshold, and that this dynamic is ongoing, from generation to generation (criterion 1b.) (Kant, 1996). He questions whether this optimal state of being can ever be reached. He devotes several comments to the practical possibility of the highest good, but he seems to conclude that it is rather impossible. It can only be found in ‘endless progress’ towards it (Kant, 1996, p. 102).

The most comprehensive conception of flourishing in Kant’s writings is informed by his account of duties to oneself (Denis, 2008, p. 97). This is because many of our duties require us to do things in order to become the best version of ourselves we can be. “We are to consider ourselves as moral beings who are human beings, with specifically human drives and capacities; to cultivate our innate capacities; and to bring our emotions into some measure of harmony with reason” (Denis, 2008, p. 97). Denis shows that Kant had a view on development that focused on the human being qua human being, on actualizing the human potential whilst fulfilling our duties (see criterion 1).

We have not yet discussed the remaining criteria of (1a) the necessity of referring to objective goods and (2) judging the flourishing life as a whole. The criterion of objective goods is easily met. In the very first lines of the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant explains the difference between the maxims of someone’s will, which are subjective, and the practical laws, which are their objective counterpart (Kant, 1996, p. 17). Moral perfection, as part of Kant’s conception of flourishing, presupposes obedience to these objective practical laws, which makes them a necessary part of his conception of flourishing as well.

It is difficult to explicitly clarify Kant’s notion of ‘life as a whole’ on the basis of his writings. It is apparent from Kant’s writings on morality that moral perfection should be sought after in all life-spheres. It is not good enough to just be morally good ‘at home’. However, there is more to life than morality, as Kant too acknowledges. Whether or not one should flourish in the (non-moral) life ‘as a whole’, is not explicitly elucidated by him. We think that a holistic perspective in Kant’s work is most clearly found in his thoughts on the full development of human capacities, assuming that full development means development in all life-spheres (Denis, 2008, p. 91).

We conclude that Kant’s notion of the highest good meets the five criteria and thus can be called a conception of human flourishing. There are similarities with Aristotelian eudaimonia, but there is also an important difference. Happiness remains conceptually distinct from virtue within the highest good (Denis, 2008, p.85). Kant thought they were ‘extremely heterogeneous concepts’ (Kant, 1996, p. 93), whereas in eudaimonia they are intertwined. It is very important for Kant’s moral theory that happiness is not part of moral goodness, because he claims that it should not be the ultimate goal of moral perfection. A person does not strive for moral perfection in order to become happy (Ibid, p. 99-100). Another difference noted by for instance Denis and Conly is that in Kant’s ethics there is more attention for the differences in desires, temperaments and situations of different people, which leads to great differences in what their flourishing lives might look like (Denis, 2008, p. 108). Although Aristotle also emphasises the individuality of flourishing, his view on ‘the flourishing life’ was a lot more ‘standardised’ than Kant’s (Denis, 2008, p. 98 and Conly, 1988).
Implications for flourishing in educational theory: Conclusion

Five formal characteristics of ‘human flourishing’ have been proposed: Human flourishing means ‘the actualisation of human potential’ (1), which entails that there is a necessary reference to ‘objective goods’, in the sense that there are human capacities that are objectively good for a person as well as certain external goods people need in order to live well (1a.); and that in order to actualise human potential development (of these capacities) is necessary, which shows that flourishing is perceived as a ‘dynamic state’ (1b.). Furthermore, to be able to say that someone flourishes, we argue that one has to look at her life as a whole in a holistic sense (2). Finally, flourishing should be perceived as intrinsically worthwhile (3). Aristotelian eudaimonia was used as an exemplar for these characteristics, but it was also shown to be just one conception of human flourishing. Using Kant’s work as an example, we have shown that the concept is wider, and allows for various conceptions.

Now what does this mean for flourishing as an aim of education? It seems that ‘human flourishing’ as an overarching aim of education has been proposed out of discontent with the current school system. Philosophers of education have actually been asking themselves the same question as Aristotle did: what is really important in life? And if ‘leading a flourishing life’ is the answer, what then is really important to teach our children? Surely not (only) passing exams and getting the highest scores on grammar and mathematics. We should equip our children so that they get the best chance of a flourishing life.

How to do that is a very complex matter. Looking at the diversity of interpretations of flourishing, the discussions could be boundless. We hope to have shown that providing tools in the form of formal criteria will make the discussion more constructive. We will give two examples of how we could use the formal criteria to contribute to (reflection on) education for flourishing. Within the confines of this paper we are only able to touch upon these issues. Much more research, also from those who have already proposed a conception of education for flourishing, is needed.

In general, formal criteria for ‘human flourishing’ can facilitate reflection on conceptions of human flourishing. First, it can help us to judge whether someone is indeed proposing a conception of flourishing. It is important to limit the debate to actual conceptions of flourishing to prevent it from becoming confused and therefore useless. Secondly, it helps to develop conceptions of flourishing as an aim of education. Finally, it might elucidate with respect to which aspects conceptions are similar and where their differences lie.

The first example concerns the criterion of objective goods (1a.) in the work of John White. In White’s conception of flourishing it is not altogether clear whether he believes that human capacities that are important for flourishing like ‘wholehearted and successful engagement in worthwhile relationships, activities, and experiences’ are deemed objectively good (Reiss & White, 2013, p. 6). On the one hand he uses terms like basic needs that need to be fulfilled, and his conceptualisation of ‘flourishing’ also refers to goods or capacities he believes to be objectively good. On the other hand, he argues in line with Raz’s theory that well-being depends on the satisfaction of desires that are deemed to be valuable by a collection of people who form – in a loose way – a social practice. What is a worthwhile relationship, activity or experience is what this collection of people believes to be valuable and what they desire (White, 2002, p. 452). A problem for White’s conception of flourishing arises only if he denies that there are objective goods in the first place, by saying that there are only goods for humans that are deemed good by this collective.

The second example concerns the criterion of life in its entirety (2.). We have said that from an educational point of view, a conception of flourishing has an idea(l) about a flourishing life, and not just about a flourishing three months. How to interpret ‘an entire life’ is difficult, but important. If the focus is more on adulthood; ‘the life you are going to have some day in the future’, education will be more concerned with preparing children for their future flourishing,
and perhaps less with their current state of well-being. The opposite can also occur: children who are being educated with a focus on the present may have a flourishing childhood, and we then ‘hope’ this situation will maintain through the rest of their lives. How should these focus points be balanced?

A clear conceptual framework brings to light several assumptions that are being made in the discussions on flourishing as an aim of education⁵. We hope that making a start at elucidating these assumptions will contribute to a meaningful debate on flourishing in educational theory.

Notes
¹ There is a lot of discussion about whether eudaimonia ‘should’ be translated as happiness or human flourishing. Annas (1993) and Kraut (1979), among others, translate eudaimonia as ‘happiness’. We will not embark on this discussion here, since our interest is in the use of the concept of human flourishing. We think that it is important to bear in mind the strong subjective connotations happiness has in our current society, and recognize that our current ideas about happiness are miles away from Aristotle’s (De Ruyter, 2004, Haybron, 2008). It is therefore at least ‘practical’ to investigate the concept of human flourishing instead of happiness, because flourishing has less strong associations in temporary debate.
² “For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy” (Aristotle, 2009, book I.7)
³ “Das “ganze und vollendete Gut” welches “als Gegenstand des Begehungsvermögens vernünftiger endlicher Wesen” in Betracht kommt, ist vielmehr die Tugend in Verbindung mit der Glückseligkeit” (Stange, 1920, p. 98)
⁴ “All the natural capacities of a creature are destined sooner or later to be developed completely and in conformity with their end” (Kant, 1784, Idea for a universal theory with a cosmopolitan purpose, cited in: Denis, 2008, p. 91).
⁵ During the presentation of this paper at INPE 2014, we will elaborate on the implications of a conceptual framework for educational theory and eventually educational practice and make it the key subject of the presentation and discussion.

References


An investigation of science nature in the Against Method Theory: A basis for democratic science education

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Abstract
The present study aims at revising science education on the basis of investigating nature of science and how it is originated and developed according to against method theory and with the purpose of drawing a democratic picture of science education. Rejecting any fundamentalist epistemology such as positivism and rationalism in explaining the nature of knowledge as well as its origination and development, Feyerabend believes any specific and unique method such as induction, conjecture and refutation, to be inappropriate as scientific method. Consequently, he introduces an anarchistic viewpoint regarding the nature of science and its development. According to the presented discussions regarding the two concepts of relativism and freedom, some points are offer for the process of science education. The findings of this study indicate to a need for a basic revision in the inductive perspective and several consequent misunderstandings, failures, and inadequacies in the process of science education. Therefore, the science education might focus on developing qualities such as free thinking, respect for scientific ideas generated throughout the history in learners and encouraging them to think differently in the field of science while appreciating various and even strange ideas.

1-Introduction
Science education, its challenges and failures are among the issues that educational system deal with in different countries. And the importance of science education has led to a bulk of studies investigating this topic and the relevant issues(for example: Fraser & Tobin, 1988; Gabel, 1994; Mintzes & Leonard, 2006; Abel & Lederman, 2007; Fraser, Tobin & McRobbie, 2012). Related to the same discussion, there are studies on science education that incorporate philosophy and the nature of science and suggest a revision in science education according to these bases (for example see: Scheffler, 1970; Mackay, 1971; Clemison, 1990; Lakin and Wellington, 1994; Matthews, 1994; Hammer, 1995; Tobin and McRobbie, 1997; Eichinger, Abell, and Dagher, 1997; McComas, 2000; Peters, 2006; and Niaz, 2009).

Accordingly, as it is suggested, science education should not be reduced to the transmission of scientific knowledge, but it should aim at developing a scientific mentality in the learners the same as the mentality of scientists like Aristotle, Archimedes, Newton and Einstein. As Matthews (1994) also indicates, this idea does not mean to expect the learners to become prominent scientists, but it means to develop the scientific mentality in the learners instead of knowledge transmission. Following this goal, learners would achieve a more complex and comprehensive understanding of science and their lifelong epistemological awareness would increase.

From a more general point of view, it seems that science education is related to different perspectives in the field of philosophy of science. Clarifying on the same issue, Clark (1989) explains that certain philosophical perspectives on subject matters create necessities that affect what the teachers do and the methods of teaching that subject matter. For example, we could differentiate the psychological and analytic perspectives regarding the philosophy of math. John Stuart Mill, as the representative for psychological perspective which follows the empiricism tradition in philosophy, believes that math is rooted in sensory experiences and hence it has a psychological ground. On the other hand, Frege rejects the ideas of John Stuart Mill and suggests that the mathematical statements are not experimental but analytical and similar to the field of logic. Accepting each perspective by the math teachers would lead
them to different methods of teaching math so that by taking the psychological perspective their teaching method would be oriented toward the learners' sensory experiences and, in other words, "Mathematics laboratory". But as Clark (1989) also points out, if the teachers or the philosophy of curriculum follow the ideas of Frege, the teaching method would not be experimental, that is based on hypothesis and experiments.

On the other hand, and in an attempt to evaluate the present educational realities, McComas and Olson (2000) state that most of scientific instructions are around the body and terminology of scientific knowledge and overlook the nature of science which is considered a serious failure in science education. This inadequacy in the process of science education might have multiple reasons. For instance, McComas and Olson mention the results of the study by Bentley and Garrison which show that the ideas presented in many science textbooks in school about the nature of science are naïve, incomplete, and ignorant of novel views on the nature of science and finally they might even be wrong. On the other hand, Lederman (2007) explains that many studies indicate that the teachers' knowledge about the nature of science is inadequate and even wrong and this could one of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of science education.

Following the discussed issues, the present study aims to investigate the revision of science education according to some philosophical illuminations about science with the purpose of drawing a free picture of science education and hence developing the spirit of free thinking in learners. Accordingly, this study draws on the Feyerabend theory as one of the contemporary and challenging theories in the philosophy of science in order to provide the grounds for revising science education and expanding democratic science education.

2-The nature of science in the Against Method Theory
Following the ideas of Popper, Kuhn, and Lakatos, Feyerabend the Austrian thinker, calls his view about the nature of science and the origination and development of science and knowledge as the Against Method or Anarchist Theory. In studying the history of science and ruling out the idea that considers this history as a progressive and uninterrupted process, Kuhn (1952) described it as a process of formation and decline of various competing paradigms. A paradigm acts as a framework which causes the followers to hardly be able to reflect on other competing paradigms. According to Kuhn, each paradigm has its specific criterion, based on which one can comment on that paradigm, while it is inappropriate to use it in the realm of other paradigms. On this ground, by emphasizing the incommensurability of different paradigms, Kuhn states that “Like the choice between competing political institutions, that between competing paradigms proves to be a choice between incompatible modes of community life.” (p. 93).

By questioning the precise boundaries among paradigms and their incommensurability, Lakatos (1976) concluded that the unit of scientific discovery is not the scientific theory on its own; rather, it is the research program which comprises “hard core” and “protective belt”.

Similar to Popper, Kuhn, and Lakatos, Feyerabend also criticizes the positivistic viewpoint toward science, and questions the logical empiricism in the description of the formation and growth of science, and consequently rejects induction as a scientific method. Logical empiricists (Sarkar and Pfeifer, 2006) maintain that sensory experiences can lead to scientific theories which are compatible with reality. Feyerabend holds that such a viewpoint is not compatible with scientific facts and, hence, will not be helpful in the growth of knowledge; rather, it will lead to some sort of dogmatism. Like Popper, Feyerabend holds that any sensory experience occurs in a context which is theory-laden, and therefore by changing the context and its theories, the observation and its result will change. Thus, the assessment of validity of scientific theories on the basis of compatibility with reality is not possible, as the human sensory experiences are not direct and immediate reflections of
reality. Therefore, scientific theory as a result of these experiences cannot be evaluated in relation to its origin, i.e., reality.

Like Kuhn, from the idea that various fields are different, Feyerabend(1999) concludes that scientific theories are also different and incommensurable. For instance, Newtonian mechanics cannot be compared with Einstein’s relative mechanics, because these two theories are related to two different fields or to two different ideologies.

In a more general view and influenced by Wittgenstein’s thoughts, Feyerabend(1993) considers the different accomplishments of human cultures as “different forms of life”. He believes that there is not a fundamental and general method or criterion for comparison among different forms. As one step forward, he considers western rationalism in a similar way and regards it as a fundamental epistemology, and by criticizing it, he distances himself from the thoughts of Popper and Lakatos. By rejecting any fundamental epistemology, he concludes that rationalism not only is not unique and universal as a theory of cognition and method of achieving knowledge, but also is not in a position to judge other epistemological theories.

Thus, Feyerabend is against any unique methodological rule, as well as dividing theories into philosophical and scientific ones using empirical or rational assessment. He also opposes the intervention of any form of life in other forms. From the idea that “development of science is not dependent on any unique and specific principle or epistemology”, he concludes that differences among methods and theories in different fields of knowledge are necessary for criticism, challenge, and further exchange of ideas and, as a result, for transformation and progress of knowledge. On such a ground, Feyerabend considers each specific epistemology to be limited, and by stating that “anything goes” for the development of knowledge, terms his theory “an anarchistic theory of knowledge”. For further elaboration, he writes:” It is an ever increased ocean of mutually incompatible alternatives. Each single theory, each fairly tale, each myth is part of the collection forcing others into greater articulation and all of them contributing, via this process of competition, to the development of our consciousness” (1993, p. 21).

On the base of abovementioned various discussions on the nature of science, and more comprehensively the nature of knowledge, the main points can be reviewed and summarized as: First, science, philosophy and other forms of life are “incommensurable”, because they are different and incommensurable in grounds, suppositions, and presuppositions (Zarghami-Hamrah, 2011). And also there is no unique and meta-historical criterion or method such as compatibility with reality to be used for judging about different forms of life and to decide about their validity and non-validity. The criteria and methods are dependent on the ground and are meaningful and applicable in relation to them and they might lose their meaning in other contexts (Feyerabend, 1993). As it is obvious, any form of life has a specific structure and a limited method and since the forms of life are various, remaining in the boarders of one, including science, actually leads to the narrowing of view and mind. Therefore, various forms of life from philosophy and science to mystery and poetry would lead to the progress of knowledge and development of human being awareness.

In sum, science is not a discovery about universe but it is a kind of idea that is made and offered by human being and in specific conditions. Feyerabend believes that these ideas are the result of theoretical Anarchism rather than following orders and rules. On the other hand, observation plays no primitive and A priori role in human achievement to knowledge. Human mind is full of suppositions and presuppositions that may shape his observations when he faces the events. Finally, rejecting any specific and unique method for knowledge, he holds that applying any method with the aim of developing science is acceptable.
Some researchers conclude that these epistemological viewpoints necessitate a democratic relativism (Sarkar and Pfeifer, 2006, p. 308). In democratic relativism all traditions, including the rationalism, bear the same reality. In the same line, Chalmers (1999) highlights that although many of the scientific judgments and theories in the fields of different sciences are incommensurable and they might be affected by individual, internal, subjective, and incommensurable factors, but it is erroneous to claim that rationality is not able to judge among the theories, specifically the competitive theories. In other words, the theories, particularly after the formation, are exposed to rational judgment and they might be either accepted or rejected. Feyerabend (1993) advocates that the incommensurability of two theories does not necessarily show that they cannot be compared in any sense. In his ideas, one of the ways for comparing the competitive theories is to evaluate them by a set of experiments in different experimental conditions and to measure their adaptability with the conditions. He indicates to other criteria such as non-linearity and complexity, compatibility and novel and bold approximations, as compared to conservative, approximations; these can also be applied in measuring the validity of a theory. As it is clear, the mentioned criteria, to somehow, necessitate rationality as one of the judgment criterion about competitive theories. Accordingly, it seems that negative view instead of positive one and methodological relativism are more applicable in reviewing Feyerabend ideas. In methodological relativism the procedures and methods for achieving the knowledge are relative and plural. Following this view, some of the Feyerabend's ideas such as “against method” and “anything goes” also take negative meaning: “against method” means to be against any specific method and “anything goes” means not to limit oneself to particular methodological rules for scientists' choices and works throughout the history. - By this interpretation, he is concerned about methodological dogmatism (Staley, 1999, 603) and his tendency toward methodological pluralism does not imply a belief in skepticism, relativism, or literal anarchism. His confrontation with specific methodology of Popper besides his support for methodological pluralism and his loyalty to criticism and belief in critical explanatory progress in science confirm these claims (Farrell, 2000, 257).

The second relevant point in considering ideas presented by Feyerabend is related to the concept of freedom that he adapted from John Staurt Mill (Staley, 1999). As it was mentioned earlier, Feyerabend looks for human being freedom from all of the limitations, including specific methodological norms. He even calls out for freedom from the compulsion to learn science and hence he even justifies learning wizardry and magic. As Chalmers believes (1999) this interpretation of freedom leads to a kind of freedom from real and social limitations, circumstances, and possibilities that surround human being; in this way it overlooks the real limitations of human life. Therefore, Feyerabend talks about an ideal freedom that is not affected by the historical conditions that encompass and restrict human being; hence it does not offer a real solution to individuals and society.

Pointing to such gaps in the ideas of Feyerabend, Staley (1999) seeks the solution in ideas by John Staurt Mill. In the same line, he proposes benefiting from artistic rules and traditions in the field of science. These rules and traditions are provisional, incomplete, limited, exceptionable and local. In this view, freedom, on the one side, means liberty from external norms, even if these norms are science or its specific and limited method. And on the other side, it means commitment to art and artistic life with the mentioned rules and tradition.

Another significant issue to be considered in this regard is the role of metaphysical and religious beliefs in the formation and development of science. As it was mentioned, rejecting any epistemological limitation, Feyerabend (1993) gives a place even to wizardry and magic. According to the fact that he is considered as a philosopher of science, it could be concluded that in his viewpoint thinking about science is based on metaphysical and even religious beliefs and this idea which is in line with the claim indicating that free thinking is acceptable and appropriate. It seems that some evidence could be traced in the history of science for supporting this type of view about natural features of science and knowledge. One of the
examples is the words by Einstein: “I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. I want to know God’s thoughts. The rest are details” (in Masters, 1997, P19). As another example, it also seems that scientific ideas of Newton are affected by his religious beliefs (Force & Popkin, 1999). But the focus is neither on the relationship among religious beliefs nor on the relationship between specific religious beliefs and scientific ideas. The important point to be underlined is the relationship between beliefs and science. Beliefs have always provided a ground for the scientists’ thoughts in achieving the scientific ideas.

3- Toward Democratic Science Education
Now, referring to the ideas by Feyerabend, some points for further consideration in the field of science education are presented:

First, the scientific ideas should be regarded as non-falsifiable, testable, and competitive ideas in the process of science education. As it was mentioned earlier, although Feyerabend (1993) believes in incommensurability of theories but he accepts the possibility of their testability and competitiveness.

It is worth mentioning that one of the consequences of taking theories as incommensurable, unlike what Popper claims, is their non-falsifiability (Chalmers, 1999). In other words, since the theories are incommensurable, falsifying a theory and supporting the other is not possible by applying criteria such as rational or experimental test. Taking this view, Popper’s claim that the process of scientific progress is in fact the process of falsification of former theories and replacing them with novel presumption constitutes some failures. Niaz (2009), following ideas by Lakatos, holds that scientific theories cannot be judged as accurate or inaccurate and it is not possible to falsify one and replace it with another theory. There are competing theories for the mentioned theories that could be evaluated by adopting criteria such as coherence, complexity, bold and even weird and unusual approximations, novel experimental evidence, explanatory power of more experimental evidence in a wide range. In this way, we can judge about the theories and their comprehensiveness in explaining the events. These ideas that are in line with Feyerabend’s ideas show that he gradually distances away from Popper and moves toward Lakatos.

The theoretical consequences of such view include: first, the dependence, and interconnection among the scientific theories can be understood in spite of their differences and incompatibilities. Feyerabend (1993) takes one step ahead and believes in dependence and interconnection among scientific and non-scientific theories and claims that human knowledge is indebted to all of the attempts. In his view scientific theories are cannot be rejected and all of the scientific, and even non-scientific (!) theories are respectable, valuable and worth attending. Such a view leads to rejecting falsification of scientific ideas and respecting all scientific ideas and those who propose them. Following this view, for example, the physics by Aristotle, Newton, and Einstein are well-known, interdependent, valuable, and at the same time incompatible scientific theories that cannot reject each other. In this way, even the criterion like being old cannot lead to the rejection of one theory and acceptance of the other. On the other hand, and according to the mentioned criteria, the theories can be evaluated; hence the constructive competition among the theories is possible. In the same line, the goal of education is not discovering, revealing, and proving facts about the universe because, as Goldman (2007) indicates, scientific ideas and theories are not discoveries about the universe but they are ideas formed and offered by the scientists. These ideas might be, on the one hand, incompatible, non-falsifiable, valuable, and incommensurable and, on the other hand, they might be interconnected, competitive and testable based on the criteria such as coherence, complexity level, explanatory power for unusual and weird events as well as their power in explaining events. Therefore, understanding such natural features for knowledge can be considered as one of the goals for science education.
The orientation in science textbook contents and teaching methods can also follow the abovementioned path. The principle to be followed is reconstructing the scientific ideas and highlighting the value of all ideas throughout the history. This kind of content mainly familiarizes learners with language, time, concepts, words, and the specific ideas of each scientist. In fact, it avoids judging scientific ideas and theories from the viewpoint of antecedent scientists and rejecting them. The next stage after the reconstruction of the ideas is explaining the manner of testing each idea according to the mentioned criteria. This stage goes further than explaining theories in the historical sequence so that it provides the ground for comprehending incompatibilities and the conflicts among scientific ideas. As a result learners are able to understand and respect the ideas and practice thinking critically about the competent theories. To this aim, the learners’ former beliefs can be challenged using the results from previous studies which lead to higher involvement and hence a comprehensive understanding of the theories by learners.

At this point one example is provided with the aim of further illumination. As Niaz (2009) also supports, the sequential teaching of atomic models suggested by Thomson, Rutherford, and Bohr might not lead to revealing the reality of scientific progress as well as the reasons and trends. To achieve this goal, education should aim at familiarizing learners with features of scientific theories and ideas such as incommensurability, and incompatibility with other theories, non-falsifiability, and at the same time testability and competitiveness according to the mentioned criteria. The educational content is developed in a way that provides the learners with the ideas by Thomson, Rutherford, and Bohr and even the former relevant ideas like the valuable and creative findings of the scientists discussed. Education should follow this goal without discussing the judgments of subsequent scientists and it also should avoid falsifying or supporting the scientific ideas and theories. Further, the conflict among the competitive theories and their evolutions needs to be explained according to coherence, novel evidence and the criteria discussed above. For example, it should be presented that the experiments done by Rutherford provide evidence against the atomic model suggested by Thomson. The model by Rutherford is more coherent and complex and enjoys a higher explanatory power for the preceding experimental observations. In the next stage, the atomic model by Bohr has such advantages in comparison to that of Rutherford.

Therefore, we could now talk about the science education based on free thinking of learners. As it was elaborated earlier, Feyerabend (1993) looks for human freedom from all methodological and even epistemological restricts. These restrictions sometimes are formed as experiment or empiricism and rationality or rationalism. Inspired by John Stuart Mill, he believes in the superiority of freedom as the human natural right over science; hence he accuses such democratic societies like America of forcing the learners to acquire science. He raises this question that: “how can a human being select his religion freely in such societies but he has no freedom in choosing what he want to study?” Investigating these ideas and following the ideas by John Stuart Mill, the present paper suggests a type of freedom in terms of artistic rules and traditions. As it was pointed out, free thinking requires attending to metaphysical and religious principles of thinking.

The point that can be referred from the discussion is focusing and emphasizing on learners’ freedom in the process of science education above the common beliefs and present theories and methodologies. This should be done according to the aesthetic, metaphysics and even religious inclinations of the learners. This point ought to be followed along with the other points presented before. The role of science education in this situation is creating a ground for learners’ free thinking in the science classroom. In order to attain this goal, in the first step the content of science curricula should respect and value metaphysics and religious beliefs in the field of science while it is applying the scientific ideas to facilitate learning science. An in the second step, it should introduce the aesthetic ideas to the learners and improve these aspects in them. In the first step, education ought to refer to the metaphysical beliefs hold by the great scientists along with presenting their scientific ideas. And in the next step, it should
consider art in developing science textbooks to include the artistic aspects and to enhance learners’ aesthetic viewpoint. In such a situation, teacher facilitates free thinking in the classroom beyond repeating the present knowledge.

In this regard it’s needed to take the steps as follows: first it’s needed to create a situation for further interaction and practice among the learners through active teaching methods. In following this goal, the teacher necessarily takes into account the daily experiences of learners. The words by Einstein can be illuminating in this regard: “The whole of science is nothing more than refinement of everyday thinking” (In Zagatto et al, 2012, p13). Second, employing simple examples, it’s needed to show the learners that each observation includes various theories and hence observation and sensory experience do not play an antecedent and basic role in the formation of science. Therefore, the viewpoint held by some thinkers like Bacon who believed in the observation to be the starting point for science is not acceptable, although it was novel and pioneering in relation to other methodologies when it was proposed. As a result, we cannot expect the learners to comprehend the scientific rules and through facing them with scientific events and encouraging their sensory experience. Each learner has a background of scientific, metaphysical, religious, and other theories and assumptions; it is natural for them to regard the new events from these points of view. This is also true for the scientists, and their scientific achievements also confirm this fact. We might have heard the story of discovering gravitation by Newton in this way: observing the falling apple led Newton to discover the gravitation! The questions to be asked here is whether such phenomena had not been observed by other people prior to Newton. The difference between Newton and the other people is not in the event observed rather it is in their mentality which evaluated (or did not evaluate) the phenomenon. We can also add the fallibility of observation and not being observable many of the physical and chemical phenomena to this reason. For example, observing sun moving in the sky during the day might lead to the false conclusion that sun orbits around the earth. Atom and the atomic phenomena inside are not also observable. Consequently, the starting point is not observation rather it is assumption and theoretical explanation. It is worth mentioning that although the role of observation is posteriori rather A priori, but it plays a significant role.

Finally, the other complementary step is applying artistic rules and traditions for creating a context for free activities of learners in the field of science. While referring to the new goals for science education, Wallner (1995) mentions the ability to handle and understand scientific products for making choices between desirable and undesirable science. Inspired by Feyerabend’s ideas, he defines this goal as: “...students should be enabled to use science in a way that most closely agrees with the values and aims of the society they have chosen for themselves” (p 70). In this regard, one of the ideals for Feyerabend (1993) is human freedom from methodological, and even epistemological, constraints. In this regard Staley (1999), seeks the solution in the ideas of John Stuart Mill and hence he recommends application of artistic rules in to science. These rules are provisional, incomplete, limited, exceptionable and local. By adopting this view, freedom, on the one side, means release from external norms even if these norms are science or its specific methods and, on the other side, it requires a commitment to art and artistic life with the mentioned rules. For example, it can be suggested to respect and encourage different ideas and viewpoints which have not been verifiable up to the present time and they conflict with common beliefs, as well as available theories, and methodologies. Also, the teacher might raise further questions and provide indirect and hesitating answers to them in order to pave the way for learners’ preciseness and creativity.

Conclusion
The aim of this study is to revise the science education in high schools with reference to the anarchism theory about the nature of science and its development with the ultimate purpose of drawing a free science education. Finally, along with the discussion, if the future orientation of science education is toward raising the spirit of free thinking in learners, then
the ideas of Feyerabend would include profound implications for science curriculum development.

According to the findings, the inductive view in science education needs to undergo a basic revision. Following this revision, the present paper suggested some points to face misunderstandings, failures, and inaccuracies in the process of science education. We need to attend to some points and necessities in the suggested revision. First, every observation includes numerous theories. In a general view, history plays a background role in the mind of learners when they are observing the events. That is the reason why understanding science in a historical context can serve as one of the principles for science education. As Feyerabend believes, the history of science proves that nature of science is not of discovery type; rather it is of idea and invention type. And also science has not been determined by any particular methodology such as deduction, induction, intuition, and falsification. On this ground, it is erroneous to talk about falsification of a theory and supporting the other. But, theories can be evaluated according to criteria such as coherence, explanatory power for subsequent experiments and observations, complexity and novel predictions. In this fashion, we can make a comparison and determine that, for example, the explanatory power of one theory is superior to other one. But, theories cannot be judged for their accuracy or inaccuracy since they are ideas and not discoveries. One of the results of such viewpoint toward theories is the development of the mentality for respecting all of the scientists throughout the history. So, learners would learn to regard all the people who have considered the universe and have achieved some findings as great characters and to respect them.

The concept of science as ideas also indicates to the creative, innovative, and artistic nature of science. Hence restricting the learners’ freedom through forcing them to follow specific methodologies such as deduction, intuition, and falsification is unjustified. Learners’ freedom for thinking in the field of science according to aesthetic, metaphysical inclinations, and even those beyond the common beliefs, might even lead them to develop novel ideas. Addressing art and aesthetic is the guideline provided by John Stuart Mill for achieving a more comprehensive meaning of freedom. He believes that free life is also an artistic life, so to provide learners with freedom for thinking in the field of science we need an artistic atmosphere for science curricula. This shows the significance of addressing ‘learners’ aesthetic inclinations as well as developing an artistic mentality in them through science curricula. This is also in line with Feyerabend’s ideas that there is no clear-cut border between various fields of knowledge such as science, art, religion, and philosophy. Therefore, the metaphysical beliefs of the learners also affect their views toward scientific ideas and some clear examples can be traced in the scientific ideas by great scientists like Einstein, Bohr and Schrodinger.

The other point to be underlined is the necessity to go beyond conservativeness and common beliefs and to find the courage for thinking in the field of science. The historical evidence supporting this claim is the set of prominent scientific ideas throughout the history which were weird and beyond common belief when they were proposed. This point takes on considerable importance today, since, on the one side, scientists have proposed numerous scientific ideas and hence many are in agreement with common beliefs. And, on the other side, since further complexities of the universe are revealed, thinking in the field of science necessitates thinking beyond the common beliefs and attending to various complexities. Finally, according to the discussion presented, if the future orientation of science education in the high schools aims at developing the mentality of great scientists in the learners so that learners take the same process as great scientists, then focusing on Feyerabend’s ideas would include implications for science curricula. The orientation of such curricula would be developing characteristics such as free thinking, respecting scientific ideas throughout the history, encouraging learners to think differently while respecting other, even weird, ideas.
References

Working papers
Are teachers superfluous? Pedagogical-phenomenological considerations in the intermediate field of teaching and learning

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Introduction
In recent years, learning has become a frequently used term: phrases such as lifelong learning, learning schools, learning systems, collective learning, just to name a few keywords that populate not only scientific discussions, but also accompany our daily lives. “There’s a kind of impatience with the hunger for the quick fix, the *deus ex machina* that will put things right in the classroom.” (Perkins, 1995, p. 43f.) According to Perkins, the target behind the discourses of learning are the desire to learn as simple and as much as possible in a short time. Nonetheless, international and national investigations in the field of education such as PIRLS, PISA, TIMMS or INVALSI-tests with their various measurement methods show that students do not achieve the desired results.

Conceptions of learning heavily depend on discourses that are publicly maintained (cf. Meyer-Drawe, 2012a). Latest scientific perceptions of learning are popular, in which cognitive neuroscientists appear as learning experts and explain to educators but also to parents how children learn – and how they should learn. When these studies replace the human learner with the study of only their brain, they are considered in terms of operationally closed systems. Thus they support theories of educational psychology which consider learners only in the context of learning theories where they are considered managers of their own learning (Meyer-Drawe, 2013, p. 90f.). As a consequence, looking at the development at European universities, the current teacher education as well as the reputation of the teaching staff is affected. For what reason are teachers needed when learners are self-organizing like a autopoietic system? Would not stimulating learning opportunities, in terms of a well differentiated learning environment, provide better results than teachers? Due to the poor test results, as in the measurements I previously mentioned, many schools are attempting to improve students’ performance by various methods; for example through the support of teachers who are only allowed to act as learning consultants or learning coaches. Schratz (2013, p. 316) speaks in this context of a “methods-learning short-circuit”, which is caused by the transmission of teaching in models of self-control (learning parcours, worksheets, weekly plans or competence grids) by the students.

Starting point and research questions
Unfortunately, concepts of learning which take into account the interaction of people within the world, the embroilment of teaching and learning as experiences at once both oppositional and interdependent, are less popular. Theories which assume a pedagogical-phenomenological perspective of learning as experience (Meyer-Drawe, 2010), however, consider this interconnectedness, and underlines that it is central to the learning of all. “Learning needs teaching”, emphasizes Meyer-Drawe (2013, p. 91) and shows the importance of challenging students again and again to try new approaches. If learning is not to be seen as an adaptation but as a creative process in which something new is learned (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1976), according to Meyer-Drawe (2013, p. 91ff.), teachers must prevent students from retreating to the familiar. In addition, teachers must assist them in exploring new perspectives (cf. Agostini, 2014). Disengaging from the familiar can be associated with great difficulties. However, teachers need to be instigators as well as facilitators in this process, as believed by Aristotle.

According to Schratz and Westfall-Greiter (2010) teachers have to be responsible in the decisions they make in shaping the educational experiences of their students. In a theory,
with the focus on learning as an experience, one must start with the entire process of learning. We can then redefine the relationship between teaching and learning, between learner and teacher (cf. Schratz et al., 2012). But what exactly can you imagine under a teaching that is based on the lived experiences of the students? How can a teacher make a practical contribution to support the students in their creative learning process, in discovering old and inventing new perspectives? Using selected vignettes we should look first at the students learning process and then secondly to the combined actions of learners and teachers in order to arrive at an answer to these questions.

**Methodology and research instruments**

Since phenomenology is the philosophy of experience it can be the foundation of lived experience research. The methodology used in this proposal is associated with the methodology used by the “Innsbruck Vignette Research” and stems from that research project “Personal Learning and Development in Diverse Classroom Communities” (cf. Schratz et al., 2012). The source and focus of the phenomenology-based research design is influenced by the work of Husserl (1992), Merlau-Ponty (1966; 1976), Gadamer (1975), Waldenfels (1997; 2002; 2004; 2006) and Meyer-Drawe (2010; 2012a; 2012b). The starting point of the study is the paradigm of Waldenfels (2000) whose recent theorem of “responsivity” (Responsivität) is seen as a critical alternative to Husserl’s “concept of intentionality”. Among the most important concerns of the study is the attention to the tense and fragile structure of sensual experiences. Experiences are seen as unforeseen events, which surprise and befall us in everyday life, disturb and disappoint our expectations and thus promote learning as experience (Meyer-Drawe, 2010; 2012a). Other concerns are to show skepticism of scientific rationality and towards an empiricist reduction of experience, understood as a mere registration of data.

Understanding learning as experience (Meyer-Drawe, 2010), rather than a product out of experience, the challenge for researchers is how to capture possible learning experiences while in the field. With the goal of maximizing the shared experience, researchers in the field attempt to stay open and particularly attentive to pathetic elements such as atmosphere, facial and bodily expressions and tone of voice. These details are noted by researchers in protocols which then form the basis for writing the vignettes. The vignettes stems from the researchers experiencing the lived experience of the students in the midst of the pedagogic situation, in medias res. Hence, they are “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1991) of the lived experience of the researchers and as close as possible the experience of the pupils in the field. Due to the linguistic expansion, vignettes are most accurately understood as a form of literary non-fiction in which researchers strive to manifest and point to the impossible plurality of the experience by revealing the pathetic qualities of a tangible moment perceived by them (cf. Meyer-Drawe, 2012b). To ensure that the researchers communicate as completely as possible the essence of the experience of the pupils without interpretation, the individual genesis of a vignette is documented, then communicatively validated with the subjects in the field and through a workshop method within the research team. As required the data collected from the school experience is triangulated with other methodological approaches such as photo evaluation, document analysis, focus groups and interviews.

Over a one-year period a team of six researchers specifically studied diverse classroom communities at 16 school sites across the South Tyrol of Italy by collecting data in grade 6 classrooms. Doing so, each researcher spent a minimum of two days in the field at three different times (October/November 2012, February/March 2013, May/June 2013) to obtain data, focusing on two learners selected by the teachers in each class.

Once vignettes have been crafted, they become the primary data for phenomenological analysis, a process which is referred to “vignette reading”. With the aim of intensifying the experience, a vignette generates surpluses for the readers and addresses their bodily responsiveness. In reading a vignette, researchers engage in the experience as readers,
holding back from categorizing and explaining in order to uncover, peel off and add layers of understanding to what is given. As Finlay (2009, p. 11), drawing on Gadamer (1975) emphasizes, an appropriate interpretation of data in the phenomenological tradition is one which “points to” phenomena of experience rather than “points out” findings.

Conclusions and expected outcomes
The expected outcome of the study is to gain a new pedagogical perspective on the complexity of the learning as well as the teaching phenomenon in order to provide a new facet to be included for teacher training. I expect the study to show that teachers who want to foster creative learning processes would have to redefine their role and should not see themselves as outside the process. Only the implementation of the process and the simultaneous active participation of both student and teacher can make learning truly creative. The results are relevant for all schools, especially with populations with multicultural students. By working closely with the research partners, the results can also be used for the professional development for teachers and the school program improvement.

References
1. Introduction

The notion of virtue, recently popular in epistemology, has now also found application in argumentation theory. Indeed, a number of theorists are attempting to ground a theory of argumentation around virtue, much in the way that epistemologists have done with virtue epistemology (Cohen 2007, 2009, 2012; Aberdeen 2007). Whether or not one accepts this type of agent-centered account of argumentation, it is clear that the notion of virtues forms a central component of most theories of critical thinking. What has been given insufficient attention in the argumentation and critical thinking literature is how one acquires these virtues. It is this issue that is the focus of this paper.

We begin by examining the notion of virtue and what constitute the virtues of argumentation or critical thinking. We argue that the notion of virtue is more appropriate in this context than the notion of dispositions commonly employed by critical thinking theorists. We also make the argument that it is more illuminating to speak of the virtues of inquiry rather than of argumentation. The remainder of the paper focuses on the issue of how these virtues might be developed.

2. The Virtues of Inquiry

What, exactly, are the virtues of argumentation or critical thinking (Cohen uses the two interchangeably)? Cohen describes them thus:

In order to bypass the debates as to exactly what sort of thing a virtue is, let us stipulate that argumentative or critical virtues are the acquired habits and skills that help us achieve the goals of critical thinking\(^5\) (Cohen 2009, 54).

Cohen’s inclusion of ‘skills’ as well as ‘habits’ in his conception of virtue runs counter to common usage. Indeed, theorists tend to include the dimension referred to by the term virtue in their conception of critical thinking to refer to precisely the aspect which goes beyond skills.\(^1\) The aspect of interest here, and the aspect commonly picked out in theories of critical thinking by the term ‘virtues’, is this additional dimension.\(^2\)

This dimension, although central to most theories of critical thinking, has been described in various ways by different theorists. Some theorists, for example Paul (1990) and Burbules (1995), do use the term virtues. Bailin et al. (1999a) refer to habits of mind. Peters talks about ‘rational passions’ (Peters 1972). The most common characterization, however, is in terms of dispositions (see, e.g., Ennis 1996; Siegel 1988). One components of the dispositional dimension is a fundamental commitment to rational belief and action, well captured by Siegel’s notion of critical spirit (Siegel 1988) or Bailin and Battersby’s spirit of

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\(^1\) See the next section for a discussion of the problems with the concept of skill to capture this aspect.

\(^2\) See Aberdein 2007 for a discussion of the importance of distinguishing between argumentative virtues and skills, e.g.,: “The exact same fallacy, say an equivocation on a word with two subtly but crucially distinct senses, could result from either a failure of virtue, if deliberately intended to deceive, or from a failure of skill, if the utterer did not notice the double meaning” (7).
inquiry (Bailin & Battersby 2010). The other component is behavioral: an inclination to act in accordance with the norms of reason. Whether they are called virtues, habits of mind, or dispositions, the list of aspects to be included is strikingly similar, for example: open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, curiosity, concern for truth and accuracy, the desire to act on the basis of reason (Bailin & Battersby 2010); love of truth, repugnance of distortion and evasion, respect for the arguments of others (Peters 1972); intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason (Paul 1990).

Why, then, characterize this aspect in terms of virtues rather than dispositions? The term disposition is used in this context to describe a behavior, a habit, an individual tendency to act in a certain way; it can also be used to refer to an imputed quality or property of an individual by virtue of which they behave in this manner (Siegel 1999). Thus having a disposition to be fair-minded means that the individual has a tendency to act in a fair-minded manner. It may imply, further, that the impulse to act in this way has an internal rather than an external source (e.g., they are not being forced etc.).

Nonetheless a significant problem with the characterization in terms of dispositions is that it actually tells us very little about why the person tends to act in this way. The disposition characterization does rule out external sources of behavior, but it would not rule out cases where the individual behaves in a certain manner because of blind habit or because they have assimilated certain external forces, e.g., if they have been indoctrinated. This seems fundamentally different from acting in this manner because they understand the enterprise and value its procedures and goals (Bailin & Battersby 2007). It is the latter that is picked out by the concept of virtue. Burbules (1995) makes the point thus:

“Disposition” tends to refer to individual tendencies, often ascribed from an external perspective through observation and behaviorist inference. A virtue, on the other hand, is not a mere expression of habit, but an expression of judgment and choice (1995, 86).

And further:

they [virtues] are not simply the activating sentiments that motivate us to apply the formal rules we have learned, but the aspects of character that bring us to care about learning or paying attention to such standards in the first place (1995, 86).

The views highlighted above refer to the virtues of argumentation or critical thinking, but we would maintain that they are better thought of as the virtues of inquiry. We have argued elsewhere that the central goal of argumentation/critical thinking is arriving at reasoned judgments, and that this is a dialectical process involving the comparative evaluation of a variety of contending positions and arguments. This enterprise is one which we characterize as inquiry (Bailin & Battersby 2010). It is true that arguers may play different roles in particular argumentative exchanges, e.g., as proponents or opponents, judges or spectators (Cohen 2013). And they often have various intentions in arguing, e.g., rational persuasion, decision-making, justification (Johnson 2007). Nonetheless, whatever the particular role or intention, because the ultimate epistemological goal is to reach a reasoned judgment, the normative structure of the practice necessitates inquiry and thus the virtues related to inquiry. For example, even if one begins with the intention to persuade, if the persuasion is to be rational, then one must care about truth and accuracy, be willing to put one's arguments to the test of reason and follow the arguments where they lead, be willing to concede to the most defensible position etc. (Bailin & Battersby 2009). In other words, one must exhibit the virtues of inquiry.
3. Acquiring the Virtues of Inquiry

According to many accounts, critical thinking is seen to involve two related, but conceptually distinct aspects: skills and dispositions. The problems with the notion of disposition has already been discussed. But even the notion of skills can be problematic if it is seen to refer to some inner mental entity. Critical thinking is skilled thinking in the sense that it meets certain criteria, and there do not seem to be any grounds, either empirical or conceptual, for positing a connection between the quality of thinking and any putative mental entities or processes (Bailin et al. 1999a).

We would argue that this mentalistic, dualistic way of conceptualizing critical thinking is faulty at its core (Bailin et al. 1999a). We would argue instead for a conception of critical thinking as a practice – the practice of inquiry.

What exactly do we mean by a practice? Here we draw on MacIntyre's notion of a practice, which he characterizes thus:

"By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity (MacIntyre 1996, 187)."

Although argumentation exhibits most of the features of a practice, there are limitations with respect to the applicability of MacIntyre's particular characterization to argumentation. As Kvernbekk (2008) has pointed out, although some of the goods of argumentation are internal to the practice of argumentation, not all are. We do sometimes argue for the sake of engaging in argumentation (Cohen 2012 ), but we more often argue for other reasons – to persuade, to justify, to make a decision. We would, however, also agree with Kvernbekk, citing Miller (1994), that not all practices are self-contained, as MacIntyre's conception implies. There are some practices which exist to serve some end beyond themselves – what Miller calls purposive practices. Argumentation can thus be seen as a purposive practice, with goods both internal and external to it. This seems very similar to Cohen's notion of argumentation as a tradition (Cohen 2012).

The practice of inquiry is essentially a critical practice, involving the evaluating of reasons, the justifying of claims, and the making of judgments. It is a practice constituted by a web of interconnected concepts (e.g., reasons, evidence, argument, justification, warrant, premise, conclusion, opinion) which are connected, in turn, to certain principles and procedures, and all the preceding are connected to the goal of reaching a reasoned judgment (Bailin 1999). Inquiry is instantiated in a number of different particular practices, e.g., morality, science, law, the arts, which involve a diversity of concepts, principles, procedures and specific purposes. But what these practices have in common is that they are all critical practices. Whatever else they may involve, they also importantly involve the evaluating of reasons, the justifying of claims, and the making of judgments (Bailin 1999).

Learning to inquire, then, is not a matter of learning a number of discrete skills (the approach typically taken in traditional critical thinking courses) and, additionally, picking up certain dispositions in the process. Rather, it is a matter of learning to participate knowledgeably and competently in the practice of inquiry in its various forms and contexts. And acquiring the virtues of inquiry arises through getting on the inside of the practice and coming to appreciate the goods inherent in it. The willingness to abide by its normative constraints comes through appreciating the value of inquiry and sharing in the constitutive purposes. Someone exhibiting the virtues of inquiry evaluates opposing views in a fair and open-minded manner because she understands that such a weighing is what is called for in order to reach a
reasoned judgment; she is willing to concede to the most defensible position because she understands that her own view could be mistaken (Bailin & Battersby 2009).

Traditional disciplinary teaching has had notoriously limited success in fostering critical thinking (Hestenes, Wells and Swackhamer 1992; Jungwirth 1987; Ferraro and Taylor 2005). This is not surprising given that reasoning and argumentation are seldom a focus of disciplinary pedagogy. The nature of inquiry and how it is instantiated in the particular area is seldom made explicit (Bailin & Battersby forthcoming). And any focus on the virtues of inquiry is, in general, notably absent.

What is required, instead, is an immersion in the practice which brings to the fore the goals, principles, and underlying structure of inquiry, both in general and within the particular context, and makes explicit its modes of argumentation, methodologies, and normative constraints (Bailin & Battersby 2010; Battersby & Bailin forthcoming). With such an approach, the virtues of inquiry are part and parcel of learning to inquire as participants come to understand that such virtues are embedded in and required by the practice of inquiry.

The practice of inquiry is, however, a communal, social practice. Thus the kind of context in which inquiry can be fostered and in which the virtues of inquiry can develop and flourish is a community of inquiry (Dewey 1938, Lipman 2003). This is a community which has as its aim rational inquiry and reasoned judgment. And it is a community which is characterized by certain sorts of relationships and interactions, i.e., by open-minded and fair-minded exchanges and a commitment to respectful treatment, meaningful participation, and productive interaction (Bailin & Battersby 2010).

References
Eclipse and the return of the father

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In the last two decades, adult education has assumed the specific and qualifying task of educating couples to the life together and parents to learn the difficult art of raising their children. In this context, it is worth noting that, within the new wider scenarios, the new fathers' awareness is visibly changing: a fact which has seemed revolutionary to a number of scholars of the history of education (Rosina, Sabbadini 2005; Barbagli, Kertzer 2005).

1. The Unity and Integration of Father and Mother

«Good enough» parents are those able to transmit both a sense of belonging (the roots) and a sense of wandering (the wings). However, an adequate physical, psychic and spiritual growth demands that mother and father, as both real and symbolical figures, be conceived of as mutually integrated (Grenier 2000).

The mother is the place of the origin; the father the source of legitimation. The mother embodies, and is able to transmit, the law of gratuitousness and happiness: being is good, if the child’s being is precious to its mother. The father, instead, recalls, and is able to communicate, the law of reality, the sense of justice as existing within things: any achievement demands work, commitment and labor, which forces us to distance ourselves from spontaneity. So, education is adequate if it holds together happiness and justice, which refers to the maternal and paternal codes: the awareness of a choice by love (i.e., education’s affective meaning) and the awareness of the law (i.e., the structure of its ethical side) (Cigoli, Scabini 2012).

To use figures that are both real and symbolical is important because the formation of the self within the child and then the adolescent takes place within a relationship and a continuous comparison with the parents. On the one hand, these are perceived as that particular woman and that particular man, from whose union the child has come into the world; on the other, they are also experienced as somehow non-sexualized: they are parental images defined by (meta-individual) functions transcending their (individual) roles. The relationship with the mother remains both a symbiotic one, and a sort of connection with one’s soul: as if that figure mirrored the child’s self, and its function were that of dilating and supporting the child’s self-perception (Jung 1976).

Conversely, the relationship with the father, perceived by the child as external to the symbiotic dyad, is structured as a symbolical relationship: it is rather a relationship with the animus as a third party, a social representative of the world to the child, its function being that of generating and nurturing the sense of otherness/the Other (Kohut 1977). Thus the parent is important for the child to begin to exist; but the father is essential in order to fully exist, i.e., to live a personal life (Davidson 2004).

2. Eclipse rather than Decline of the Father

In actual fact, today the father appears as an emergency, considering the sense of his figure and his role from an educational viewpoint, within the family and, generally, society. This means, on the one hand, that his identity reveals an increasing, ominous, fragility; it is not by chance that the expression “death of the father” has been used for defining a salient trait of post-modernity since the early 1970s. (Hurstel 1996). On the other hand, a new father figure can be detected as emerging in post-modern societies: still a fragile one but certainly less neurotic and less psychotic, seemingly called to a different, mundane, half-concealed, protagonism. The new father is emerging and affirming himself especially by his increasingly felt presence in family life, beside his partner or spouse, ready to care for his children; he is...
physically more present but also more psychologically alert and involved in education issues (Andolfi 2001).

If considering the critical or problematic aspect of this emergence, it is evident that, in the troubled or unsuccessful genesis of the paternal conscience, the main difficulties are closely bound to the growth of a basic male gender identity, perceived as a difference. Paternity, in fact, is first and foremost an affective bond implied by the generative act and the attachment deriving from it; however, it is qualified as such in relation to the growth of the subject’s personal identity, particularly, in relation to the male development (Ventimiglia 2006).

The father is an ethical figure, because of his nexus with the origin of life, and because of the care he is expected to take of the transitions in family life. However, to make a man into a father, it is necessary for him to have a woman at his side: the particular woman who receives his love and who, by choosing to love him, asks him to become the particular man he needs to be. This is, to me, the most important aspect, the primary condition for the rise of paternal identity, together with the male gender development (Lacroix 2004).

There is, nevertheless, another crucial condition: in order to become a father, a man needs to have a father within himself; no man can be a father if he harbors within a black hole as to his own origins. A significant, positive (however minimal) relationship with one’s father is necessary in order not to forget the source of one’s being: this is always received gratuitously and meaningfully, even though not always in full awareness (Cattorini 2003).

Further considerations regard the emergence of a new father figure suggesting the eclipse, rather than the decline, of the father in post-modern societies. However, what father is returning or must return? The answer to this question is, in a way, self-evident and immediately persuasive, as this is a father whose witness is self-effacing, rather than a despotic, possessive parent. The former embodies a good life ideal but entrusts it to individual actions performed almost casually and often depending on fleeting encounters; ultimately, he is an authentic man who does not conceal his limits, and this is why he can sometimes look like a merely symbolical figure (Recalcati 2011).

3. «From Phantom to Symbol»

He becomes a father when no longer being just the parent of the child he has generated through the union with his woman, even though this simple experience keeps the original meaning of everything he is and can be. He remains – necessarily – the life-giving parent; but he becomes a father when spending himself to help the other than himself, his son/daughter to receive an entirely new form of life: to be a man/woman, to become oneself. As a father, then, his role changes significantly, whilst somehow remaining the same: in the new generation, the father’s role is indissolubly bound to the gift of identity. To acquire this identity, the child must separate from the person it has been attached to, the one by whom, beside the mother, it has been received and cared for (Risé 2003).

The philosopher P. Ricoeur has described the process of becoming an individual on part of the child by expressing the need for the father to move «from phantom to symbol» (Ricoeur 1969). This expression belongs to religious language, as it refers to the idea that, directly or indirectly, each human father symbolizes the paternity of God. Philosophers, however, explain the calling to become oneself as a free and conscious exercise of one’s own existence. From the perspective of pedagogical anthropology, it is necessary to consider, beside the mother’s gift (matris munus > «matrimony»), the father’s gift (patris munus > «patrimony»), which founds the family community. This, in fact, is formed when, together with the gift of life, there comes the gift of the name; it is the «munus relationsis», generating significant personal life and the norms regulating the couple and the family (Melchiorre 2000).
The development of this paternal awareness makes a parent into his children’s guardian: the man who acknowledges that his children come from something other than himself, that they fundamentally do not belong to him and are defined by an identity and a destination different from his own. It implies the parents’ work on themselves, to dispossess themselves; their choice to become their children’s guides throughout their lives, leaving them free before the decisions they are called to make. This is an adequate, effective educational method: to let the children develop by fully expressing their own diversity, the joy of managing by themselves, to plan, hope, fight, be enterprising. Such a method is based on the conviction that it is ultimately preferable to allow the children the freedom to make mistakes, so that they may become responsible to themselves and others (and/or an Other) (Bornstein 2002).

4. «From Oedipus to Telemachus»

Another author, the psychoanalyst M. Recalcati, views the issue from the children’s perspective. He describes their condition as «hypermodern» by resorting to a new symbolic figure beside Oedipus and Narcissus: Telemachus, the son defined by the desire that his father may return: «If it were possible for us mortals to have every wish fulfilled, our priority should be my father’s return above all» (XVI, 149-150). Oedipus is the character marked by both a «phallic delusion» and a «paternal interdiction»; Narcissus, on the other hand, lives off the delusion of being enough to himself and, by overcoming all prohibitions, lives as if completely free from bonds and relationships, which he perceives as chains. Beyond Oedipus and beyond Narcissus, Telemachus can establish a new relationship with his father: the latter does not repress his desire but is perceived as the one who legitimizes desire; by giving his son the desire to desire, he entrusts him with the greatest possible thing, i.e., the condition enabling any personal project and any original work (Recalcati 2013).

Besides, because of awaiting his father, Telemachus is the «rightful heir»: he understands that the humanization of his life, its personalization – or perhaps just his own educational development – demand an encounter with his father: in it the most precious inheritance can be found as a «possible embodiment of the alliance between desire and law» (Lacan 1966). To this son, the father does not appear as lord and master of life: he is a pilgrim and comes to him as a beggar; he can spare the son neither reality’s tears nor the life’s labor. Hence, this father can become the guardian of life and death, a deeper mystery than his ability to comprehend and experience it, and one which no man can control. He can thus pass on to his children a witness of the attitude to assume before being and life itself (Bellingreri 2014). This entrusting act is the father’s humble truth, an unresolved enigma; it is the symbolic act, as – going back to Ricoeur’s suggestion – it makes the father into a symbol by referring him to the greater origin which precedes and surpasses any human procreation.

References


Does 21st century learning enhance teachers’ critical reflective practice?

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Abstract
Two important features of the concept of ‘21st century learning’ are the use of digital technologies and, increasingly, use of flexible learning spaces. These are claimed to both demand, and lead to, enhanced reflective practice by teaching practitioners. This article is based on a project that has used multiple New Zealand case studies to engage teachers and leaders in interviews to explore their experiences at the futures–digital–reflective intersection. Critical theoretic and critical hermeneutic approaches are used to explore the relationships between reflective practice and digital futures of learning through analysis and comparison of educational discourses with voices from the selected case study schools. For the purposes of the INPE conference, only the initial theoretic arguments are presented, without the inclusion of the case study research evidence.

Introduction
Two important features of the concept of ‘21st century learning’ are the use of digital technologies and, increasingly, use of flexible learning spaces. These are claimed to both demand, and lead to, enhanced reflective practice by teaching practitioners. This article explores briefly the concept of 21st century learning, followed by a consideration of reflective practice. It argues for reflective practice principles suggesting that, despite the potential affordances of technology, philosophically, technology is unable to meet the principled requirements of reflective practice outlined here.

An adequate understanding of the concept of 21st century learning must reflect the fluidity and unpredictability of this complex phenomenon (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). This concept is taken here to refer to teaching and learning that prepares young people for engaging in a complex and dynamic world deeply influenced by globalisation and the revolution in digital technology (see, for example, Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Loveless, & Williamson, 2013). Both schools and places of learning outside and beyond schools are challenged to develop appropriate skill-sets in their students. These skill-sets are often bundled as, for example, key competencies, which have shifted educational discourse from education to learning, with a focus on developing not only lifelong learning, but employability too (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012; European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS), 2012). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009) has suggested that the persistence of ‘outmoded’ transmission models of teaching in global compulsory education systems is a barrier to effective learning. As this article is focussed on teachers, rather than students (or ‘learners’), the interest of the OECD, which yields considerable global educational power and influence (Meyer & Benavot, 2013), is particularly significant.

In relation to evolving discourses that call for approaches to teaching and learning more consistent with a technology-rich knowledge society and preparation of students for a global knowledge economy in the 21st century, the meaning of terms such as ‘education’ and ‘to be educated’ is being reconstituted. Thus, a fundamental question to be asked must be whether there is a place for teachers (and students, of course) to flourish as human beings beyond the narrow confines of economic imperatives. The notion, for example, that 21st century learning enhances reflective practice, thus achieves greater significance, as it may be argued that the disposition and ability to be critically reflective suggest precisely such flourishing. And, while the emphasis in this article is on teachers, they serve as role models to students of the critically reflective life.
Reflective Practice

Dewey defined reflective thought as the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (1933, p. 9, cited by Khourey-Bowers, 2005, p. 85). From this quote, it can be suggested that reflective practice must, as a baseline, assume a level of directed, proactive cognitive activity by the knower, who must be a person disposed to such activity. Here one may think of Plato's subject who is pained by taking on the rigours of critical activity demanded by his exit from the cave, and is humiliated by those who do not share his new-found enlightenment. Despite this potentially negative outcome, note that Plato required the participation of more than one in this enterprise of consciousness-raising.

For thinkers such as Freire, the place and role of others in the mutual process of raising consciousness to new, critical levels, is central to that process—it cannot be done alone. This position is supported in the context of digitally-enabled reflective practice (Bryan & Ressco, 2006; Freidhoff, 2008; Khourey-Bowers, 2005).

The role and status of digital learning, by both students and teachers, has been greatly promoted into the forefront of thinking about pedagogy (teachers' values, beliefs and assumptions about education generally), and classroom practice, in the first decade and half of the 21st century. The World Wide Web (WWW) and Internet have brought accessible resources to users, encouraging not only shared learning, but also loosening the grip of schools and universities on knowledge and content. Whereas teachers have traditionally presented knowledge to students (Collins & Halverson, 2009), the WWW has been able to undermine the disciplinary knowledge presented by schools (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). Shifts in pedagogy and classroom practice are therefore likely, as digital technology perturbs traditional classroom and educational approaches (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013).

Freidhoff (2008) has suggested that teachers' reflective activity—deep engagement with one's values, beliefs and assumptions (Bryan & Ressco, 2006; Larrivee, 2000)—is underpinned by two principles. These are that these practices be individually sustaining (the individual teacher will reflect on an on-going basis, even if not required to do so), and the practices must be collaborative, occurring in a community setting. This much has been established already; to these two I would add that reflective activity must be intellectually and morally unsettling, that the collaborative and community principle necessarily include an ethical dimension, and that the outcome of reflection must be changed practice.

The activity must be unsettling, as evidenced by the slave released from Plato's cave, whose understanding of the world is radically perturbed by, first, the confrontation with the images that have been used to dupe the slaves, and second, by the confrontation with the sunlight. While we might not agree with Plato's universalist conception of the Good, we can understand the point that our perception and knowledge of the world may be multi-layered, increasing in complexity as we come to make more meaning and sense of that world. The potentially duplicitous character of some aspects of the world—perhaps represented by misinformation or bias, including the possibility that individuals may, in their unwitting ignorance, be deluded—suggests a moral imperative to achieve greater critical knowledge and clarity.

An argument for critical reflection to be necessarily ethical is all the more important to make, as various technologies are linked to the enhancement of reflective practice (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Bryan & Ressco, 2006; Freidhoff, 2008; Khourey-Bowers, 2005; Masterman, 2013). Freidhoff (2008) and Masterman (2013) make the point that technology is not neutral, though their intention is to emphasise the point that technology requires a user to bring together content, pedagogy and technology (Freidhoff, 2008). I would argue that technology is not neutral for another reason, namely that it has the potential to shape and craft the identity of the user and the context in which the user operates the technology in ways that may not be ethical at all, insofar as the screen and keyboard offer a physical separation and
anonymity not possible when face to face. Levinas presents a compelling reason to think of ‘the face’ in our dealings with others: ‘the face’ symbolises both the recognition of the Other, and the recognition of the ‘interiority’ and vulnerability of the Other (Kodelja, 2008).

Levinas placed each of us in a relationship of infinite responsibility to the Other (Peperzak, 1993, p. 26). Real freedom is derived from this recognition and the realisation that this infinite responsibility has a non-reciprocal nature (Bergo, 2009; Egéa-Kuehne, 2008). Levinas’ notion of the ‘third party’ (‘the whole of humanity’ (1991, p. 213)) demands a concept of justice and fraternity, mediated by language: “The third party looks at me in the eyes of the Other—language is justice” (1991, p. 213). Thus it is debateable whether the principles of teacher reflective activity, as argued here, may be adequately met by technology, regardless of what the affordances of a particular technology may be.

What of the principle of changed practice? Argyris & Schön (1974), Brookfield (1995), Larrivee (2000), Senge (1990) and Smyth (1992) each argued, in their own way, for practitioner reflection to lead to changed practice by confronting personal assumptions and values as a consequence of experiencing perturbations in practice. We must turn, however, to Freire to be reminded of his contention that a problem-posing education is dialogical, enabling teachers and students to produce and create knowledge as active subjects (1998; 2000). Teacher reflection should thus not be regarded to be an individualist effort, but one that must involve an ‘other’ (Roberts, 2000). Although Freire did accept technology as potentially beneficial in the liberation process (1998), this acceptance must be balanced by his wariness of “the excess of a rationality that now inundates our highly technologized world” (p. 38). The zeal that seemingly surrounds the ‘uptake’ of technology as a by-product of the 21st century should arguably be tempered by the thoughts of thinkers such as Levinas and Freire.

The pressure on teachers to be reflective will intensify rather than relax given that the disposition to be self-reflective and to take an inquiring attitude to practice is considered essential if schools are to prepare themselves and their students for the uncertain and fast-changing 21st century world in which knowledge takes on altered meanings (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). Furthermore, school leaders must understand the complexities, characteristics, limits and extents of their personal reflective capability, that of their teachers, and that of their school as an organisation, if the challenge presented by a rapidly evolving, digital future, is to be taken seriously by schools (2012).

**The Research Study and Discussion**

In its more developed version, it is anticipated that this article will continue by addressing the following questions:

1. How do the theoretic arguments above relate to or reconcile with, a research methodology that seeks to find participants in their spaces, interacting with those spaces, and engaging in critical reflection as they do so?
2. Some brief comments about the study and the method of data retrieval and interpretation, again relating back to critical hermeneutics.
3. The words of the participants and some interpretations of their key assumptions and practices
4. Provide the link between the notion of 21st century learning and reflective practice.

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Informal learning in family contexts. Identity, meaning and knowledge of Italian and Italian-American parents

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This paper describes a research on the processes of learning and of knowledge construction occurring within the family contexts. The aim of such research is the development of educational action logics able to intercept, promote and validate the knowledge and repertoires of practice that the family systems generate.

The study, positioning itself within a frame of sense proper to the studies on adult education, explores:

- activities, practices, representations, horizons of value, and meaning systems that orient the acting of the parents involved;
- strengths and weaknesses linked to trajectories of educational practice that support the situated, constructed relationally, tacit and distributed knowledge that constitute the family fabric in which the daily life of different members realizes itself.

Theories that support this research focus on community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and transformative learning (TL) as articulated by Cranton (2006), Freire (1973), Marsick & Watkins (1999), and Mezirow (1991, 2000, 2003). The family is thematized as a system characterized by an inherent capability of learning and its members as epistemic subjects who develop knowledge and activity systems functional to deal with the open-endedness of the situations in which they move. The theoretical underpinnings that legitimate this research refer to the constructs of community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and of transformative learning (TL) as articulated by Cranton (2006), Freire (1973), Marsick & Watkins (1999), and Mezirow (1991, 2000, 2003).

Exploring the family through such constructs solicits to bring into focus a constellation of dimensions, concerning the meanings that persons attribute to family life, the daily experiences in which they participate, the practices of construction and reproduction of activity systems in which they are involved and the reflexivity processes that are backed (or less) at the own inner.

In this framework, the construct of CoP represents: (1) an interpretative scheme to describe the situated and informal nature of the learning that the family interactions are able to produce and, at the same time, (2) a methodological device which outlines the possibility, under certain conditions, to promote, develop and cultivate CoPs. The focus on the situativity emphasizes a dimension markedly social of the learning and opens the opportunity to promote educational interventions interested in supporting the local dynamics of learning, wherever they happen.

Wenger, McDermott & Snyder define the CoPs as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (2002: 4). In particular, Wenger underlines: "we all belong to CoPs. At home, at work, at school, in our hobbies - we belong to several CoPs at any given time. And the CoPs to which we belong change over the course of our lives. In fact, the CoPs are everywhere. Families struggle to establish an habitable way of life. They develop their own practices, routines, rituals, artifacts, symbols, conventions, stories, and histories. Family members hate each other and they love each other; they agree and they disagree. They do what it takes to keep going. Even when families fall apart,
members create ways of dealing with each other. Surviving together is an important enterprise, whether surviving consists in the search for food and shelter or in the quest for a viable identity” (1998: 6).

Afar from assuming a priori family groups as CoPs, it is interesting to take into consideration the indications that this perspective provides on how learning occurs and on what is needed to do for promoting it in reference to family experience. In this sense, the construct of CoP is used as an access point to a more extended conceptual scheme of whose it is a constituent element.

Starting from this scenario, it is possible to recognize in family world, shared stories of learning characterized by a generational becoming where the relationship between parents and children is bound by a previous story and open to future stories. Family life is a try for generations to come and, at least in the early steps of its development, is the outcome of the meeting between educational styles that the parental couple has learned by the respective families of origin. Beyond the connotations that the comparison between the current nucleus and the family of origin can assume, parental identities are connected to relational spaces where negotiating possible positionings respect to received inheritances. Habits, value horizons, beliefs and expectations, more or less consciously, pass through each new family nucleus.

Analyzing the family dynamics with interpretive lenses anchored to the theory of CoPs solicits to observe the participation experiences of the subjects to family contexts and the processes of identity construction of its members. This requires to understand how different identities are formed, inherited, rejected, interlocked and transformed through mutual engagement in practice from generation to generation. It is possible to recognize in the family a learning community generative of our mode to become members of other communities or to participate in CoPs, that provides a sort of cultural imprinting, potentially able to offer the longest period of apprenticeship that it can be experienced in the span of a lifetime.

A further hermeneutical key that allows to enrich the educational look thrown on the themes of the learning and the knowing in the family is traceable in transformative learning theory as articulated by Cranton (2006), Freire (1973), Marsick & Watkins (1999), and Mezirow (1991, 2000, 2003).

Such theory describes how adult learners, struggling with critical passages of existence, may help themselves to overcome the constraints on learning that occurred during childhood through a transformative experience. In other words, the authors investigate how adults construct meaning systems through elaboration processes of own experiences.

The transformative theory is a constructivist theory of adult learning and it outlines a perspective that emphasizes the centrality of a critical-reflective thinking able to validate the ways in which individuals interpret and symbolize the experiences that characterize them. The focus is on what happens in the apical events of the existence and possible connections between adult life and disorienting dilemmas that may mark the course. “Perspective transformation can occur either through accretion of transformed meaning schemes resulting from a series of dilemmas or in response to an external imposed epochal dilemma such as a death, illness, separation or divorce, children leaving home, being passed over for promotion or gaining a promotion, failing an important examination, or retirement. A disorienting dilemma that begins the process of transformation also can result from an eye-opening discussion, book, poem, or painting or from efforts to understand a different culture with customs that contradict our own previously accepted presuppositions” (Mezirow J., 1991, p.168).
In the studies of family psychology, it is a now consolidated assumption the thematization of the family life cycle as a function of the critical events that mark the different phases (marriage, birth of children, adolescence of the children, children "leaving home", birth of grandchildren, retirement, illness, death). The relationships among family members, the roles that distinguish its components, the processes of construction of individual and social identities are dimensions that are revealed in a more evident in times of transition, that is when the family is solicited to change its structure and to reveal its strengths and weaknesses. Family life is characterized by critical events or disorienting dilemmas - using the Mezirow language - that may be expected and predictable or unpredictable and unexpected. The critical aspect of the event resides in the fact that it opens a window on uncertainty, calls for a change and throws up new objectives that may either promote development or constitute an obstacle and a blockage for the family. It's possible to mention "among the expected events those resulting from the acquisition of new family member (due to marriages, births and adoptions), and those resulting from losses (deaths, separations and illnesses). Other equally specific events appear less focused and delimited, such the transition to adulthood or old age" (Scabini E. Marta E, Lanz M., 2006, p. 16).

Within this framework, the transformative paradigm invites to wonder how the learning processes in family systems - in their multi-generational (of family story) connections and compared to the dimensions of change - may facilitate or hinder transformative trajectories. The interest, by an educational point of view, is focused on the development of training devices able to accompany growth processes involving familiar contexts.

The research focuses on exchange processes and on systems of intra- and interfamily relationships that characterize family nucleuses with different socio-cultural backgrounds. A comparative study was conducted of two samples: one is composed of forty-three Italian parents living in Milan, Italy, and one of twenty-seven Italian-American parents living in New York City, United States. The decision to conduct a cross-cultural study is motivated by the attempt to understand and to compare how parents with, through and beyond the own cultural positioning construct knowledge, identity configurations (Schachter, E., 2005), trajectories of participation (Wenger E., 1998), and modes of belonging to the families of which they are part.

The research is aimed at understanding:
- the educational practices that characterize the parental acting in different family contexts;
- the perspectives and the meaning schemes that orient the processes of decision making and the behaviors of the involved subjects in respect to the constructs of participation in family life and management of own role within such context;
- the modes and the activities through which individuals translate the value frames that distinguish them;
- Critical events and circumstances that have contributed to define the parental identity of subjects involved.

The data collection method used in this phase is the ethnographic interview. I will compare learning within families in Italy and Italian-American families in the United States and engage in discussion of the dilemmas and challenges of social learning within those boundaries, and on learning strategies that catalyze transformative learning in family units.

References


Education, politics, communication and rhetoric

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The work I propose presenting under the sub-theme Italian philosophies of education focuses on an examination of the relationship between education, politics, communication and rhetoric.

My area of investigation, within the field of analysis of educational discourse, is essentially a reflection on the role that educational communication plays in educational planning, both in the theoretical and the practical-social.

The starting point is an observation of the complexity of communicative action in education, with the corresponding difficulty of describing a paradigm of ethically founded and shared social and political communication.

The crisis of educational communication, therefore, must be seen within the context of larger crisis of public and political communication (M. Perniola Contro la comunicazione [Against communication], 2004), both part of a context which today is critical: the discomfort of pedagogy, in fact, corresponds to that of politics, hence the difficulty of building a fruitful dialogue between education and society.

The research focus lies in two basic questions: is possible to recover the role of a pedagogy that contributes to the growth of the individual as manufacturer of ethical and political reality? And what educational and communication strategies may be activated to promote the interrupted (or never fully consummated) dialogue between pedagogy and politics in contemporary society?

The analysis intends investigating two contiguous areas; the problematisation of the concept of educational communication, and the relationship between education, ethics and politics.

The reading and understanding of several classic Greek philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle) allows the revival of the ancient and often contradictory roots of communication as problematic and ambiguous action, and to achieve an articulated reading of the current communicative complexity, including in education (Wittgenstein, Ricoeur, Foucault, Rorty). The analysis of Paul Ricoeur regarding the possibility of establishing just institutions that work for the common good also reactivates the question of educational communication and its role in the current socio-political scenario (Ricoeur, Persona, comunità, istituzioni [People, communities, institutions], 1994; Id., Parcours de la reconnaissance. Trois études, 2004). What tasks/roles/challenges do education and pedagogy have in redefining the relationship between the individual and society as a whole? Ricoeur seems to argue that, in the dialectic between ethics and politics, there is room for a new educational approach, one able to work for the construction of values such as the good life and just institutions.

This differs from the position taken by Richard Rorty, who outlines the profile of the post-philosophical intellectual, affirms the primacy of democracy over philosophy, and relativises the notion of truth as a rebuttable and negotiable belief (R. Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, 1979; Id., Contingency, Irony and Solidarity, 1989). Rorty emphasizes the concept of democratic right, which allows a play of opinions and the prevalence of a idea about the other as the price to pay for the protection of democratic freedoms. It is clear that the echo of the recent debate on postmodern realism and new realism may here be heard in the background, especially in relation to the concept of truth (H. Putnam, Philosophy in an Age of
The two authors also seem to have opposing views on the role of communication: from a tool for the development and the foundation of ethical values (Ricoeur) to simple narration and conversation between equals (Rorty).

In both cases, communication plays a decisive role. However, it should be defined from the start, in a Socratic manner, what is meant by this term. Communication between human beings, in fact, is not the simple semantic axis of speech, since the information and knowledge transmitted during each speech act are only a part of the global significance of communication. The value of the relational axis present in every dialogue should not be ignored, that is to say, the total of the motivations, goals, hopes and desires that drive human beings to enter into a relationship of communication with each other.

In today's democratic societies, the art of rhetoric has increasingly become argumentation theory, that is to say, knowing how to spread a mastery of the tools for learning how to separate good from bad topics (F. D'Agostini, Verità avvelenata. Buoni e cattivi argomenti nel dibattito pubblico [Poisoned truth. Good and bad arguments in public debate], 2010). And this results, as is evident, in the need to find good reasons, both logical and moral, to support rhetorical-dialectical procedures, and to teach proper communication methods.

Obviously, this is not an entirely new proposal. During the Greek democracy of the V-IV century B.C.E. rhetorical-dialectical argumentation already took the form of philosophising with the truth understood as the common good. Philosophy was in fact, according to D'Agostini, the specific application of argumentation techniques dedicated to the pursuit of the true, an investigation into the actual, and the search for public and individual happiness (good) (F. D’Agostini, Op. cit., p. 215).

Within this context, it is opportune to reflect on the future of education and pedagogy. According to some scholars, the greater the spread of education and of a rhetorical-communicative expertise, the more our ability to communicate in an authentic, accountable and democratic manner will grow (A. Cattani, Botta e risposta [Cut and thrust]. L'arte della replica [The art of replying], 2001; F.H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst, Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies. A Pragma-Dialectical Perspective, 1992).

There is no denying that this is a conviction at risk of a pedagogical-normative Enlightenment. Every strict regulation of speech and any attempt to place communication within the space of rigid prescriptive may result in abstract thought becoming an illusion which does not take account the elusiveness and transience of subjectivity. Especially when it fails to address the more complex (and perhaps uncomfortable) issue of the placement of public communication within a complete horizon of ethics and values.

However, during a period when practical philosophy and tolerant conversation are being rediscovered, which Richard Rorty views as the last chance of old philosophy to survive, it seems inevitable to consider the educational communication and rhetoric as the best way to work on values which really are shared, such assuch as equality, solidarity, and democracy.
Rhetoric, in fact, is woven tightly to the problematic world of ethics and politics, because it is, according to Raimondi, the place of the manifold, of the plurality of differences in contacts and in dialogue, the site of multiple questions, giving rise to problems rather than offering solutions, and where one is invited to make decisions. (E. Raimondi, La retorica d’oggi [Rhetoric today] 2002, p. 22). The reference to the multiplicity and complexity of the social world highlights the existence of a reciprocity between the interiority of the subject and its public dimension. Rhetoric, in this case, functions both for the reunification of different areas of subjectivity, expanding the expressive and evocative potential of the word, and for the reconciliation, in the form of peaceful dialogue, of contradictions and social unrest. It plays the role of reason which mediates, communicates, and persuades, to reach a consensus on values which are never seen as given.

This presupposes, of course, that one is willing to view communication in an anti-Platonic sense, as a complex theory of argumentation where conflicts and differences are triggered, but where each individual is permitted to remain as such.

This is equivalent to shifting the centre of attention from the absolutely axiological level to that of the real, dealing with the everyday, the ordinary, the practical. From a philosophical point of view, this means abandoning the claim to complete accuracy of formal logical language (Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus [Logical philosophical treatise], 1921) to accommodate the imperfect and precarious dimensions of ordinary language (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 1953).

However, a framework of reference values must be included. The central idea is to rebuild modes of communication among men on ethical and non-negotiable values, in the conviction that we must define the rules of discourse to re-establish human society on a foundation of rational and shared norms (Habermas, Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns [Theory of communicative action], 1981; Id., Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwölf Vorlesungen [The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures], 1985). Language is, in fact, where different views meet and where differences and conflicts may arise. It is therefore necessary to work on dialogue and consensus to build new ethical-moral habits. Communication, which cannot be considered to be merely the exchange of information, then emerges as a rich and complex tapestry of linguistic relationships between people. If discourse fails to take on the commitment to support a rich and varied semantic load, it risks relinquishing its main role.

Education is an obligatory member of this significant grouping. If it is possible and desirous in a democracy to learn the difference between good and bad reason, we will be able to draw on an ethical and educational code within the same rhetoric processes. The richness of educational discourse can be cultivated only through a dialectic of communicative complexity, through consolidation and unification of its many modes of expression. Because rhetoric exerts a useful function as a "bridge" between intellectual knowledge, internal emotional experiences, and the environment of the emotion.
Knowledge and ethical thinking in pedagogy: Diachronic overview and contemporary perspectives on the issues of education, of the person and values

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In a truly pedagogical perspective, ethics and knowledge are two closely related terms: the question of ethics and its relationship with knowledge is, either on an epistemological or a practical level, a widely debated topic and deeply relevant for anyone involved in pedagogical issues, in a spirit of forward-looking responsibility and concrete "cure". An ethic that does not involve the goal of a more profound and authentic knowledge of being, and knowledge that cannot find in the ethical principles some true allies in the search for truth, would both be paths of research and reflection intended to run aground in an impasse.

A diachronic analysis shows the stages of the path, sometimes tortuous and damaged, which in the various fields of knowledge and in relation to various facets of multidimensional ethical dimension, has been articulated and winds still an intricate and sometimes labyrinthine pattern of theories, ideological, empirical and experimental issues, diversity of religious, scientific studies and economic requirements, which are interwoven in an increasingly intricate web of factors, traceable in metacategory of complexity, in the meaning that gives Edgar Morin.

In order to understand the foundations of the relationship between knowledge and ethics is necessary to retrace the route that, in the context of the historical horizon - Western cultural, diachronically embraces the philosophical reflections from the fifth century BC, to retrace the ancient dialectic about the substance of knowledge that affected generations of pre-Socratic philosophers from Plato to Aristotle, in order to delimitate the vision at the old time. It is with the Sophists and Socrates that it concerns the transition from a conception of knowledge understood as an attempt at rational understanding of the cosmos, the identification of the principle (αρχή) or first cause (philosophical cosmology), to a new field of knowledge itself that poses in the centre the man's being and essence. And it is the reflection about the essence or human nature, that arose the question about the αρετή (virtue), understood as that which allows mankind to fully realize this nature: here we are at the dawn of moral philosophy.

It was then that the centrality of the debate on the art of knowledge and know put his heart in the contrast between δόξα and αλητεία (dòxa and aletèia) , opinion and truth. The knowledge, identified as a process capable of grasping reality through rational criteria, is true when it does not show characters of ambiguity, arbitrariness and irrationality, but its objectivity is to be found in the processes of thought, in someone's opinion, in other ones' opinions in sensible experience, according to multiverse, multifaceted and intersecting and multi – prospectic optics.

The famous axiom of Protagoras, according to which man is the measure of all things:"παντων χρη ατων επιν ετρον ο ανθρωποι, those who are for what they are, and those that are not for what they are not" (Diels - Kranz 80 B 1) which express a purely subjective criterion of knowledge, was opposed by the Socratic thought that made his own the ancient judgment of "Γνωθι σεαυτόν". He investigated the nature or essence of man in a more detailed and comprehensive than the Sophists and even said that the man is his soul, because it is this latter that sets him apart from anything else (Reale G., 2001). If, on side, the axiom of Protagoras was considered almost the magna charta of western relativism: the principle of homo – mensura, indeed, Protagoras undoubtedly intended to deny that there is
an absolute criterion which discriminates being and non-being, the true and the false, and, in general, all the values, but the criterion is only relative, it is the man himself, the individual human being; on the other side, the Socratic ethics introduces the concept of ἀρετή as science or knowledge, and the opposite of virtue understood as a privation of knowledge, that is ignorance. If man is distinguished by his soul, then, and if the soul is self conscious and intelligent, ἀρετή is what fully implements this consciousness and intelligence: virtue is knowledge of what is the man and, consequently, of what is good and useful to him. This is not about self-reflection which refers only to himself, but a knowledge made possible by a previous exit by oneself, by the recognition of a truth which, already present in the inner man, is not only founded by himself, but also involves other men. The primary goal of the improvement of the soul through knowledge is for Socrates, the achievement dell’εὐδαιμονία (eudaimonia), happiness, which coincides with being at peace with oneself in the full and harmonious realization of own nature (cf. Plat., Gorgias, 470 E). Following the footsteps of this discourse, Plato comes to considering the ἔθος (ethos) as a basis for achieving the εὐδαιμονία. It is understood that, as for Plato, the process of rational knowledge is both a moral conversion process: the cognitive process leads man from the false to the true dimension of being. Aristotle in his Metaphysics will be to investigate further the being as being, stating that this science is not born from nothing more than the wonder and awe that a man feels in the face of things: then, it is science aimed to satisfy the human need of pure knowing (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics).

We considered it necessary to call in a nutshell, those which were the first systematic reflections of Western thought about the nature and origin of knowledge in his being in relation with the ethical requirement, namely, in its always ask itself the question of what it is good in the very act of knowing, in the subject and object of knowledge, as well as the efficient cause and the final cause of the cognitive process. These questions will be present, such as substantial and essential points of the elaboration of philosophical thought, even in the later periods: from the Scholastics in the Middle Ages with the introduction of Christian ethics, to the modern age with the birth of the science of nature, mathematical physics of Galileo and Newton, which replaced the teleological model with a mechanical model, determining thus a rift between the cognitive and normative moment, or between the descriptions and prescriptions, originally united in the idea of practical philosophy, up to lead the Kantian criticism, which systematized the split between knowledge and action in the separation between the "pure theoretical reason" and the "pure practical reason", characterized by the categorical imperative.

With the advent of the human sciences, whose historical roots are to be found in the eighteenth century, the broad field of philosophical knowledge is enriched with new joints, with which they establish a relationship of crossing / separation in a complex route to developing own epistemological statutes, route that went through the whole nineteenth and twentieth century. With the growing complexities of Western culture, in the transition between modernity and postmodernity, the increasingly pervasive triumph of the scientific-technical-technological paradigm, referring not only to the exact sciences, but also to the so-called human sciences, including pedagogy, raises new questions in the debate regarding the ethics - related knowledge, it problematizes the subject and object, means and ends, scopes and reciprocal skills. From the second half of the nineteenth century and with progressive acceleration in the course of the twentieth century, the man himself, the object of consideration metaphysics, ethics, hermeneutics, aesthetics, psychological and pedagogical philosophy, finds himself the object of science and the so-called empirical and experimental sciences of man constitute (Acone G., 2005).

The urgent and deeply relevant issue today stands in the foreground in this complex epistemological and hermeneutic framework, questions about which type of rationality is the basis of practical philosophy, namely ethics. While we can not speak of absolute rationality, rigorous, typical of the exact sciences, the model of which are axiomatic - deductive systems,
on the other hand it can not underestimate the need for a horizon that transcends the bounded historical and cultural context of an age and to serve as a significant carrier and guidance of being, of value and meaning of existence (Acone G., 2001).

The twentieth century opens with an exemplary attempt at synthesis/clarification between theoretical thinking, ethics, conscience and values in the process of knowledge, which time intrinsic to the experience, made by John Dewey, who puts philosophy and pedagogy in active connection with the life itself in the process of signification. In the view of John Dewey, this process, in its making education in the sense of "to give meaning to things ", would exclude an a-priori normative able to attribute meaning and value to the experience, as it is the experience itself in its concrete realization, under the guidance of reflective thought, the source, from which to draw, in order to draw out every value and principle of moral conduct. If the insights and Dewey's problematizations in pedagogical ambit show dense and deeply present both on the theoretical and methodological level, its taken away from any metaphysical horizon in philosophy and its consequent split between pedagogy and eschatology, led him to exclude any hold to a minimum of transcendentality, or transcendental preferability (Catalfamo G., 1986), as well as theorized by pedagogical personalism of Christian inspiration, in an actualizing and critical view whose perspective still reveals in the tension to Universal, the ontologically human need for overcome the contingent and complex making and unmaking of the cultural horizon. Without that minimum transcendentality, education, that process concerning the link between human development and significant experience crossed by values and not just process of transmitting knowledge consistent and ordered in some way, is neither theorized nor speakable (Acone G., 2004).

The deconstruction of the centrality of the subject (ego-cogito of Descartes, I-consciousness of Kant, I-transcendental of Pascal) took place in twentieth century, in pedagogy has been translated into a problematization of the subject and greater attention to process of self-education of the person (constructionist and secular personalism), process always considered precarious, uncertain and uneasy, without metaphysical foundations in which the person is sentenced to "live the disenchantment" (F.Cambi, 2006). From this emerges an ethics always questioned and characterized by values never definitive, associated with a knowledge related to the scientific-technological side, the only source of "certainties" experimentally based, but always renewable and refutable.

We mentioned earlier the two “grand narratives” (Ricoeur) of pedagogical thinking that has gone through the first three quarters of the twentieth century: pragmatism and personalism, two narratives pedagogical distant, very different from the roots, which look to relationship between ethics and knowledge from dialectical perspective, but now questioning the spirit of contemporary pedagogy on the topic of "person", of its formation and its education. These currents, where there is a clear link pedagogy/philosophy, today reduce the theoretical distances which, although irreducible, show unedited meeting points compared to the 40s of the last century when Maritain wrote "Education at the Crossroads" in net opposition to "My pedagogic creed " by Dewey. Against the advance of the "disturbing guest", as Nietzsche called nihilism, pragmatism and personalism are presented as principals of resistance of humanism: secular, immanent and problematic the first one, onto- metaphysical the second one. Both of theme defend the narrative form as the foundation of any unavoidable pedagogical discourse that intends to education as a "humanization of man" and as "the ultimate tale possible of the humanity " (G.Acone, 2013).

In front of the post-humanist drift of scientism – nihilism – relativism and in front of the attempt to displace the entire pedagogical theory on bases techno-scientistic, emerges the need to reconsider Pragmatism and Personalism pedagogical, beyond the inevitable aspects of dating, as being able to problematize the relationship ethics - knowledge in the light of the centrality of the person, not just as process but as “right subsisting” (A. Rosmini), and in
perspective of an education impossible without “a minimum of enchantment” (G.Acone, 2013).

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Intra-relationality, and the question of *between* in educational relations

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Placing the educational relation as something in-between individuals, between a student and a teacher, is a general description proposed by many educational theorists. For example, Alexander Sidorkin claims that a relation "cannot belong to one thing; they are the joint property of at least two things. Relations are located, so to speak, in-between things, and are located in neither of the things joint into a relation" (Sidorkin 2000, p. 3). The aim of this paper is to revise this idea or educational relations as something between, using intra-relational theories.

Education located between the student and the teacher is a recurring theme in Gert Biesta’s educational theory. Biesta (2006) is critical towards theories that focus too heavily on the recipient of education, that is, the students/learners. His main argument is that such theories render teaching unnecessary and that students are left alone with a material, or in a ‘learning environment’ (such as e-learning) with too little support (Biesta 2006). Also, what exactly the student is learning is considered less important just as long as they learn something. At the same time, there are lots of theories focusing on “the one who does the educating. These involve teaching, instruction, training, parenting, and guiding” (Biesta 2004, p. 11). Neither of these two alternatives is satisfying for Biesta, who instead proposes locating education in-between, in the gap:

The idea that education is an interaction between the (activities of the) educator and the (activities of the) one being educated is, as such, a sound idea. It shows that education is basically a relationship between an educator and the one being educated. But in order to understand the precise nature of the educational relationship, we should take the idea that education consists of the interaction between the teacher and the learner absolutely seriously. We should take it in its most literal sense. If we do so, it follows that education is located not in the activities of the teacher, nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction between the two. Education, in other words, takes place in the gap between the teacher and the learner (Biesta 2004, p. 12-13).

Biesta argues that there is a gap between students and teachers and that this gap is necessary for communication and education. Education means neither ‘a student learning’, nor ‘a teacher teaching’, instead, it is in this very gap between student/teacher or between learning/teaching that education is located. However, creating a space between also means creating subjects that are separated from each other.

Subjectivity and relationality are two major ways of looking at the world. However, they are of course not the only two alternatives. There are lots of discussions about to which extent we are relational or individual. For Martin Buber (1994) the philosophical starting point is the relation. As a critique towards existential and individualistic solipsistic thinking, the I-It and I-Thou relations make us think in a relational way. For Buber, you are always in relation, and he discerns two alternatives for the I to be in relation to the world. The I-Thou relation is more exclusive and meaningful, and the I-It relation is to consider it from a distance, placing it in predetermined categories. Hence, for Buber a subject is not somewhere between being a subject and a relation, or moving in and out of relations. Rather, it is always relation, never a separated subject.

Buber proposed his philosophy in a response to existentialism and an increasingly individualistic society; his main book, *Ich und Du*, came out 1923. Today, similar relational
theories are emerging; however, they are born in a different context. One of the main contemporary theorists of a similar kind of relationality is Karen Barad whose theories are based on quantum physics.

Barad argues in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007) that when looking at the very basics of the material existence – atoms, electrons and quarks – we see that nothing is as organized, causal or linear as we might think it is. There are no entities that enter relations with other separated entities and no new entities are in reality created this way. This atomistic world view is a mere construction of human thought and our eagerness to order life and being. In other words, the grounding parts of our existence are not separated quarks and electrons, rather, they are relational energy and electric charges. Also at the level of human existence and functioning, we have a tendency to regard life as atomistic; we see humans as separated subjects that interact with other human beings. Instead, Barad argues that we change our perspective into an intra-relational world view.

Barad’s theory is called *agential realism*, which I will summarize in a few points using some of Barad’s key concepts:

- An entity does not engage into interaction, rather it is already intra-acting with other entities.
- The intra-action precedes being, that is, no thing exists before its intra-actions.
- Agency is not limited to human actors. Everything has agency, things act through our intra-actions with them, and a human actor exists through its intra-actions with human and non-human actors.
- Agency is something you do, not something you have.
- Since being is not stable, it is also affected by the way we perceive being, that is, our epistemology. The term *onto-epistemology* shows the inevitable entanglement of knowledge and being. Also, it does not exist outside an ethical sphere, creating the term *onto-ethico-epistemology*.

A problem with an intra-relational perspective, such as Barad’s, is the question if one can actually say anything about anything if everything is entangled and comes into being through intra-action. For Barad, separations are seen as temporary cuts (*agential cuts*) in order to study something before it has changed again. Knowledge is then something created relationally during an agential cut.

Biesta proposes that “we should take the idea that education consists of the interaction between the teacher and the learner absolutely seriously. We should take it in its most literal sense” (Biesta 2004, p. 12). In order to explore new ways of looking at educational relations, we must of course expose our selves and existing ways of thinking for alternative ideas. But in order to really engage with ideas and be ready to change them, we must do as Biesta proposes: take ideas absolutely seriously. Similarly, this paper proposes the idea to shift from looking at educational relations as interactions between the teacher and the learner, to looking at educational relations as intra-actions. In a wider sense, it means to explore in what ways an intra-relational perspective affects current views on educational relations. I will firstly work with a previously used quote by Sidorkin, before analysing interaction, as well as Biesta locating education to the gap between.

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1 I here use the term ‘intra-relation’ and ‘intra-relationality’ in a way to try to capture the general idea of Barad’s ideas and transposing it into the discussion of relationality and educational relations. Barad herself never uses this concept.
Sidorkin states that "[r]elations cannot belong to one thing; they are the joint property of at least two things. Relations located, so to speak, in-between things, and are located in neither of the things joint into a relation" (Sidorkin 2000, p. 3). Here, relations are placed in-between and not within the things that constitute the relation. However, from an intra-relational perspective, relations are actually what makes things come into being. So when things are intra-acting, that means that they already are in relation. According to Barad, the only time things are separated in the way proposed by Sidorkin, is when making a temporary agential cut in order to study a process. The main point here is that from an intra-relational perspective the idea that the relation is something in-between separate entities is revised. Sidorkin writes that relations "are located in neither of the things joint into a relation" (Sidorkin 2000, p. 3). Instead, the consequences of thinking intra-relationally is that (1) things, subjects and agents are already relational, and (2) which bypasses the notion of in-between thereby making it unnecessary. To rephrase Sidorkin’s quote from an intra-relational perspective: "Relations are inherent in all things; they are the intra-action of at least two things. Relations are located, so to speak, in things, and constitute the very existence of the things already joined in a relation".

Let us now return to Biesta’s account of locating education as something between the student and the teacher. If Biesta’s idea of the gap builds on the idea that the student and the teacher are separated, what then happens to the gap from an intra-relational perspective? What happens to the location of education? If the gap is read as a philosophical position for locating education, we could also re-locate this position. The important issue for Biesta when locating education to the gap was that it would neither be placed at the student’s side, nor at the learner’s side. Biesta is here not talking about a teacher or a student in particular, rather, he is looking for a different direction within educational theory. Some of Biesta’s viewpoints coincide with intra-relational theory; however, applying an intra-relational perspective to his work might still produce new views about the extent of relationality or separatedness of the world. Education for Biesta is interaction between student and teacher, but from an intra-relational perspective the relation is what creates the student and the teacher, not the other way around. Education for Biesta is a relationship between the student and the teacher, and from an intra-relational perspective, the relations are not something you only enter when you feel like it. Rather, it is the foundation of being student, and of being teacher. Biesta writes that “education is located not in the activities of the teacher, nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction between the two” (Biesta 2004 p. 12–13). From an intra-relational perspective education is actually located in the activities of the teacher, and in the activities of the learner, since the very activities are already intra-acting. It is not necessarily a gap, rather an over-lap of intra-acting relations.

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Philosophy, neuroscience and education – the importance of social class and family background

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Ivan Snook (2007, 2012, 2013) has had some insightful things to say about the emerging field of philosophy, neuroscience and education. While acknowledging that education has something to gain from the findings of neuroscience, he also urges philosophical caution over just how useful these findings can be for teachers wishing to improve their practice. In his latest reflection on the growth of what he calls ‘educational neuroscience’, Snook (2013) remarks: “Although I did not develop this thought, the modern emphasis on the brain is quite likely yet another attempt to sheet home responsibility to the individual and to ignore the major impact of social class and home background” (p.199). There is a danger that this could happen, but it is not a necessary consequence of making a connection between neuroscience and education. There is a way of avoiding the very thing Snook fears.

The Brain and the Social World: The Etiological and Constitutive

Nelson and Sheridan (2011) examined the contribution of neuroscience research to causal explanations of the connection between family/neighbourhood factors and school achievement. The importance of their theorising lies in linking the etiological (the causal structure of the world) and the constitutive (the internal causal structure of some phenomenon) together in a way which illustrates why thinking about neuroscience and education must go beyond the constitutive to incorporate the etiological as well (Robins & Craver, 2009). The question they ask is this: What can neuroscience tell us about educational inequality, connections between families and neighbourhoods, and links between school achievement and the labour-market?

Their answer takes the following form. How a child develops has a major impact on their future location in the labour market. Understanding child development requires an understanding of the brain and its influence on school achievement. So, if we are to gain a deeper appreciation of how school achievement relates to family and neighbourhood as well as labour market destination we need to have a prior explanation of how the brain works and contributes to this complex set of causal relationships. Nelson and Sheridan (2011) base their argument on the following thesis: “Both micro-experiences (such as the care-giving environment) and macro-experiences (neighbourhoods and schools) weave their way into the developing brain and, depending on their timing, exert different effects” (p.28).

The formation of the brain comes with the growth of neurons and the synaptic connections made between their singular axons and multiple dendrites to create a massive neural network. As a child develops, many connections are made which are lost in later life through experience as well as natural pruning. The acquisition and loss of synaptic connections varies by brain region and function, and between childhood overproduction of synapses and peak adult numbers of synapses; for example, childhood synaptic overproduction in the visual cortex (sight) occurs at around four months and reaches its adult peak from four to six years while in the prefrontal cortex (cognition) overproduction occurs when a child is around one while the adult peak is not reached until mid/late adolescence. Myelination of axons, a coating which speeds up the neural transmission of information, comes in waves with sensory motor aspects before birth while cognitive functioning comes very much later in the early twenties of adulthood.

Nelson and Sheridan suggest that the plasticity of the brain, of how experience enters into the structure of the brain, consists of two types: developmental and adult. By developmental
plasticity they mean the changes which take place as the brain is developing through childhood into adulthood. Two constraints apply: (1) because, as just noted, different neural regions reach maturity at different times then once they are fully formed they are that much harder to alter through later experience, and (2) some regions require more experience than others and where such experience is lacking during the developmental phase then later functioning may prove to be significantly reduced. Experience has its greatest impact on any particular region of the brain during the sensitive period of that region when maximum plasticity occurs, normally during the first few years of a child's life. This suggests that the family of a child and the neighbourhood s/he lives in must be of a kind which can provide the sorts of experiences which are most conducive to healthy child development: “If a brain is exposed to good experiences during a sensitive period, then the long-term outcome is biased to be positive. However, if the brain is exposed to bad experiences, then the long-term outcome is biased to be negative”(p.31). Given that the sensitive period of neural plasticity for cognitive development stretches well into late adolescence, then even if a child is given a good start early in life it is always possible that later poor experience will stunt or limit later progress.

Adult plasticity, on the other hand, concerns changes to developed brains. Once neural connections are made then they are hard to alter in any significant way. Our visual mechanisms put in place at an early age do not improve with age but can deteriorate; our motor skills may continue to increase over time but later ones tend to have a lower level of performance than those acquired when young; learning and memory have a long period of plastic sensitivity hence we are capable of learning new things and remembering past things well into late adult life.

One thing having a significant impact on neural development is stress. Not all stresses are harmful (first day starting school) but some clearly are, such as child abuse in the family, victimisation in the neighbourhood or bullying at school. The hippocampus, functional in the first few years of a child’s life, is critical for learning and memory: extreme or excessive stress can impair the functioning of the hippocampus through the release of glucocorticoids which may inhibit learning and reduce memory, thereby effecting the level of school achievement. One of the stresses children can experience which may significantly lower school achievement over the long term is poverty. Nelson and Sheridan (2011), in their review of various empirical studies, reported that those which used behavioural tests to explore cognitive functioning located in the prefrontal cortex found that a decrease in cognitive performance was associated with lower parental SES. Neuroimaging indicated that children from low SES families tended to have reduced prefrontal cortex functioning. They conclude: During childhood, the plastic brain receives inputs and quickly adapts to the environment as it is. These adaptations become permanent differences in neural structure and function, altering the opportunities of children as they grow into adulthood. By ensuring that early environments are more positive and more equitably distributed, we increase the chance of success that all children have. By ignoring early inequality, we risk permanently altering the chances that some children have. These early differences in environment are etched into the structure of our brains; the way we think, react and feel in adulthood is necessarily related to the environmental exposures we did and did not experience in our childhood (p.41).

Within/Beyond or Proximal/Distal?
Children’s learning is shaped by a very wide range of factors. How these factors are grouped is of the utmost importance. The conventional way, used widely in education, is to classify them according to a basic dualism of within school and beyond school factors. This separates two camps: those who argue that it is the within school factors which make the most difference and hence ought to be the focus of attention, thereby ruling out of contention those beyond the school factors as outside the scope of educational concern, and those who consider the beyond school factors to be so important, outweighing the within school factors
to such an extent that attending to what lies outside of the school must be given the greatest amount of attention.

The problem with placing the causes of the inequality of school achievement in a within school/beyond school dualism is that the two sides are then pitted against one another. A focus on within school causes gives little or no regard to beyond school factors while an emphasis on beyond school considerations downplays the contribution of within school influences. The dualism forces an either/or approach when a more encompassing view is required.

An alternative, and better, way of conceptualising the issue is to adopt a proximal (close)/distal (distant) continuum. All relevant causal elements are taken into consideration and accounted for, with none being excluded. Regardless of whether they are primarily located within the school or beyond, every effort must be made to identify all those factors which have the most direct and immediate impact (what a teacher says to a child, parents reading books to their children) with a grading off to those far more remote which, nonetheless, play a very significant role in learning (government economic policy, national examinations). Now, no causal feature is eliminated for any arbitrary or ideological reason. Rather, all factors enter the causal mix; how they relate and interact and the weightings to be accorded them remain a matter of considerable debate.

Concluding Comment
Snook’s worry that educational neuroscience might ignore the impact of social class and home background cannot be lightly dismissed. It is all too easy for those working in this field to focus inwardly on the constitutive side of things and downplay the importance of the etiological aspects. To do so would be a very serious mistake. Whatever happens in the brain does not occur independently of what happens outside of it. In terms of children’s learning, especially in the classroom, social class and home background play a crucial role in providing the sensory inputs which are processed in the brain and stored in memory for use at a later time in generating learning outputs. To ignore this is to tell less than the whole story of how we learn and why.

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Reflexivity, adulthood, and contemporary education: Between two legacies

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The paper presents some insights about the value of reflexivity in adult education and is part of a wider work in progress on the philosophical foundations of contemporary adult education.

Such work in progress – beside focusing on ethics – revolves around the two legacies in the title that are hereby developed, i.e. the European educational thinking (namely, phenomenological) and the American approach (namely, pragmatistic), viewed in both their differences and possible connections.

Reflection is widely acknowledged as a significant feature of our late or second modernity as well as a specific educational issue. Actually, in these last few years, it has been the object of several theoretical and empirical educational inquiries on adult education, where it is considered as a way to better perform and, at the same time, a goal for high school students and adult learners to achieve since the reflection-oriented attitude seems to imply a reshaping of the very notion of adulthood.

However, the so-called “reflective turn” does imply some risks. Namely, as argued by social theorists such as U. Beck (1992, 2003) and A. Giddens (1991, 1999), a specific risk of our reflexive second modernity might be individualization, which follows the decreasing relevance of tradition and the ensuing different approach to biographies – the latter having been de-standardized insofar as the passages to adulthood are now neither final nor the same for all. Actually: “The normal family, the normal career and the normal life history are suddenly called into question and have to be re-negotiated” (Beck – Bonns – Lau, 2003: 4). Accordingly, Giddens pinpoints that, in the late modern age we are living in, the self is an individual reflexive project entailing, therefore, a clear-cut separation from any wider moral patterns.

This involves a widespread sense of uncertainty from which some serious challenges to adult education derive.

Within this framework, the paper suggests that a crucial unasked question in our allegedly reflexive age is what reflection, reflectivity, and/or reflexivity really mean. Yet, as long as we do not devote a specific philosophical attention to this, defining contemporary adulthood and adult education will remain a task far from being accomplished.

The paper, then, provides an overview of the above-mentioned philosophical approaches to the human capability to reflect, i.e.: i) Dewey’s legacy as shown in the accounts on reflective practice by D. Schön and J. Mezirow and ii) the phenomenological-hermeneutical perspective on reflexivity as in H. Arendt and P. Ricoeur. The aim is to show that, even though the reflective approach has certainly affected contemporary education, the reflexive attitude, however less often explored with pedagogical purposes it may be, can also be particularly precious in educational contexts.

In the Deweyan theories of adult learning, adults are considered as critically reflective not only as to the other’s point of view, but also, and more significantly, vis-à-vis their own ways of thinking and acting – thus underlying their autonomous decision-making which they also share with others.
Actually, according to Schön’s account on reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, practitioners should engage in a reflective dialogue with situations whereby they may continuously examine, understand, evaluate, and improve their practice. In this respect, Schön explicitly recognizes his debt to Dewey insofar as such reflective practice is presented as a version of the American philosopher’s reflective thought. He also recalls the link Dewey has envisaged between intentional reflection and intelligent action and, more generally, shares Dewey’s effort of restating the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process (see the full title of How We Think).

Similarly, within his transformative learning theory, Mezirow (1991) mentions Dewey’s seminal analysis on reflection and implicitly refers to the preface of How We Think, namely when he states that «a defining condition of being human is our urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience» (2012: 73) – as opposed to our seizing the explanations provided by traditions and authority figures. A key element of the transformative learning theory is, indeed, the notion of frame of reference followed by the possibility to change such frame through reflection.

By “frame of reference” Mezirow means the structure of assumptions and expectations that, despite our general lack of awareness, give rise to the habits of mind and resulting viewpoints that guide our action. According to Mezirow, this frame of reference is hardly reconsidered unless our education-derived attitude to reflect, i.e. adulthood, comes into play. Therefore, although an adult is commonly envisaged as a person old enough to be held responsible for his/her acts in different contexts, it is worth stressing that, according to this Deweyan perspective, such responsibility derives from a democratic and educative environment where he/she can become more critically reflective on his/her frame of reference. Through this process, described by Mezirow as “premise reflection”, adults may envisage a new frame, namely one that is more inclusive, permeable to other viewpoints, and integrative of experience. This enables them to develop the necessary self-confidence to take action responsibly.

To sum up: according to the Deweyan legacy, reflection can be defined as the act of “thinking about” something during or after an event. Reflectivity is, therefore, the related attitude to monitor oneself as life unfolds, that is to scrutinize what has just happened with a metacognitive and epistemic purpose. Such reflective dialogue with situations and the people involved therein can provide new insights into professional practice. The goal of reflection is, therefore, an increasing effectiveness and educating to reflect means preparing learners for the demands of practice or – to put it differently – for intelligent actions.

However, being reflective is different from being reflexive insofar as the former does not necessarily include the latter, which implies a different scope and direction. Actually, the reflexive process can be meant as a tool to scrutinize my lived-experience, my mental state, and my emotional being, in order to gain new insights not only into my own practice but, mostly, my own self. In other terms, reflexivity involves a kind of introspection, which is precisely the focus of the phenomenological approach. Within this context, the value of reflection is mainly existential and, therefore, educating means preparing learners to develop an ethical competence far beyond the demands of practice.

So, to expand on what mentioned above, one may say that, within the pragmatistic educational thinking, reflecting is a useful and hopefully effective activity of the mind implying looking back in order to determine the future course of actions, so looking forward, whereas, from a phenomenological perspective, reflection seems to mainly mean looking inside oneself.

More specifically, Schön and Mezirow, as Dewey’s followers, focus on the process of becoming critically aware of one’s assumptions, reformulating them, and acting upon these
newly acquired understandings; they deal with the criteria and limits of knowledge and agency, hence with self-criticism and self-correction. Accordingly, their educational theories context have been developed in order to model learning processes involving transformation or, to put it in Mezirow’s words: «Fostering these liberating conditions for making more autonomous and informed choice and developing a sense of self-empowerment is the cardinal goal of adult education» (2012: 90).

On the other hand, within the phenomenological approach, the object of reflection is human interiority rather than action and/or the capability to act. Indeed, reflection here means existential self-interpretation since, according to the Husserlian and Heideggerian legacy, suspending the habitual adhesion to the world, looking back on one’s assumptions, and reconsidering what is taken for granted requires a radical reflection on the self. This entails the issue of subjectivity, meant as personhood, with significant consequences for the philosophy of adult education. Accordingly, an adult is one who critically looks into his/her inner self or, to quote Arendt, whose thought is hereby considered, into The Life of the Mind (1978).

H. Arendt, indeed one of our representatives of the phenomenological thinking, envisages human inwardsness as a special region of life, which reflection discloses. Actually, for her, reflection is closely linked to the Husserlian gesture of epochè insofar as the former stems from the inclination to stop-and-think and to consider freedom as connected to the phrase “I will” rather than “I can”. She, therefore, interprets reflexivity as a split in the willing faculty (cogito me cogitare) as well as a Kantian drive for totality and for what will never be fully captured by us. Accordingly, she stresses that what is useless and ineffective – i.e., not immediately associated with either problem setting or problem solving aims – is still indispensable for a truly human life.

In this perspective, Arendt considers the ethical nature of reflection as relevant to the avoidance not only of evil-doing (as in Eichmann) but also of what she calls the “victory of animails laborans”, whereby evil and other forms of dehumanisation are viewed as the result of the absence of reflexivity. Hence, reflection is not guided by practical needs and, accordingly, interrupts any doing – which is precisely what Schön argues against since his aim is, rather, to show that doing and thinking are always complementary.

The peculiar phenomenological-hermeneutical understanding of reflection can also be seen in Ricouer’s reflexive philosophy. In his own words, «reflection is nothing other that the appropriation of our act of existing by means of a critique applied to the works and the acts which are the signs of this act of existing. […] Reflection is the appropriation of our effort to exist and of our desire to be by means of the works which testify to this effort and this desire» (1974: 17-18).

Here, the Husserlian gesture of suspending in order to reflect on lived-experiences is developed as distanciation, whereby the role of otherness, promise, and recognition in the formation of personal identity can be discovered.

This highlights an important difference with the Deweyan approach as to the relationship between reflection and tradition, since Arendt and Ricoeur consider the latter as an essential belonging, which requires reflection, appropriation, and a special kind of gratitude. Thus, a reflexive self, meant as a project as in Giddens, is not necessarily separate from wider intersubjective and moral claims. In particular, Arendt (1958) views the crisis of education as a crisis of tradition, which suggests that adult identity has an element of permanence and cannot be made and remade.
Despite the above-mentioned differences, fruitful connections between the two legacies can still be found, in particular with regard to the importance of unreflective practice and, vice versa, the value of a mindful experience.

In fact, Dewey and Husserl share an antidogmatical and critical use of reason, whereby a parallel examination of their philosophical methods turns particularly useful in adult education. Moreover, within both approaches the key role of intersubjectivity and community is highlighted, thus leading to some related ethical attitudes such as responsibility, dialogue, empathy, and mutual recognition.

In conclusion, the Deweyan philosophical tradition and the Husserlian approach both consider reflection as a virtue requiring an appropriate education and an intersubjective moral context. However, the phenomenological effort of widening, deepening, and radicalizing reflectivity into reflexivity seems to disclose a new way of understanding adulthood and adult education. This, therefore, suggests an existential pedagogy that is a more wide-ranging notion than any learning approach, however lifelong it may be. So, within this tradition, education can be meant not only as learning but, also, as seeking for self-understanding and a sense for life.

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Neuroscience and pedagogy: Proposals for an interdisciplinary dialogue

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If we give people, children, adolescents, or adults, information on the correlation between the operation and the structure of the brain, neural development and the impact of the experience and the development of their mental life, we help them to develop a capacity of discernment that allows them to see their minds in a new light (...) Reflect on the neural correlates allows us to understand the experience, rather than elaborate rationalizations aimed at explaining the our inappropriate behavior in order to get rid of it; insights neural seem to really help us to have more compassion and insight for ourselves and for other people (Siegel, 2009, p. 258).

1. Epistemological background
Part of the pedagogical world still underestimates the actual role of neurosciences in studying the relationship between brain, body and behavior and applying the results of research to education, considering neurosciences as disciplines far from traditional approaches in pedagogy.

In reality, the conflict is only apparent and is a characteristic of the interaction between related scientific disciplines, which often has stimulated the advancement of knowledge. As noted by several historians of science, for every discipline there is generally an antidiscipline that generates a creative tension within the mother discipline, putting into question the thesis and accuracy of the methods. In this case, neurosciences can represent new antidisciplines with respect to which pedagogical disciplines are mothers.

Our work tries to demonstrate how neuroscience will gain increasing importance and space in pedagogy as biology of human mental processes; at the same time pedagogy can help to define and clarify the processes that need to be studied if you want to arrive at a deep and multifaceted understanding biology of the human mind in educational processes. The attempt to achieve common epistemological basis in order to study and refine educational practices, urged by the availability of many neuroscientists to take charge organic layers of complex social behaviors, allow to predict the implications of this combination applied to educational processes, with the objective to converge pedagogical, psychological, biological studies and correlate their scientific languages from theoretical to applied research.

2. Brain and education
Studies on brain functioning in interpersonal relationships (within psicophysiology, neuropsychiatry, psychoneuroendocrinology, psychosomatic, biogenetic) are now numerous.

Here we name just a few of them: Sapolsky’s studies on psychoneuroendocrinology of stress, Solm’s studies on neuropsychoanalysis, those on the relationship between self-construction and brain anatomofisiology brain of LeDoux, psychobiological studies of empathy of Trevarthen, studies on memory and the relationship between psychoanalysis, psychiatry and biology of the mind of Kandel, studies on mirror neurons of Rizzolatti, those on the conscience of Damasio and Edelmann, psychogenetic studies of Ridley and Plomin, Siegel’s studies on neurobiology of interpersonal experience.

These studies highlight the role of experience in determining the structure and function of the biological organism. Taking into consideration a lot of research on early negative experiences that may result from deprivation, they show how the quality of interpersonal
experiences can be decisive for a normal neurobiological and psychological development. It seems that human relations produce changes at the molecular level, with broad implications on learning and memory.

Today many neuroscience researches are based on a combination of epidemiological studies, genetic studies, molecular and brain imaging techniques: to encourage this course it would be appropriate to combine the resources available for research in the different sectors (educational, neurological, psychological, biological, pharmacological, etc.).

Much of the current educational practices today show a strong dualism that makes difficult and problematic integrate the work done by the education professionals with the understanding and the technological resources provided by neuroscience.

Already exist in clinical psychology trials of changes in brain circuits induced by psychotherapy, which suggests a similar possible action induced by educational process, but the impact of the neuroscience studies on these subjects is still limited. Now it’s the time that researches and studies on the structure and functioning of human brain constitute an indispensable part of the corpus of knowledge and training programs of present and future educators, favouring the construction of appropriate tools and methods of working.

Our contribution, in an epistemological sense, is aimed at creating a new way of thinking in pedagogical sciences, abandoning counterproductive distinctions between mind and brain, biology and experience, nature and culture. It’s is based on the idea that, despite the genetical and constitutional factors play an important role in the development of the human mind, human relations and cultural and social factors implicated in education can shape the development of the brain and mind and promote a good quality of cognitive, social, emotional functioning.

The integration of biological, neurological, psychological, philosophical and pedagogical perspectives can bridge the gaps between definitions of behaviors that are based on pedagogical constructs and their neural correlates, to understand, for example, the biological basis of emotive communication or emotional effects of traumatic experiences on brain development.

We base our reflections on the relation between mind and brain on personalistic anthropology, which, in the light of neuroscience theories, try to connect causality, physiology and phenomenology to consider the brain not as a mechanism but as organism with its own teleology, in fruitful mutual relationship with the environment, where the human being is viewed as a symphony of physical, psychological, social self.

The reason why this convergence has not been achieved before is probably because neuroscience did not seem mature enough from a technical point of view to deal with the issues concerning the mental processes in all their complexity. Now, as a consequence of advances in neuroimaging is possible to wide and refine our understanding of education to obtain higher level of understanding of the mechanisms involved in it.

This is not to undermine a discipline in favor of another: on the contrary, when pedagogy suggesting fundamental ideas about human education has a better potential than neuroscience, much less able to consider the existential aspects of education.

The dichotomy between mother discipline and anti-discipline indicates how the two disciplines can interact with profit. In this pedagogy has a dual role: on the one hand should try to answer questions within its competence in education; from another side can propose meaningful tasks to neuroscience research. The potential of
pedagogy and neuroscience reside in their visions of the world and their potential to generate specific theories on the variables interrelated.

The synergistic interaction between pedagogy and neuroscience has been described in two paradigms: the consequences on the development of some forms of social deprivation experienced at an early age and the mechanisms of learning.

These two lines of research are paradigmatic in different directions: they exemplify the kind of problems that the sciences of education are required to synthesize and to bring to the attention of neuroscience and are interesting from a methodological point of view because they illustrate the ability to simplify and refine behavioral models.

The great opportunity that is presented today to pedagogy is the following: when they come to studying educational processes, neuroscientists need a guide, therefore pedagogy can provide an important contribution to neuroscience. Its power resides in the peculiarity of its perspectives, which may indicate the mental functions and the relationships that need to be studied to arrive at an understanding of more complex and profound study of the human mind in the dynamic process of education. As stated in the introductory part of this work, pedagogy can play a dual role in trying to answer questions pertaining educational processes; on the other side, it can asks questions about education that neuroscience is called to respond, with the objective to obtain an advanced vision of educational processes.

As a consequence of the progress of neurosciences and pedagogy in recent years, both disciplines have a new and better position to unify pedagogical insights and the search for a deeper understanding of biological basis of education.

We want propose a conceptual model designated to put together pedagogical theories and practices with the latest discoveries in neuroscience in the training of educators. The current thinking of neuroscientists about the relationship between mind and brain can be summarized in five principles: 1) all mental processes, even the most complex derive from brain processes; the assumption is that what we call mind is a set of functions performed by the brain; the action of the brain is not limited to simple motor behaviors but extends to all complex cognitive, conscious and unconscious acts that we associate to the human behavior: thought, language and the creation of literary, musical and artistic production. A related principle is that cognitive and emotional problems are also disorders of brain function, even when their causes are environmental in origin; 2) the combination of genes exerts a strong control over behavior; 3) a modification of genes alone can not explain all the variability observed in a given personality trait: a remarkable contribute is given by social and developmental factors; just as the combinations of genes contribute to determine the behavior, also the behavior and social factors may exert a retroactive effect on the brain by modifying gene expression and functioning of nerve cells; learning results in alteration of gene expression: therefore the whole "culture" is expressed in the form of "nature"; 4) genetic changes induced by learning produce patterns of neuronal connection which contribute to forming the biological basis of individuality and are probably responsible of behavioral differences induced by social circumstances; 5) if education is effective, we presume that this is done through the process of learning that change genetic expression by acting on the effectiveness of synaptic connections and rewrites the paths of anatomical connections between the neurons of the brain; so the brain imaging techniques may eventually allow a quantitative assessment of the outcome of the educational process. The basic assumption of neuroscience is that all the functions of the mind reflect functions of the brain: specific brain lesions produce behavioral changes and specific alterations of behavior are reflected in the typical changes of brain functioning. But we must say we only have a partial knowledge of the way in which the brain generates mental processes. The great challenge for neurobiologists and for pedagogist is to delineate
this relationship in terms that are satisfactory to the neurobiologist who studies the brain and for the pedagogist who studies education. Kandel’s research shows that when we learn, the mind influences gene transcription in neurons; then we can shape our genes, which in turn affects brain anatomy even at the microscopic level.

Education changes people through learning by producing changes in genetic expression that modifies the intensity of synaptic connections and through structural changes that alter the anatomical pattern of interconnections between nerve cells and the brain. Education works deeply in the brain modifying its structure and activating genes: it acts "talking to neurons." An effective educator is therefore a real microsurgeon of mind, a neurosculptor of neuronal networks.

A great, wonderful responsibility!

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Educating people about the mountains and risk reduction through new technologies and neogeography: A geoethical interdisciplinary approach

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Geoethics deals with the ethical, social and cultural implications of research and of geological and geographical practice, representing a meeting point of Geosciences, Geography, History, Philosophy and Sociology. Through the identification of principles that should guide our actions with regard the geosphere, Geoethics may provide an opportunity for scientists to become more aware of their social responsibilities and a tool to guide society when dealing with issues relating to defense against natural hazards, sustainable use of resources and environmental protection. Geoethics can help construct correct social knowledge, reinforcing ties with the territory as a common heritage to be shared (Peppoloni, Pievani, 2013). In particular, we ask ethics to furnish us with indications of how to address the problems inherent in the major changes that scientific research and technological innovation have produced in today’s society, especially in the relationship between man and territory. This has led to the development of debates on so-called “environmental ethics”. Consequently, scientists in the third millennium claim the right to intervene in an area which was previously considered the exclusive competence of philosophers and the religious: the area of values. In this context, science plays a role of higher social responsibility than that commonly assigned to it. This new ethic considers good and bad not so much with regard to man, an anthropocentric view, but with respect of the territory, seen as an entity that has its intrinsic value regardless of the uses it is put to, an ecocentric vision. Indeed, the territory, as an expression of a given culture, a given history and a special relationship between man and nature, is documentary evidence that can be considered as a fully-fledged cultural heritage and its priority right to exist and be protected and appraised derives from this (Piacente, 2013). Analysis of the issues dealt with by Geoethics leads to some considerations. First of all, in order to establish a selection criteria for appropriate behaviour, it is first necessary to identify the values on which such behaviour is based. In addition, it would be appropriate to ask about the responsibility of those working in the Geosciences fields, focusing on the ethical issues of the operator, as an expert on the area and all its dangers, whether operating in research or in the public, institutional sector, carrying out professional activities or engaged in teaching and/or scientific divulgation (Peppoloni, 2011). In this context, environmental sciences are often an area for the application for geographic information systems. Atmospheric and oceanic phenomena, the morphology of the planet and its geological composition are studied using GIS (Geographic Information System); nature and the distribution of organic forms, the life and death of plants, animals and human beings, and the way in which man organizes, harms or improves the world in which he lives are all observed. Every dynamic within the environment and between the environment and humans may be represented in its full complexity on different scales. Opportunities for scientific reflection are being amplified by increasingly more sophisticated systems. Things are now operating in the global network, beyond the traditional concept of a geodatabase in a stand-alone configuration. If, until a few years ago, researchers, professionals and ordinary people interested in environmental issues depended on a limited range of mostly institutional or commercial resources, the advent of open source, webgis or, generally speaking, of readily available implementation and documentation has greatly extended access to data and technologies (Casagrande, 2010). It is necessary, therefore, to take advantage of new technologies in order to obtain greater "geoethical control" of the most significant environmental emergencies: pollution and waste problems, the greenhouse effect and climate change, critical analysis of the use of natural resources, accurate information about dangers and risks to the territory, and the development of environmentally friendly technologies.
Geography, as a "channel" between the social and physical-biological sciences, interacts between areas of knowledge which allow quantitative measurement and others which instead mainly rely on qualitative considerations. Due to their educational values and the methodological possibilities they open up, such possibilities for interaction would be most valuable in educational environment, as they would represent a significant step toward educational-methodological settings that permit the acquisition of skills and competencies of immediate spendability, for example the importance of "knowing how to translate quantitative elements into qualitative and vice-verse" (Bissanti, 1991). In a context of alternation between quantity and quality, the concept of resource is open to a multiplicity of ideas. If we consider the mountains as a resource, ideas develop from that of the riches of the mountains as being measurable through quantitative indexes (but not always) and reach one of the mountains as a whole as a resource, valuable mainly through qualitative criteria (but not only). This game between quantity and quality leads to informed evaluation of environmental conditions and human actions. On an educational level, one can work with students through the use of environmental indicators (naturalistic and cultural). In addition, the signs of the past, etched into the mountains and often still influential in the present, constitute the fourth dimension of space, of which the teaching of Geography can not do without. Memory can be reconstructed through the use of different sources (for example, pictorial or literary) or through photography, highlighting still further the possible connections with history, literature, art and image. However, the exploration of time also concerns the future, especially with regard the ethics of responsibility: it investigates the consequences of choices made in the present and how they can affect the future. Due to its many specificities (especially, but not exclusively, in terms of resources and risks), planning for a mountainous territory lends to an inexhaustible series of educational applications (De Vecchis, 2008). The anthropic presence in the mountain has progressively diminished over the last century and this mountain depopulation has coincided with a loss of identity, cultural capital and the ability to rework the mountains culturally. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) development seems capable of diminishing the marginal position of the mountains, largely due to factors of physical distance and a lack of physical infrastructure. Information and communication technologies should therefore be thought of as a tool which can redesign territorial gaps, overcoming the traditional centre-periphery logic and strengthening the region's practices of local development, such as those for mountainous areas which have had greater difficulty promoting their environmental resources during the era of industrialization. A simple survey of the websites within cyberspace and the use of ICT shows a significant foothold which educational agencies wishing to develop training projects for the mountains can refer to. In particular, the geographer Cristiano Giorda suggests four research paths through the ICT which may be particularly relevant today and can be used for educational purposes: the territorial system relative to local development: projects, actors and territorial values; territorial and environmental representations: identity, economy and use of the mountains through websites; self-representation of the mountains with regard the aim of sustainability: a comparison between visions and principles; ICT as a connective structure for relationships between mountains, men and territories (Giorda, 2008).

The building of an “education about the mountains” project for primary and secondary school children through a series of learning units, from direct and indirect observation to territorial analysis, could bring out the range of perceptions that mountains can arouse in a child or pre-adolescent: from images of sadness and unhappiness to others of joy and elation. The mountains move you and palpitate, feel and make you feel, stimulate and awaken all the senses, thanks to their scenery, smells and tastes. The experience of a mountain path is instructive because the body can totally immerse itself, clearly grasping the multitude of possible sensory perceptions of light and shadow, heat and cold, and changes in the weather conditions. The sounds and the silences, the odours and fragrances are other examples of the many sensory perceptions which, although perhaps less obvious than their visual counterparts, are of great importance in the exploration of the environment. Perception is, of
course, the first operational level and is essential in the exploration and understanding of space. This exploration and understanding is initially based on sensory perceptions and is then added to by perceptions of the environmental condition of the mountains, the weaknesses and risks, the links to history and to demographic, economic, social and cultural trends (De Vecchis, 2011). In this context, through the use of new technologies, children could become the true volunteers of geographic information (Goodchild, 2007), communicating their perceptions and their emotions directly on the web. Indeed, with the advent of Web 2.0, an experience based on mass collaboration, we have moved from "Wikinomics" to "Socialnomics", where citizens are voluntary sensors. Over the past few decades, the main issue for GIS applications has been the availability of sound spatial information. Today, the wide diffusion of electronic devices that provide geo-referenced information has resulted in the production of a great amount of territorial information. This trend has led to a "GIS wikification", where mass collaboration plays a key role in the context of territorial information (hardware, software, data and people). Neogeography [the term was used in France by the philosopher François Dagognet (Dagognet, 1977) and appeared in the English-speaking world for the first time in 1922] plays a fundamental role in providing new challenges to scholars and territorial planners when addressing territorial issues and a new wealth of updated data, usually created by people who are interested in geographically related phenomena. Attention is devoted to the creation and display of geographic contents, in this case, by children who become the key players and producers of data and information, enriching any eventual maps of the mountains with their feelings and perceptions. This is a new educational experiment that firstly provides the opportunity for young children to become aware of the value of the natural, aesthetic and economic landscape of the mountains and, at the same time, enhance the mountains in all their aspects by using, in addition to iconocartographic representations (including "mental maps"), the oldest and most effective media of communication in the world: the word (Consoli et al., 2008), through the use of GPS (Global Positioning System) and positioning devices (mobile phones, PDAs and browsers). This mechanism is a sort of collective mental map and a valuable tool for spatial studies which use the techniques of participatory cartography; in addition, it can also be converted into an instrument of participatory democracy or, rather, of active citizenship, or even in participatory science. Indeed, this tool could also be useful with regard earthquakes perception and in order to know about the reactions of young people and adults when a seismic event occurs. The confirmation that so-called "participatory science" is an important low-cost complementary tool for research comes from a study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). On a global level, there are few sensors for earthquake detection in proportion to the territory and this means that communication signals can take about twenty minutes before they are processed by a research centre. According to the study, the new instruments have the ability to raise awareness in the population and obtain valuable information very quickly. In fact, the seismic monitoring station apps for smartphones, such as "Did you feel it?" in the U.S. or the Italian "Hai sentito il terremoto?", allow citizens to give news of any earthquakes.

The introduction of these services is economical and provides an optimum solution to integrate with traditional networks. The reporting of an earthquake through a mobile phone or Internet also becomes a tool of psychological support for a child, who strives to identify some positive aspects as a consolation and, thus, enhances his resilience. This will serve to increase his ability to effectively manage stress, daily difficulties and, in this case, a possible traumatic event like an earthquake. Therefore, in the context of education regarding risk, improving communications, awareness of the complexity of a risk and the level of preparation would increase the resilience of the territory and allow for more effective management and planning.

References


Learning by *feigning*. Rethinking the role of fiction in the apprenticeship of philosophy

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This work-in-progress is part of a PhD dissertation in Philosophy of Education. I am particularly interested in the way in which certain contemporary French philosophers elaborate the concept of “learning”, as well as in how they learn philosophy. My research focuses mainly on the concept of “apprentissage”, which can be translated to both “learning” and “apprenticeship”, and is not necessarily related to the recent educational policies of “lifelong-learning”.

In this occasion, I seek to rethink the role of fiction in education, and more particularly in the apprenticeship of Philosophy. Fiction is usually connected to childhood and leisure time: it must be overcome by children, whereas adults are not expected to take fiction seriously. I will make the assumption that fiction is not just a mere preparatory stage that must be left behind, nor an insignificant leisure-time activity, but an essential gesture of the (apprentice) philosopher.

From childhood to adulthood: the (over)preparatory role of fiction.

In his untranslated book *The Rule of the Game. On the difficulty of learning philosophy* (2004), the Spanish philosopher José Luis Pardo analyzes certain recent changes in education that jeopardize the passage from childhood to adulthood. According to Pardo, what distinguishes the child from the adult is the way either of them relate to fiction. The child confuses fiction and reality, whereas the adult does not (anymore); the former believes that Santa exists, the latter does not (anymore). This seems to imply that: 1) becoming an adult entails learning to distinguish fiction from reality, 2) since raising children into adulthood education is about making someone mature, then education is also about teaching or showing how to tell fiction apart from reality.

The pedagogical virtues of fiction are well-known: these are good training for real life. What we do at school is “not for real”, but to prepare us for real life. Thus, what is bad about fiction is not fiction itself, but the incapacity of distinguishing it from reality. The problem is that, on the one hand, education is considered as a lifelong-learning, thus never-ending process; on the other hand, the corporate world has colonized school, pushing children into working like adults. Then, we live in “a society of adults who feign they are children [and] children who feign they are adults” (488). We are children who tend to adulthood, learners who tend to masters, apprentices who tend to workers: we are (fictionally, virtually) overprepared, but our (real) time never comes.

In Pardo’s argument, “fiction” is mostly understood as a discourse, or even as a view of the world, that has not been contrasted with reality. The author raises an intermediate figure between the child and the adult: the adolescent or teenager, who, once in the past a child, became troubled by youthful deceptions, and from now on tends to believe that everything is false. From the standpoint of the adolescent, everything is fiction, which means here that everything is untrue. Indeed, this meaning of fiction is not unusual. However, I would like to look at a different meaning of the word “fiction”. Etymologically, fiction has nothing to do with

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1 Of course, this situation is not new: children have always worked, and unfortunately child labour is a widely held practice. And yet, the Western World believes that its children are safe, kept away from work, whereas the educational institutions constantly expose the children to the adult world of work.
truth or falsehood: a fiction is “something invented”, created. In the following, drawing on Martha Nussbaum, Milan Kundera, Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, I will regard fiction as a real gesture. At the end, I will make the assumption that learning Philosophy through fiction, that is, by feigning, makes the apprentice grow mature in Philosophy.

**Feigning, or how to mature in Philosophy.**

a.) About fictional partitions (M. Nussbaum)

In her book *Love’s knowledge: essays on philosophy and literature* (1992), Martha Nussbaum explains how surprised and uncomfortable she felt when she realised that literature was not seriously taken by academical philosophers. At school, there was no such a subject called “Philosophy”: she used to study what we could call philosophical questions by reading literature. She found out that the Greeks would also have considered such an academical partition between literature and philosophy as unnatural and unilluminating: “For [them], there were not two separate sets of questions in the area of human choice and action, [...] to be studied and written about by mutually detached colleagues in different departments” (15). If Philosophy seeks to tell truths about human life, then it has to make room for Literature, thus fiction.

It is, in fact, just this that we wish to preserve and to bring into Philosophy -which means, for us, just the pursuit of truth, and which therefore must become various and mysterious and unsystematic if, and insofar as, the truth is so. The very qualities that make the novels so unlike dogmatic abstract treatises are, for us, the source of their philosophical interest. (29)

b.) Profoundness of fiction (M. Kundera)

Milan Kundera goes even further than Nussbaum. According to him, Philosophy and novels refer to two different worlds:

 [...] the world of single Truth and the relative, ambiguous world of the novel are molded of entirely different substances. Totalitarian Truth excludes relativity, doubt, questioning; it can never accommodate what I would call the spirit of the novel. (1988)

The objects of inquiry of Philosophy and fiction are thus different:

A novel examines not reality but existence. And existence is not what has occurred, existence is the realm of human possibilities, everything that man can become, everything he’s capable of.

c.) Fiction as a natural human gesture (H. Bergson)

Both Nussbaum and Kundera exalt the role of fiction: without taking fiction into account, philosophical truths are incomplete, abstract, insignificant. Both authors provide us with an insightful account of the relation between philosophy and fiction but still refer to the latter as a literary genre. However, fiction is, first of all a natural human gesture, as Bergson reminds us (1977). Unlike the other living beings, we humans are aware of our finitude and weakness: we feel uncertain about the success of our projects, and this can be depressing, or even paralysing. We need to invent magic, religion or other fables in order to counterbalance the grim discoveries made by our intelligence. According to Bergson, the fiction is a ruse of the nature: it can imitate perception and thus, stop or modify the action. The fiction is then a gesture that helps us stay alive.

Bergson’s concept of fiction needs profound study, which I will definitely pursue. For the moment, what I want to highlight is that 1) fiction is not dispensable, but on the contrary it is

2 The same applies to the verb “to feign”.

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essential to the human being, 2) fiction has little to do with truth or falsehood: it is a daily
gesture that helps us stay alive.

d.) Philoso-fiction (G.Deleuze)
In the prologue of *Difference and repetition*, Gilles Deleuze writes: “It should be possible to
recount a real book of past philosophy as if it were an imaginary and *feigned* book.”
Immediately after that, he refers to "Pierre Ménard, author of the Quixote ", a short novel by
Jorge Luis Borges. This reference to fiction in French Contemporary Philosophy, which calls
itself fragmentarian and perspectivist, is not unusual. But this is more than a mere reference
to fiction; *Difference and Repetition* -by the way, Deleuze’s major dissertation, a work which
he was to prove his philosophical maturity with- is a fiction *per se.*

Later in the prologue, Deleuze writes " a book of philosophy should be in part a very
particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction " (xx). Why? " The time
is coming when it will hardly be possible to write a book of philosophy as it has been done for
so long ", we must " search new means of philosophical expression ". This is a direct attack
on the History of Philosophy: the apprentice of Philosophy is supposed to read everything, to
perfectly know what happened throughout the History of Thought, before he starts thinking.
In the book, Deleuze takes the liberty to write *as if* Nietzsche had ended Spinoza’s gesture,
*as if* Zarathoustra had died one more time. Of course, Deleuze is *also* an expert; he knows
what he is talking about. But what is most important is not how much or well he *knows,* but
how he *uses* what he knows. When Deleuze writes, one is never sure of who is behind the
words: him? Nietzsche? Spinoza? This gesture, which is a gesture of fiction, seems to be a
problem for scholars; in his book about Deleuze, Michael Hardt depicts how furious a
bergsonist scholar was with Deleuze, for he had transformed Bergson into Nietzsche. She
exclaimed: “Bergson is not Nietzsche!”

And yet, it seems that this gesture of fiction is essential in the apprenticeship of Philosophy.
Indeed, by *feigning* (that Bergson is Nietzsche, that Nietzsche is Spinoza...), the gap
between the apprentice and the master of Philosophy vanishes. From this standpoint, the
apprentice does not have to wait for the blessing of the master ("Now, you are ready, you
know enough Philosophy, you can think by yourself."); he becomes a mature philosopher, so
as to say, from fiction to fiction.

**To be continued...**
So far, two meanings of “fiction” have been compared: 1) a discourse, or view of the world,
“weaker” than reality, which children have to overcome in order to grow up, 2) a maturining
gesture of the apprentice (of Philosophy). I am interested in this second meaning of fiction,
for it seems to support an authentic experience of emancipation and maturity, for the
apprentice of Philosophy at least. However, this approach may also shed a different light on
the relation of fiction with education and adulthood. Further research must be undertaken on
the concept of fiction, taking into account the following last remarks:

- What does fiction mean in Deleuze’s apprenticeship of Philosophy? If fiction does not
  wait for absolute knowledge, nor for the blessing of the master, it does not imply that
  the apprentice can go his own way, or do absolutely anything.

- Deleuze is not the only philosopher who considers the research or apprenticeship in
  Philosophy as a fiction. Giorgio Agamben wrote that his book *Stanzas. Word and
  Phantasm in the Western Culture,* is “intended as a first, insufficient attempt to follow
  in the wake of the project that Robert Musil entrusted to his unfinished novel” (1993,
  XIX). Also, Michel Foucault reveals in an interview:

  People who read me, especially those who appreciate what I do, often tell me,
  laughing: “Basically, you know that what you say is nothing more than fiction.”
always answer: “Of course, this is not supposed to be anything else but fictions.” (2001, 863)

And, later:

Thus, this book works like an experience, for the one who writes and for the one who reads […]. This [kind of book] cannot be a novel. Yet, the essential does not lie in the series of true […] observations, but rather in the experience that the book enables us to have. But this experience is not true nor false. An experience is always a fiction; it is something that we build for ourselves, that does not exist before and that will happen to exist afterwards. (864)

- Given that both Philosophy and Education are committed to the research of certain truths, this last remark by Foucault, as well as previous assumptions made over the relation between fiction and truth pose a compelling question. This is leading me to examine in depth the relation between fiction and truth in the apprenticeship of Philosophy.
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The aesthetics of educational relationships: Sculpting education differently.

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Global education policies have, for many years, stressed a familiar and clear duty for teachers. This is to extend their young charges’ capabilities along predetermined avenues of skills and prescribed knowledge that are set out to be acquired during schooling. This view gives little acknowledgement to the inevitable indeterminacy that long-term views of educational activity can offer. Indeed, for some teachers and schools, a focus on the short term, with its clearly specified requirements in the name of measurability and accountability, suggests it is possible to eradicate or deny that education can, and should have, unprescribable outcomes as part of its richly transformative potential. Performance-driven schooling with its diet of accumulation or acquisition of inert understandings, can easily slide into students’ disaffection. For many of those concerned with education there are alternative aspirations for education but the question is, what could challenge and stand in the stead of clearly prescribed outcomes and what are the risks inherent in such a view?

One antidote to this prevalent view of schooling would be an emphasis on the kind of educational experience that could generate individual understanding with an intensified quality of engagement with the activity or material encountered. Many good teachers already value and strive hard for these qualities alongside their more prescribed duties. This is in spite of time pressures that mitigate against opportunities to dwell with material and activities that might ignite a slower fuse of understanding or deepening engagement. If some valuable outcomes for education cannot be pre-determined, how might teachers cultivate relationships that acknowledge the indeterminant nature of education while addressing the vital nature of personal transformation that education can offer?

In this paper I briefly consider some relevant views of the nature of relationships involved in educating and then build from these to argue that educational relationships have important but overlooked aesthetic qualities akin to the risks involved in art making and appreciation. My argument is that if these could be recognised and become embedded in teachers’ and policy makers’ thinking, they offer different way to conceptualise teaching and an alternative understanding for what it is to educate.

Numerous writers have argued against variants of views that essentially pervade and distort the nature of education in favour of measurability and economic purpose. Padraig Hogan suggests that education today struggles from what he terms a failed ‘marriage between a newly assertive political control of education and a scientific machinery of performance management’ (Hogan, 2010:165) Gert Biesta, writing earlier, argued that educational discourse with its pervasive focus on the very idea of ‘learning’ actually obstructs ideas concerning education. He shows how the continuing emphasis on ‘learning’ as the main criterion of any teaching relationship profoundly misleads thinking about what education is and is for and is thus fundamentally inadequate for understanding what elements constitute educational relationships. As illustration of this, Biesta is not alone in pointing out that ‘delineates….. (or) even constitutes – what can be seen…..said…..known…..thought and ultimately what can be done.’ (Biesta, 2006:13) As he and others have suggested, metaphors and similes are powerful and the current language of ‘delivery’ and ‘targets’ matter, and deserve to be challenged, because of the distortion they bring to our understanding of educational relationships. For Paul Fairfield, the problem in education is over-reliance on technical rationality, economic demands and marketization. Following Lyotard he cites what he calls ‘corporate scientism’ as the disease that is
enveloping education, which is now reduced to a social practice that is simply a means to external ends (Fairfield, 2009:23).

Padraig Hogan develops his thesis against current trends by pointing out that distance teaching or virtual learning depletes the potential space for learning and risks the vital loss of ‘presence’ brought through ‘live’ relationships. However the richness of Hogan’s claim for what he terms ‘heartwork’ on behalf of the teacher, highlights the importance of love for both the ‘what’ as well as the ‘who’ the teacher teaches. In live interaction, Hogan suggests that teachers need to be continually alert and responsive, resourceful and imaginative in order to elicit ideas and motivate the student to learn. Coupled with a blend of wise, practical judgement and encouragement, he argues for due regard for the complexity of an educational relationship where ‘skills and human qualities get embodied in the relationship and capture the distinctiveness of teaching…. (bringing) into being a particular kind of learning atmosphere or ethos.’ (Hogan, 2010:56).

One can find echoes of these suggestions in Biesta where the idea of space and presence is perhaps more developed. Biesta argues for education to be seen as a ‘coming into the world’, that is made possible through the ‘troubling’, ethical space of intersubjectivity. This on-going space is educationally necessary, for it is where each person (teacher to student, student to student) can ‘find their own voice, to constitute themselves as unique, singular beings’ (Biesta, 2006:71). This space offers an expectation and reliance on the actions of others to ‘take up (those) beginnings.’ (ibid:92) Key then, are relationships which are characterized by a mutual alertness to the quality of ‘action’ possible and a persistent commitment to act in such a way that new beginnings have the space and freedom to emerge. (ibid:93). For the teacher participating and generating this kind of encounter for students, both the artistry required and the responsibility is great. This is because the destination is fundamentally unknown for both themselves and those in their charge. Encounters of this nature will inevitably involve risk and trust and Biesta suggests that these should be prized, for it is this uncertainty and possibility that gives us our ‘response-ability to expose ourselves to what is other and different……(making ) us unique and, in a certain sense, human.’ (ibid:70)

In their respective, careful and extensive arguments, both Biesta and Hogan, stress responsiveness, openness and possibility as key in the relationship generated between teacher, student and curriculum and there is a clear acknowledgement that what is generated in this encounter has particularity, fluidity and cannot be fully prescribed. This reading of their work seems to me to point clearly towards the experiential and aesthetic engagement required from personal encounters with art. At their very simplest, the arts call upon our senses: we see, we watch, we touch, we listen. But we are not simply lone spectators. The moment we participate in the arts – we carve, we move, we gesture and it is clear we become bodily engaged. But somaesthetic and aesthetic experience goes deeper, beyond the skin – as both spectator and engaged participant, often in the company of others, we respond, we feel, we imagine, we create, and are ‘stirred’ through our artistic endeavors and appreciation of the artistic endeavors of others. Aesthetic experiences such as these serve to deepen our ability to respond and heighten our perception and sensibility.

Among others, writers such as Dewey, Heidegger and Hans Georges Gadamer came to see in their different ways, that the openness and responsiveness enshrined in full and powerful engagement with the arts, had prized transformative qualities that could be extended to a more general, flourishing engagement with life. For Dewey, the educational shaping of the continuity of experience for growth, with the dual call to be engaged in both ‘doing and undergoing’, echoes aesthetic experience and suggests a desirable form of living (Dewey, 1938). For Heidegger, openness to objects, others and the world, allows a perceptive viewer to ‘attend’ closely, allowing space for each: the tree, the painting or person, to dwell and be ‘called forth’ (Heidegger, 1978). The depth of particularity and significance possible in this
form of encounter then offers a valuable way to relate and build understanding of the world. For Gadamer, encounters which generate the to and fro of interplay between two entities in the form of genuine conversation and imaginative engagement, can release us from what he calls the ‘actual strain of existence’ (Gadamer 1979:105) and are significant for living relationships. The stress for him then lies in listening:

‘the important thing…… is to listen to what (the other) has to say to us. To this end, openness is necessary…………anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without this kind of openness to one another there is no genuine human relationship.’ (ibid 1979:324)

I am conscious that these brief sketches blur very significant differences of perspective. For example, there is contrast between the emphasis Heidegger places on the individual in their generation of meaning and the insistence that Dewey might bring to the need for a communal generation of understanding. However the suggestion is that resonances between these views are sufficient to warrant further consideration of art to life relationships and help to shed light on how the world becomes known and meaningful to us. In particular, I suggest there is potentially a fruitful line of argument that captures some possibilities for educational relationships that acknowledge aspects of education that cannot be predetermined, yet are so central and vital to the full value of what an education can offer. The act of creating meaning for ourselves when we appreciate art or partake in creative arts activity requires discipline, sensibility and appreciative, imaginative judgement as materials and works move through to fruition. But meaning cannot be created for us only by us. And this is frequently generated in ‘conversation’ with the works and with others. This form of conversation, sensitively mediated, orchestrated, delicately prompted and guided by the honed and refined, ‘response-ability’ of the teacher I suggest is at the heart of educational relationships. My argument then is for what I understand as an essentially aesthetic sensibility to both the fuller notion of the embodied personhood of the learner and the richness of the possibilities inherent in the artifacts, emblems and signs of human experience enshrined in curriculum knowledge. It is this imaginative sensibility that should lie at the very basis of the triadic nature of the student-teacher relationship in order to provoke the real educative potential that lies within that relationship.

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Silences in (post)conflict societies: Visions for higher education curriculum-making

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Introduction to the question of silence in (post)conflict societies
(Post)conflict societies refers to contexts where national conflict was the status quo, followed by some kind of violent or non-violent revolution, that resulted in a holistic reconceptualisation of that society in terms of new political and economic ideologies and/or the redefinition of social relationships. Revolutions are not once-off occurrences; it is shadowed by further evolutions in pursuit of more emancipatory politics. New ideologies and redefined social relationships require different conceptualisations of social encounters and what constitutes common good. (Post)conflict societies, in particular, are faced with these challenges and dialogue is often proposed as a way to establish new relationships and to seek common good. For example, in South Africa (SA) there are constant pleas “to talk about the rain and the rainbow, the pain and the hope” (Jansen, 2011:1) as a way to mourn and deal with our ‘shared’ historical trauma, internalised brutality and mutual pain (Jansen, 2011:5-11). Whilst sharing this dialogic sentiment, I became all the more intrigued by silences that lurk within such dialogic encounters. Given this background, the following question emerged: In (post)conflict societal dialogues, what could different silences possibly signify? To facilitate this exploration, I begin by describing the nature of (r)evolutions according to Alain Badiou’s Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil (2002). In the full paper I will discuss this in the context of SA as an example of a (post)conflict society. This will also guide my theorisation of what different silences could signify. Lastly, I will reflect on how this theorisation could navigate our visions for higher education curriculum-making in (post)conflict societies.

The nature of (r)evolutions in (post)conflict societies
For Badiou (2002:viii-ix) human action is divided into two separate but overlapping realms: the ordinary realm of approved knowledges that is structured in accordance to those who dominate and govern and that signals “the state of the situation”; and the exceptional realm of singular innovations or truths constituted by a truth procedure that succeeds and evades the domination of the state of a situation and paves the way for an ethic of truth. Firstly, it should be noted that in the ordinary realm of approved knowledges a situation is not merely a set, but it also consists of the network of relations that sustains a set (Badiou, 2002:lvi). Secondly, the realm of the exceptional awakens when subjects instigate and maintain singular innovations (or truths) from within the realm of the ordinary (Badiou, 2002:ix). This is referred to as an event. An event is both situated, in that it is related to a specific situation, and supplementary in that it is detached from all the rules of the situation (Badiou, 2002:68). Such an event ruptures the ordinary realm and sets a truth procedure going (Badiou, 2002:ix). Badiou (2002:41-42) describes this process as follows: “To be faithful to an event is to move within the situation that this event has supplemented, by thinking … the situation ‘according to’ the event. And this … compels the subject to invent a new way of being and acting in the situation”. This process could only be maintained through faithful “subjects who ‘bear’ its [the event’s] trajectory” (Badiou, 2002:ix); that is, people who reveal fidelity, perseverance and encouragement through selfless devotion to resist anything that could beset a truth (Badiou, 2002:x-xi, 43). It is exactly this fidelity to the truth and perseverance to maintain the truth of the event that Badiou (2002:xi) describes as the ethical, “the single imperative: ‘Keep going!’…” This powerful truth is described as “the multiple, internal to the situation, that the fidelity constructs, bit by bit; it is what the fidelity gathers together and produces” (Badiou, 2002:68).
The imperative of ‘keep going!’ unites resources of discernment, courage and moderation (Badiou, 2002:91). Discernment serves to remind a subject to not fall under delusions concerning the event; courage teaches not to give up, and moderation warns the subject not to get carried away in totalitarian extremes (Badiou, 2002:91). However, Badiou (2002:91) also warns that “Evil is possible only through an encounter with the Good”. This Evil, emanating from the Good, Badiou states could manifest in three figures. Badiou (2002:91) summarises these forms of evil as follows: “… the simulacrum (to be the terrorizing follower of a false event); betrayal (to give up on a truth in the name of one’s interest); the forcing of the unnameable, or disaster (to believe in the total power of a truth)”.

The performativity of silences
Cultural norms and individual traits ascribes to the act of silence quite different meanings (Sifianou, 1997:64). For some ‘silence is golden’, a form of communication that speaks for itself, an indication of inner strength. For others it might indicate an absence of communication, a rather negative response indicating emptiness, fear or doubt; perhaps even an outer weakness. Silence is also a pragmatic and discursive strategy used in particular situations and contexts (Jaworski, 1997:3). However conceptualised, silence does something and it does so in very particular ways.

Discerning silences
Discerning silences are performed when a person has to ‘think through’ a particular event or situation – whether from the past, the present or the future. It entails the act of thinking beyond the situation and making a judgment about it. I suspect that often in (post)conflict dialogues about sensitive matters people need to ‘think through’ historical trauma, internalised brutality and hurtful memories. The performance of such silences is imperative for the healing process and making judgments about experiences of the past, present and future.

Courageous silences
Courageous silences, a form of moral courage, are strategically performed when a person perseveres in building up a strong opposing argument to be express later. It is an act of remaining loyal to one’s argument and protecting it to be expressed at the right time and/or space. For Badiou (2002:x) courageous silence describes the loyal determination of those “… subjects who maintained a resilient fidelity to the consequences of an event that took place in a situation but was not of it”.

Silences of moderation
Silence as moderation in post-conflict contexts was echoed by Mandela (2000): “It is never my custom to use words lightly. If twenty-seven years in prison have done anything to us, it was to use the silence of solitude to make us understand how precious words are and how real speech is in its impact on the way people live and die”. This form of silence is performed in situations where subjects need to eliminate and lessen extremes to facilitate reasonableness in the wake of new beginnings.

Silences of simulacrum
Duffy (2009:61), reflecting on the work of Paul Ricouer, speaks about the forces that silences victims of the past through the process of structured amnesia – “a blotting out of voices of resistance”. In apartheid SA, this structured amnesia was enforced by the ruling party, not only to prevent the majority of victims of severe oppression to resist the status quo, but also to pacify those who were submissive to the ruling party. This reflects the absolute domination that ensures conformity and obedience to a situation that Badiou (2002:ix) referred to. One way in which this has been done was to provide an inferior education to the majority of victims. Another way was to ban certain literature and limit access to information that could have led to the minority supporters of the ruling party to resist their ideology.
Silences of betrayal
A large portion of South Africans has taken the position of ‘politically correct’ behaviour and often refrain from critical dialogues in fear of coming across as politically incorrect. This behaviour could be described as negative politeness. Sifianou (1997:74) states that “in societies where negative politeness prevails, silence could be better understood as a means of safeguarding personal territory”. Safeguarding personal territory is akin to what Badiou (2002:91) referred to as acting in one’s own interest, i.e. betraying the truth. In addition, the act of silence in a (post)conflict society might also be the result of evading further degradation, reliving past despair and suffering (Duffy, 2009:61). Hence, betraying the truth procedure that has led to the event.

Unnameable silences
Both structural amnesia and hyperthymesia could be perceived as unforgivable silences, i.e. remaining quiet when one should have spoken out (Willig, 2012). Unforgivable silences are not only harmful, but affect one’s freedom of speech later (Willig, 2012). Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn describes this unforgivable silence in The Gulag Archipelago (1978) as follows: “In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousand fold in the future. When we neither punish nor reproach evildoers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age, we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations”.

Visions for higher education curriculum-making in (post)conflict societies
What I wished to illustrate with the above discussion of the performativity of silence, is its complex nature. In conclusion, I would like to reflect some of the above ideas in terms of higher education curriculum-making in (post)conflict societies. Firstly, the current situation marked by the commodification of (higher) education signals the ordinary realm of approved knowledges. These knowledges are not merely a set, but a complex network of relations that sustains and complicates the set (Badiou, 2002:lvi). (Post)conflict societies in particular requires singular innovations toward epistemological revolutions that pays heed to the complexities and traumas that such societies need to work through. In Badiou’s (2002:68) terms this will require a detachment from the rules of the governing situation with its own set of approved knowledges.

Secondly, discerning silences in aid of singular innovations should receive as much emphasis as dialogue. Silences have the propensity to enrich dialogue through newly formulated ways of being and acting. Herewith, we should perhaps consider speaking about our silences and how we pragmatically and discursively perform them.

Thirdly, I propose a ‘pedagogy of keep going’ for (post)conflict societies. Such pedagogy should reveal fidelity, perseverance and encouragement through selfless devotion to resist anything that could beset a truth (Badiou, 2002:x-xi, 43).

Finally, I wish to reiterate the importance that Foucault (1978:27) places on silence (one I fully endorse): “There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say … There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses”. I think it is time that those in (post)conflict societies begin to ascribe the same attention to silences that permeate our discourses as is given to dialogue.

References


Learning as swimming: A school project for the future

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Today we live in a condition when no convincing predictions or projections can be made for the future. There are many different visions of education based not on clearly reasoned educational reforms, but rather on imagination. Many new metaphors and allegories come to the field of education. They push out analytical constructions little by little or try to combine an analysis of educational language and its meanings with very vague and broad visions toward education, which shows that the contemporary process of education cannot be shaped in strict frames.

The concept of swimming for the purpose of better learning has been analyzed by many great philosophers and educationalists. This concept is very popular among Gilles Deleuzean researchers, though in Deleuze' words (2012) he borrowed this allegory from Leibnitz, who saw the sea as a transformative space for relations between singularities and totality.

“Swimming” is very convenient for the investigation of the study/learning process for many reasons. This concept is more or less related to those things directly or metaphorically important for the educational field: repetition and creativity, deep diving or remaining on the surface, the balance between a broad field and local area, the use of different directions of movement, relaxation and attention, and the sharing of human features with something else (from fish to God). In other words, there are many oppositions and metaphors to map different directions of imagination and to find some new or intermedium variations. They allow for understanding the space of education, where action (reality) and signs (virtuality) are in relation, as well as to find new ways and styles of teaching/learning to insure intellectual and spontaneous creativity in modern schools. Schools suffer from an inability to correspond to the new conditions of humanity, when a declaration of freedom is mixed with an increased control of actions. School is dull and ineffective, mostly related to the past, not to our present and not at all to the future.

Being prepared to swim: Maimon and Deleuze

Keeping in mind a Deleuzean understanding of learning to swim as described in “Difference and repetition,” every move is marked by difference despite its repetition. It always leads to a novelty:

“When a body combines some of its own distinctive points with those of a wave, it espouses the principle of repetition which is no longer that of the Same, but involves the Other-involves difference, from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted. To learn is indeed to constitute this space of an encounter with signs, in which the distinctive points renew themselves in each other, and repetitions takes shape while disguising itself” (Deleuze 2012: 26).

Such an extract becomes classical; we can find references to it in the publications of Semetsky, Wallin, and Ramey, who first of all emphasize body and mind learning, and the conscious and unconscious content of mind. In this particular paper, the investigation of swimming is important as the continuity of a Deleuzean conception and on the other hand a distinction from philosophers who influenced Deleuze and used the concept of swimming as learning.
First of all is Salomon Maimon, who lived in the 18th century and was a Lithuanian-Polish Jew. According to Daniel W. Smith (2012: 65), Maimon's investigations “exerted an enormous influence on Deleuze”, correcting the Deleuzean conception of immanence and the concept of difference. Maimon in his book “An Autobiography” (second part) was very attentive to Maimonid, from whose “A Guide for the Perplexed” he cited and interpreted select quotations. Sometimes it is difficult to recognize which are Maimonid’s words and which are Maimon’s. However, it seems Maimon agrees with Maimonid, who for the understanding of metaphysical learning gives an example of Bible interpreters:

“He who can swim, may bring up pearls from the depth of the sea, he who is unable to swim will be drowned, therefore only such persons as have had proper instruction should expose themselves to the risk” (Maimonid 1904: 124).

It is clear that for Maimon and Maimonid water is understood as a divine wisdom, which is described in Holy Law. Swimming in the sea means being in a space which has riches such as pearls somewhere very deep. They represent marvelous insights, ideas, and knowledge which can be obtained only if someone is prepared for them. It is a traditional understanding of the teaching/learning process as a matter of working with ideas which belong to a transcendental field. Knowledge in this sense is related not to something unexpected and new, but to something which is valuable, like a pearl, growing for many years, waiting until someone will discover and use it. They are countable and can be reached only by the best students. Creativity in this case is beyond their personal everyday life and the field of immanence. Student can be connected to creativity as the process which is in the disposition of God. It requires following special instructions.

Maimon’s vision, in comparison to that which Deleuze gives us, is different. However, Maimon’s concept of being in the process of learning in some aspects is not so extreme. He emphasizes waiting on the event which depends neither on only personal efforts nor on someone from outside. That is obvious from Maimon’s quotation, where he says:

“Proper expression of the object and proper to the subject teaching method sometimes seems are suggested by themselves in the right time, but sometimes we have to torment oneself over, until find them” (Maimonas 2004: 190).

According to Maimon, what must happen does not depend on traditionally reasonable and obvious things. It is the glorification of success in the proper time when wholeness and potentiality are evidently concentrated in singularity and personal expression. This outside and inside connection can be understood as divine forces, but not only that.

In the process of learning Maimon’s concept of an idea is not separately valuable; ideas are immanent to experience, and he posits the “principle of difference as the fulfillment of this condition” of real thought (Smith 2012: 67). So the reasoning of learning action and results contains and exposes potentiality, which is hidden but actualized during actions that later on were developed by Deleuze as intrinsic and extrinsic difference. It is being in the interconnection with others and the surroundings, and being in chain, in the process of becoming, which is actualized through the differences. Semetsky in his interpretation of Deleuze would name it being in the chain of collective unconscious (2013), while others identify it as relating to the mystical world (Hallward 2006), as eventually becoming “worthy” of the event (Duff 2013), or as learning the uncanny (Ramey 2013). The connection of the learner with the outside world is marked by an intermediary between the known and unknown, the material and spiritual, or the immanent and transcendent, but in Maimon’s version, as different from Deleuze’s, primarily as a preparatory process.
Courage and will: The Bergsonian concept of swimming

Another great philosopher who influenced Deleuze was Henri Bergson. Giving the example of swimming and learning to swim, he raised the idea that reason must be pushed out of its limits by the courage to do so. The emphasis is on courage, not on a preparatory process. Jumping means a move from the rational to irrational, from one surrounding/space to another, like the change from walking to swimming. Bergson (1911) says:

“If we had never seen a man swim, we might say that swimming is an impossible thing, in as much as, to learn to swim, we must begin by holding ourselves up in the water and, consequently, already know how to swim. Reasoning, in fact, always nails us down to the solid ground. But if, quite simply, I throw myself into the water without fear, I may keep myself up well enough at first by merely struggling, and gradually adapt myself to the new environment: I shall thus have learnt to swim.” [pg 192]

In the Bergsonian position such a process of learning and cognition is a risk, a desire to invent new things, the courage to investigate and at the same time create by using intuition and imagination. Such is the process of the creation of oneself, which follows the will to choose this way. Instinct is so strong and alive, which gives the direction for the development of oneself, while the intellect provides some frames for this spontaneous development. Deleuze borrowed the idea of the unconscious, the desire to act in affectation despite unexpected conditions. It is the linkage of body and mind, of the self and the surrounding.

Learning means the combination of instinct, intuition, imagination and reason, as Bergson states, and also the process of becoming an educated and creative person, sensitive to signs, as Deleuze posits. In a Deleuzean sense this process is based on affects and percepts. It is the learner’s process of becoming, becoming a swimmer or a kind of mermaid (nymph), animal, hybrid, which can live in another territory.

Project for the future school based on Deleuze: flooding in the school

The Deleuzean proposition for education is based on a structure of micropolitics, an assemblage of student and teacher actions, based on various directions towards becoming educated. Schooling has to be deterritorialized and reterritorialized into a new, smooth, not striated space. Examples of such proposition in real life are modern schools which work in new conditions, with free space and timeless schedules. (Davies, Gannon 2009)

The proper space for a modern school can be allegorically understood as a flooding space, which means that from the first glance there is disorder, and later on a change in the positions of things by changing territory without artificially stepping out from it, but letting it stream its content out of the borders. There are some points to consider such a suggestion for the imaginary project.

First of all it can be a continuation of the understanding of micropolitics, which is transforming the hegemony of teachers into a nomadic interrelated trajectory of teacher and student, their equal right to be and move on the surface of the plane, at their own personal speed, to change vectors and dive as deeply as wanted and is able to. The priority is to the horizontal – nomadic, not vertical –arboreal– moving. In such a way there is no advanced order for things, subjects, and restriction of time and space. Everyone is in the individual movement and “we never know in advance how someone will learn” (Deleuze 2012: 205).

Secondly, the teacher and student will be in the same conditions of “swimming”, when body-mind learning and teaching should be two sides of the same coin. Everyone will be pushed out from a strict position into one which requires an exchange of instructional knowledge with instinctively active and creative forces, to link sign with action, to be a kind of hybrid of teacher and student. This kind of catastrophic situation requires a transformation of the school community and the multiplication of functions.
Thirdly, during the flooding the treasure will not be “pearls”, which are limited, but everything that will be seen through feculent-like “crystals”, which are valuable personally, and an event of learning in surrounding, while encountering others. In Deleuzean words: “There is no more a method for learning than there is a method for finding treasures” (ibid: 205), it is “living passage from one to the other” (ibid: 206).

Finally, flooding means the other consistence of space, which requires a changing gaze and understanding of things, how they move in time and which positions they take; it creates conditions for the contemplation, seeing and being in novelty, which arises from the linkage of the partial with a whole, when the singularities’ “variation among relations” are “incarnated in the real movement of waves” (ibid: 204).

It is not a project for the final and ideal understanding of a future school, but it can be the transition position on the road from old to new.

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A philosophical approach: The learning experience and new technologies in education

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“As long ago as 1933 Benjamin had accurately diagnosed this ‘poverty of experience’ of the modern age”.
Giorgio Agamben1.

1. Presentation
The objective of this paper is to provide a philosophical approach which can help deepen the comprehension of the concept of learning experience, more precisely, the idea of learning conceived as an active-creative process through the use of ITC in the classroom.

The tremendous development experienced by information and communication technologies (ICT) over the past years has boosted a substantial transformation in human practices and relations, politics, world economy, ultimately, culture in its whole. For its part, education has not remained unaltered by these powerful influences. It is noteworthy that such evolution generates certain impacts on the context of a specific society, depending on the particular conditions of its structure and historical circumstances. This paper will focus on thinking the effects that the implementation of the technological paradigm has (has had, could have…) on education, effects which translate into changes in teaching practices and learning conceptions, into alternative ways of conceiving knowledge and its appropriation, into subjectivity transformations, etc.

From a philosophical point of view, we question and ponder how these tools –ICT- could be turned into devices that can help improve learning by fostering through its use the possibility of having actual learning experiences.

This is why we turn our attention to the concept of experience. To elaborate this concept we will base our speculations about the subject matter on Italian philosopher G. Agamben’s contributions2, together with the ideas of South African thinker S. Papert3. Intertwining our reading of Agamben with Papert’s ideas, we intend to contemplate the following questions, with no aspiration of putting forward definitive answers: is it possible that an actual and genuine learning experience occurs, and not simply the reproduction of experiments with ICT? Can ICT promote educational and even anthropological changes which would enable a pedagogical revolution in the classroom? Can ICT enable and promote humanizing, critical and autonomous thinking? From this perspective, can a space for experience be created (or at least fostered), one in which a significant and alternative learning process is promoted?

2. Some conceptual clarifications
Basically, ICT is defined as the ensemble of internet based tools which enable communication and the access to information. These include information dissemination tools

1 Agamben, 1993: 11.

2 Born in Rome in 1942, Giorgio Agamben is a well-known contemporary European philosopher, author of the essay entitled “Infancy and history” (1978) which we will be referring to in this paper.

3 Seymour Papert was born in South Africa in 1928. He is considered to be a distinguished computer scientist and mathematician. In addition, Papert has done research on education matters. In this paper, we will focus on the ideas presented on one of his books, “The children’s machine: rethinking school in the age of computers” (1995).
and communication and interaction resources known as virtual spaces. What is more, software specially designed for educational purposes should be included in this category. These technologies are considered by many authors as tools which support the construction of knowledge, which transform and are transformed in order to facilitate and integrate knowledge. This conception of ICT implies that these technologies develop with their use, so they are constantly evolving. Nevertheless, when we consider the relation between education and ICT, we believe the emphasis should be placed on educating and not on the ICT per se. From the latter perspective, if technologies are the (educational institution's) priority, they tend to update it but not to trigger a deeper transformation; this fact is indicated by Papert, who worked together with Jean Piaget in the Geneva University: introducing computers into the school system, 'digitalizing' schools, does not necessarily imply its transformation nor an improvement in learning and individuals' lives.

In his book, Papert seeks to combat the idea that technology dehumanizes since, although it can be used in bad, nonproductive ways, it can also be used by students and teachers as a means to foment and develop alternative ways of conceiving the educational processes of teaching and learning: student-centered lessons (as opposed to teacher-centered), where teachers adopt a more ‘passive', or well, a less expositive role and, consequently, tend to encourage a more active participation of the students in their learning process, offering the possibility of doing so collaboratively. “I have always longed for the emergence of ways (of learning) in which children act more as creators rather than as consumers of knowledge” (Papert, 1995: 27). In this way, the author criticizes the notion of passive individual in education; in order to truly learn, a child must have a leading role, must be an agent in his/her learning process. Through anecdotes, Papert illustrates how, by the means of meaningful activities and/or objects, intimately related to their daily life, children can construct thoughts and significant knowledge.

The constructionist theory, i.e., Papert's own version of Piaget's constructivism, aims to revalue the context in which educational processes (essentially learning) take place, in an attempt to restore what the school system –School-, denaturalized by mounting completely artificial learning situations and scenarios. The author believes that due to its closeness to children's immediate, day-to-day reality, the computer presents itself as an interesting option to carry out his proposal. In addition to this, we can say that, ironically, technology would serve the purpose of establishing a more humane and broader relationship between teachers and students, since teachers would necessarily learn in the teaching process (in fact, they might probably learn how to use these new technologies) as would students teach other classmates (or even their teachers) while learning.

In the words of Papert, the use of digital technology from a constructionist view amplifies the quantity and the quality of projects which children can carry out in the classroom, and thereby the idea of active learning becomes possible. A key question Papert asks and which we reformulate here is how to redesign education in the era of ICT.

Historically, the school system has tended to uniformity and standardization, not only of (transmitted and, ideally, acquired) knowledge but also of teaching methods and learning pathways: it requires not only that students reach the 'right' solutions, but that they reach them the way they have been taught to. According to this, those who cannot adjust to the School's methods and logics are cataloged as 'different'; so, in fact, the school system ends up generating greater inequality in the name of the equality it intends. In turn, among other of Papert's considerations, is to allow and enable the development of multiple and more personal educational paths. In this way, he identifies that students’ inability (or, at least, difficulty) to learn is a matter beyond motivation. It is necessary to re-examine typical school methods (such as memorization); alternatives must be sought, alternatives which, as we previously tried to indicate, must transcend didactics, in the understanding that they are linked to a different conception of the educational process in its entirety.
In this train of thought, we understand that technology is -or more precisely, could be- more than just a teaching tool: a tool which could enable a more profound change, a conceptual shift, a shift in our conceptions about education; ultimately, a structural change, a change of educational paradigm. From Papert’s point of view, which we share, ICT possess the potential to liberate us from both, the constraints of a rigid, inflexible structure (hierarchical structure of the education system, which is also reproduced in the classroom), and on the other, from outdated conceptions (e.g., learning (entirely) conceived as a passive-receptive process). Nevertheless, the computer, ICT on their own, i.e, without clear political and philosophical objectives, without a pertinent pedagogical conduction, can operate as an object of mental alienation, as it tends to occur. By itself, ICT do not promote critical thinking abilities, and in fact tends to inhibit them, by presenting itself as a means for consumption or well entertainment with no educational or humanizing consequences.

It is important to stimulate and encourage those teachers and students who are one step ahead in the use of ICT at school to take initiative, because it is this kind of variation, of concrete action, that makes the implementation of major changes possible. Every action in this direction is one step taken towards the consolidation of a vision. Education in the context of a technological paradigm should be directed to the general public, and the academic discussion ought to give less consideration to the aspects related to didactics and teaching practices (as does the instructionist perspective described by Papert in his book) and focus on the learning processes, on thinking about how people learn.

Educational actions and activities must be thought in a micro and macro scale, which respectively regard the learning environment and how individuals learn, and also the organization of the particular education institutions and system, their functions and goals. ICT have brought about substantial changes in a way mankind never experienced before; in this historical juncture, the hierarchy of knowledge and its dynamics have been significantly altered, as well as its availability. But this is not enough; what about the will to know, the ability to discern what is important and meaningful concerning information, critical and creative capacities? This is why, above all, the use of ICT with educational purposes must be settled in an ethic that promotes human development in a global context.

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In “Infancy and history: the destruction of experience”, Agamben quotes F. Bacon to note that “There remains but mere experience, which when it offers itself is called chance; when it is sought after, experiment” (1993: 17). What the author intends to illustrate through Bacon’s quote is the fact that

“The scientific verification of experience which is enacted in the experiment – permitting sensory impressions to be deduced with the exactitude of quantitative determinations and, therefore, the prediction of future impressions- responds to this loss of certainty by displacing experience as far as possible outside the individual: on to instruments and numbers. But the traditional experience thereby lost all real value. For [...] experience is incompatible with certainty” (1993: 17-18).

Applying Agamben’s concept to education, by experience we understand the possibility of pursuing a unique and unrepeatable (irreproducible) learning situation, which implies a change or transformation in one’s subjectivity: “Thus experience is now definitely something one can only undergo but never have. It is never accessible as a totality, it is never complete but in the infinite approximation of the overall social process” (1993: 34). We call experiment the artificial establishment of learning parameters in which the transmission of socially pertinent knowledge is pretended and, thereby, results (which students have to be able to reproduce) are set a priori of the actual subjective learning experience.
Resuming out speculations about ICT and education, we note that they can serve both positions: on the one hand, it can be a tool/space to experiment, i.e., to perform experiments, which restrict the possibility of provoking experiences. On the other hand, it can operate as a space for experiencing, that is, to promote a certain ‘openness’ to undetermined situations in which knowledge, particular to each individual, may be constructed in various ways. Therefore, contrary to an experiment, to ‘experimenting with’, an experience cannot be guided, it is a situation that occurs and has to do with the individual’s subjectivity (interests, skills, etc.), since it involves the student as a subject and not an object. This is why we consider using the term experience (verb) more convenient, as well as the idea of fomenting learning experiences by means of ICT rather than carrying out teaching experiments with them. While the first perspective focuses on the student, in the latter one the teacher remains the center of the process.

Intertwining our reading of Agamben with the ideas put forward by Papert, we understand that the new ICT applied to education are a privileged space to enable learning to be once again –just as in early childhood, as Agamben highlights in his essay- something spontaneous, natural, re-integrated to life. Still, we want to emphasize that, this scenario depends on how ICT is introduced in the classroom and with what purposes. In addition, even if learning is (or should be) spontaneous, this does not mean the disappearance of the teacher at all; it just implies a shift in our pedagogical paradigm, to one in which neither the student nor the teacher is the center, but the possibility of various and varied learning and knowing experiences where, evidently, roles tend to blur.

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The teacher as social entrepreneur

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Précis: We need to rethink the role of the teacher so that it goes beyond its pedagogical conceptions. Up to now, philosophers of education have proposed that teachers be activists, critical pedagogues, anti-racism educators, poststructuralist feminists, intellectuals – to name just a few. Instead, I am suggesting that we need to move beyond these pedagogical conceptions to re-conceptualizing the teacher as social entrepreneur. Such a re-conception includes the pedagogical dimension, but also adds an entrepreneurial layer to the teacher’s role. In other words, I want the teacher to be able to practice their craft not only effectively in the classroom, but also regardless of the job market – the availability of teaching jobs. I want the teacher graduate ready to both fill a teaching position as well as create one – if required. Given that student demand worldwide will always exceed teacher supply, re-conceptualizing the teacher as social entrepreneur offers a promising solution for future teacher employment and unmet student demand. While the scope of this paper is broader than the interests of philosophers of education, I would suggest that keeping up with the changing role of the teacher and what that means to teacher education programs would be of great interest to them, especially those in administrative and teaching-the-teacher roles.

The Problem
The province of Ontario, Canada pumps out over 11,650 certified student-teacher graduates each year. And each year only 4500 teachers retire from its public school system. That means that there is a surplus of 7,150 teachers that cannot find jobs and this is even after applying for teaching jobs outside the province and the country. According to the Ontario College of Teachers, the government appointed body that certifies these teachers, this trend is projected to continue for the next 10 years, which means there will be 71,500 very talented and highly trained teachers whose newly-minted skills set and budding idealism, for the most part, will be wasted.

So far, to solve this teacher unemployment problem, key stakeholders and regulators such as government, certifying bodies, universities, school boards, private schools and teacher unions have tried to control the influx of teacher candidates by cutting back admission numbers, increasing admission standards, reducing government subsidies to teacher education programs, applying more stringent evaluation criteria for successful program completion and, finally, dissuading student applicants with a harsh reality-check of the odds against success.

While this survey is admittedly cursory, still it is very telling. It shows a significant lack of imagination on the part of the gatekeepers and caretakers of the Ontario public school system. But this lack of imagination also spills over to the graduating student-teachers. On any given day of the week, these teachers can be found volunteering, networking, canvassing schools, applying to different public boards and private schools, supply teaching as well as taking on long-term occasional and maternity leaves in hopes of securing a position. While these resume-building activities are good in themselves, they are oversubscribed and hence reap very few jobs. In fact, the whole job-hunting search has become a cut-throat, endurance race where everyone is counting on his or her peers to give up. Sadly, too many do. And, yet, very few of these jobseekers raise even a hand of protest. To my constant astonishment, an idea that rarely occurs to them, and I admittedly base this claim on a very small research sample of my own, is that they could create their own teaching jobs. When I have suggested this possibility, I have been typically greeted with a blank look or an expression of polite amusement or even a dismissing tone. And this is even
after I have shown them that at least a third of students in Ontario, as in so many other school districts in North America, continue to drop out of school and that in the public and non-profit sectors there are numerous funding opportunities for someone who is daring enough to come up with their own innovative service and business model to address this drop-out population.

I am even met with more incredulity when I explain that by 2015, 57 million children will be out-of-school worldwide and that an extra 5.4 million teachers will be needed to meet this demand and that now is the time for creative, innovative teachers to construct new educational models of delivery that could be financially sustainable, creating jobs not only for themselves but also for their teaching peers. Again, as I just said, at this point, I am greeted with total incredulity.

No matter from what angle one looks at this teacher unemployment problem nor what extenuating circumstances one considers, it is clear that Ontario’s inability to resolve this problem is a failure of imagination. To be sure, this problem is very complex and multilayered. To attempt any solution requires examining multiple, interacting factors. Beyond the educational, there is also the political, economic, legal, managerial and even other lessor factors to account for. Still, granted this complexity, I would like to argue that the most pivotal and promising part of any answer is to re-conceptualize the teacher as social entrepreneur. It would give student-teachers the skills-set not only to fill existing teaching vacancies, but also to create jobs for themselves and other unemployed teachers. Even more importantly, such a reconceptualization puts a renewed emphasis on ‘life-long arts education.’ Specifically, it prioritizes an aesthetic education that forges linkages between the imagination, empathy and social action where social entrepreneurship becomes a concrete expression of social action.

A Promising Solution

In this paper, I want to re-conceptualize the teacher as social entrepreneur. Once again, the main reason that I am proposing this re-conception is that I want graduating student-teachers to be able to not only secure teaching jobs, but also to create them when they do not exist. At the very least, equipping teachers to become social entrepreneurs will encourage them to consider this option and pursue it, as they are able. As we will see later, one of the key controversies of what I am proposing here is whether becoming a social entrepreneur is possible for all or a select few. For the time being, I would like to put this question on hold and return to it later.

At any rate, tackling this problem of teacher unemployment starts with the power to imagine alternative worlds. It requires a trained or even better an ‘educated imagination,’ which we typically and rightly associate with being an artist. A social entrepreneur is a species in the genus artist. That is, at his/her core, a social entrepreneur is an artist. Like the artist, a social entrepreneur starts by re-visioning a problem as an opportunity to be exploited for the benefit of the common good. He/she does not start with what is, but rather with the ‘image’ or ‘mental picture’ of what could be. From here, again like the artist, the social entrepreneur takes the raw materials/resources at the disposal of his/her hands and shapes them into something ‘good’ or ‘beautiful’ or ‘beneficial to all.’

At the same time, the social entrepreneur is a hybrid – a synthesis of the artist and the analytic. She/he goes beyond the artist by bringing her/his fiscal, management and marketing competences to his/her “work of art,” that is, ‘social enterprise.’ This social enterprise becomes a practical instrument of distributing social goods and services to a targeted audience, typically marginalized. In the end, a successful social entrepreneur becomes a generator of a triple bottom-line of economic, social and environmental value that benefits everyone.
Clearly, if the social entrepreneur is a species of the genus artist, then it makes sense that his/her apprenticeship starts with a solid arts education, but not exclusively so. For, a strong math and science grounding is also needed to become a successful social entrepreneur. However, it is very crucial that this arts education program is designed in such a way that not only does it generate alternative visions of what could be, but also the ability to see things from the perspective of others, in other words, to be empathetic and, as a result, be motivated to serve others, especially the vulnerable. By definition, social entrepreneurship allocates its surpluses, that is, ‘profits’ to the service of the greater social good. Ultimately this commitment boils down to improving the quality of life for everyone. Impressively, it manifests itself as educational equality, political freedom, social justice, peace, environmental sustainability and the like.

The Roadmap
In this paper, rather than be problem-focused, I want to be solution-focused. That means I am not going to try to justify my re-conception of the teacher in relations to other extant conceptions – as important as that is. Instead, I will simply assume that we should conceptualize the teacher as social entrepreneur. Then, building on this assumption, I will examine what it would require educationally to develop teachers into social entrepreneurs. To do this, I will first consider what it takes to educate the imagination – the social entrepreneur’s most critical capability – in such a way that it strengthens the student’s power for human empathy and irresistibly moves her/him to a life-long practice of compassionate social action. Second, I will look at how this educational approach/strategy can be applied to teacher formation and used to prepare a student-teacher to become a social entrepreneur. Third and lastly, I will revisit the question of whether becoming a social entrepreneur is an elite or universal human capability. To tip my hand, I will argue that it is a universal capability that with discipline can be mastered by everyone. However, the level to which an individual can take his/her social entrepreneurship does vary. Some may only be able to take it to the most basic level of self-employment, others to small-to-mid size social enterprises and still others to national and global organizations.

Finally, my sources for this paper will, in the first section, be the seminal writings of three educational theorists who have focused on the importance of intentionally educating the imagination for human flourishing and collective problem-solving. These three theorists are John Dewey, Northrop Frye and Maxine Greene. Together they will enable me to conceptualize what the imagination is, its role in the teaching-learning process and how it can be educated to arouse the kind of empathy that leads the student to social action. More specifically, I am looking to Dewey’s theory of experience to give me a framework by which to consider how the experiences of imaging, empathizing and taking action can dynamically interact and evolve into an educative experience that satisfies Dewey’s criteria of continuity and interaction. From Frye, I want to see how his conception of the “language of imagination,” which he equates with literature, can help me understand the difference between analytic thinking and artistic/design thinking and how they complement each other in the teaching-learning process. Finally, Greene, who has especially focused on how the well-developed imagination can lead to human empathy and social action both individually and collectively, will help me discern how best to theorize the linkages between imagination, empathy and social action as a unified educational process. Then, in the second and the third sections, my main source will be the seminal thinking of J. Gregory Dees – one of the pioneers of social entrepreneurship as a scholarly field of study. He will help inform my understanding of what a social entrepreneur is and what it would take to teach/train a student-teachers to become one.

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Northrop Frye


Maxine Greene

The early childhood teacher and the family: An exploration of the familial role of the professional using a few childish things

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Introduction
This paper works through shifting boundaries between private and public education and childrearing in the profession of early childhood (EC) teaching. The ‘profession’ is of interest here because of its apparent partnership with the family – a boundary-crossing partnership in its very essence. Professional discourses construct boundaries based on a knowledge that child-rearing is educational and that higher education is essential to the professional role (Meade et al., 2012). However the idea of a profession of EC experts continues to be a challenge within the profession (Dalli & Urban, 2010; Osgood, 2012); and while there are many contending perspectives on what the profession should look like teachers are often discouraged from their own questioning of their professional boundaries (Osgood, 2012).

As a working paper the focus is on developing questions about professionalism. That these are necessary is evidenced in the 2010 special issue of Educational Theory focused upon childrearing and government intervention. The EC profession is implicated throughout the special issue. The purpose here is to build on the questioning of the profession in order to keep open a professional commitment to challenging the boundaries that govern family and profession.

The use of childish things provides context and method for the analysis. These ‘things’ include: children’s literature; the game of hop-scotch; and the iPad application Endless Numbers. Using these tools the paper explores the contemporary shifting landscape of EC.

Hop-Scotch and progress
Hop-Scotch, Crombie (1886) reckoned in his 19th century anthropological studies, is an ancient game in imagining the future. He traces the game from its possible initial parodying of adult past times to its use of the metaphor of the labyrinth. In Crombie’s analysis (1886, p. 408) the ancient hop-scotching child enjoyed the “wanderings of the soul in a future state”. In the Christian tradition the image of a labyrinth is replaced by orderly, squared, representations of the progress of the soul through states of spiritual being. That ‘modern’ children often jump through numbered squares might be evidence of their increasingly metric lives: that the child’s future is the management of an enumerated soul. From the mysterious hopping about towards an unknown future, to the hop and skip of an eternally saved or damned self, we have moved to a neo-bureaucratic management of a child’s efficient play.

The family role concomitantly transforms through deeper layers of the game’s purposeful governance of the child – the extraction of the maximum value. This extraction is apparent in governance of childrearing, both through the family and the EC profession. The OECD’s ‘Starting Strong’ series provides evidence of the kind of game of progress that children are hopping through. The OECD’s series of EC interventions are aimed at rationalising and enhancing educational qualities within a context of ‘productivity’ that makes it possible to use the phrase ‘babies and bosses’ (OECD, 2004) in a public domain.

The OECD work narrates shifting boundaries for familial-professional relationships. For instance parents are increasingly constructed as not only consumers of their child’s early education, but also critical to the quality of that service. The OECD (2012, p. 220) notes that parental involvement in ECE is a “fundamental right and obligation”. Paradoxically, with increasing hours of a young child’s life in a centre, the family capacity to know and shape
these rights and obligations wanes. The role of policy is then to ‘lever’ the profession and the family together, a leverage that is made palatable by the assumption that the teacher is an expert, up to date with the latest research on child development and curriculum.

However, in Aotearoa recent policy developments including the reduction of funding incentives for fully qualified teaching staff evidence limits to the esteem of the profession. The entire sector is under fire in recent media debate (Woulfe, 2014a, 2014b). The quality of service has been challenged; the right of the profession to call itself expert undermined. That this is a media debate encourages families to consider that they then have a role to demand more of early childhood education in intervening in their family lives.

**Gender and the profession**

In the children’s story *The Tiger That Came To Tea* a young girl and her mother are interrupted by an uninvited tiger who eats all the tea on the table and then clears out the larder and the fridge too. The tiger is a reminder of the absence of the father. The absence of the father in the family is a narrative of intervention. Children without fathers, we are often told, need the intervention of early childhood services in order to grow up in the ‘right’ kind of supportive environment. Yet the EC profession is also apparently too feminised and the familial-professional partnership deficient (Early Childhood Council, 2013). While the critics of gender imbalance are rather imbalanced by a weak understanding and a particular normalisation of gender (Sumison, 2005), questioning gender is important here.

Davis (2010) tracks the ‘feminine profession’ through various pedagogical iterations, singling out the kindergarten and progressive movements for their models of the teacher – from innate care-giver to formally trained child psychologist. While the characteristics may vary, they have cumulatively constructed the profession and its complex and disputatious identity.

These movements have not, arguably, led to any new understanding of the longstanding gendered boundaries between caring and education, and to the competing views on who the EC teacher is. Their legacy is perhaps to keep polemics, distrust and power at the centre of the early childhood policy community through which pedagogical factions clamour for their evidence and/or philosophy. Davis notes, “contemporary policy debates … seem fated to rehearse the same controversies and the same struggles for legitimate authority” (pp. 289-290). A key element in this contest is a reticence to consider the deeper tensions between private and public spheres. Questioning these tensions is necessary in order to: make sense of the impact of an epistemological boundary between the profession and the family; reveal the technologies of family intervention (Smeyers, 2008, 2010a, 2010b); and to explore the ways in which other related boundaries impact on childrearing – for instance the very idea of the privacy of the home (Derrida, 2000) or of the gendered construction of care.

Davis, citing Arendt’s essay on education, notes that the EC profession loses its sense of “responsibility for the world” (p. 298) when it is the tool and object of increased governance. He challenges that the profession is increasingly and problematically an “insidious and unaccountable technology of governance active in the subtle, covert reconstruction of the public, the private, and the boundaries between them” (p. 298). Does the profession then sustain itself on the resources of the family home, whether it is welcome or not? I think it is unreasonable to presume that the profession is not considerate of the notion of partnerships with families – it is certainly aware of the problem of being an unwelcome guest (ECE Taskforce, 2011). My interest here is how the construction of the EC profession influences the nature of partnerships, and the questions teachers feel encouraged and safe to ask about partnership.

Are teachers sensitive to their shifting nature as a mechanism within a wider disciplinary apparatus that takes advantage of the early years of learning as a function of controlling the freedoms of the social world and the future ‘life chances’ of the child? This idea of the future
is the focus of the final ‘toy’, exploring the professional influence of the era of ‘cool capitalism’ and its fast flows of electronically mediated knowledge (Loveless & Williamson, 2013).

Apply iPad liberally

Endless numbers is top rating free iPad application for children’s learning. The product is an excellent example of an anxious parental rush to plug children in to educational advantage. These pressures connect the family and the profession through the kind of deterministic thinking that associates good games, good play, good teaching and good home-centre partnerships with better life chances (Woule, 2014b). My interest here is not whether the evidence is good regarding the quality of the application and its causal relationship with the good life, but rather with the application of new knowledge about particular elements of a child’s life. There are drivers of this knowledge. The economy of EC education is a complex screen behind which the tensions of low pay and good business operate in tacit complicity with public perception. EC is endless business, whether through numbers of sales of vital toys or through numbers that float around about children’s best development.

For teachers it is not the numbers that are endless but rather the sciences of childhood that endlessly (re)produce knowledge on development and pedagogy. The teacher has her eyes glued to her twitter account should a new professional fact become fashionable. One of the very fashionable but highly problematised twitterings around EC is the use of new electronic media. The rolling out of new media into the curriculum is loaded with assumptions of the profession’s ‘low-tech hi-touch’ stigma (see Gibbons, 2007; Gibbons, 2008) and a technological anxiety associated with lost opportunity.

Childrearing professionals engage with the problem of the promise of the future, the problem with the anxiousness that we have in relation to the idea of a life lived meaningfully (Camus, 1991). This kind of anxiety steers the teacher towards a unified technical determinism, and away from the idea of a professional ‘care’. Care is critical to partnership. Caring partnerships should remain quite skeptical of any illusions of better technologically determined futures.

Questioning boundaries

That professional partnerships are required with the family requires a complex understanding of the nature of professional/family relationships, and yet the nature of a partnership continues to cause headaches in terms of what it means to: have a partnership; draw in elements of the home into the centre; influence the practices of parents through dialogue and advocacy; influence the status of the early childhood teaching profession as an expert profession; and be consciousness of the imposition of “certain ways of seeing things to the detriment of other possible understandings” (Smeyers, 2010b, p. 284).

The purpose of this paper is to question the kind of thinking that entrenches the profession. The entrenchment is an epistemological error, a weak response to an apparatus that asks only certain questions. Davis wonders about the possibility of a future “genuine and enduring embrace of infancy as a communitarian locus of caring relations between adults and” children (p. 298). The work to be done here is a kind of professional narrative that keeps a careful eye on the boundaries that are created between teacher and parent, private and public, and care and education. I think there is sufficient evidence in the polemics that goes on in the early childhood sector that partnership is a rhetorical nicety at best, and so there is some work to do here to negotiate out of a blind alley in which the governing of both the profession and the family is expressed in terms of honouring but acts in ways that marginalise, demean, deprive and exploit family and teachers justified by narrow measures of someone’s good life.

The familial role of the profession is a critical and careful distrust of the boundaries that appear and that are employed, including family-centre boundaries, qualification boundaries,
developmental boundaries, research boundaries, and pedagogical boundaries, and a critical and careful trust that builds rather than divides the community on account of these boundaries. The questions about education raised in this working paper provide an indication that the governing of the early years will continue to join together some kind of family and some kind of teaching professional. Whatever the agenda for pushing this partnership, and whatever the means of disciplining the nature of the partners, I would like to argue here that it is mutually beneficial for the family and the profession to dive into increasingly complex manifestations of this relationship, with the condition that the partnership be a form of resistance and care.

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The uniqueness of the other and the common world: Tensions and paradoxes

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The issue of the other and their significance for ethics in education initially requires the displacement of the horizon of metaphysics, which encloses the possibilities of an opening to alterity, to the horizon of facticity. This implies recognizing a problem for education, since the autonomous and self-determined individual (subject) is constituted in a process of self-relationship and reflexivity, without any appeal to exteriority. In other words, already in the metaphysical constitution of the modern subject, the other is not considered.

The issue of the other presents linguistic and conceptual difficulties, that Waldenfels called “linguistic and conceptual shadows” (2007, p.). The other is a category which is established in relation to identity, generating double identity and alterity, in which the other is seen as the limit of identity. It is a matter of distinguishing, through an elimination process, the same (idem), which is opposed to the other (alius). Through this process, for example, we distinguish an apple from a pear.

But the other also appears as the stranger, that which is heterogeneous to us, associated with what is disquieting, unfamiliar. The stranger does not appear by the simple process of delimitation, they emerge from a simultaneous process of inclusion and exclusion (Ibid., p.7). This same process is used to separate cultures, gender differences, man from animal, West from East, etc., which generates part of our difficulties in acknowledging what does not adjust to our conceptual appropriation schemes.

In modern thinking, the other appears as that which tends to exclusion, associated with what is strange in identity, all that is contrary, distinct and opposite to it. As Ricoeur reminds one (1996), the philosophy of the subject is paradigmatic, since insofar as the Cartesian “I think” founds all relationships, the self is expressed without the confrontation of something outside itself, and this configures a kind of prologue to this topic. In Meditations, Descartes show that the objectivation of thinking, which may ensure the truth, does not depend on another. Certainty is connected only to cogito, there is only pure thinking and this allows representing the world and dominating nature. The consequence of a radical separation between thinking and corporeity, for instance, was our difficulty in dealing with nature, in recognizing the other in ourselves. Thus, the modern subject is constituted without appealing to any externality, and everywhere we look around us, we will only see what we put there, in other words, ourselves. According to Waldenfels’ interpretation, in modernity, when the stranger comes on the scene, he interferes in the order of reason and brings the subject out of focus, unbalancing him to the point of producing the effect that “man does not feel completely at home” (2007, p.4). Although Western thinking, through the Hegelian-Marxist philosophy, has brought the concept of estrangement or alienation (Entfremdung), it is not the same as strangeness (Fremdheit).

Thus, the distinction between the Self and the other, between the own and the stranger, is not reduced to an opposition between terms. Rather it implies a phenomenology and a comprehensive hermeneutics that configures the appearance of the stranger within the very

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1 This is a reference by Waldefels to the famous statement by Freud that: “the ego is not the master in its own house” (1969, p. 178).
self, due to the intra-subjective and intracultural character of the other. The other is already internalized in the Self, it is a kind of double me myself. In this sense, Waldensfels emphasizes that neither otherness of me myself nor the other come first, since "if I become me myself and am touched by the other, and responding to their appeal, the two dimensions intersect: I am outside myself precisely because I am duplicated by the other; and I am duplicated precisely remaining outside myself" (Ibid. p.12).

The problem then refers to eclipsing in the relationship with the other, with the difference and with the stranger. We can recall how much education has had to deal with this matter in the known pedagogical efforts to work with the students' peculiarities, ranging from the introduction of methodological procedures to further adjust teaching to the individual differences, curriculum reform with a view to covering historical demands for recognition denied to the minorities\(^2\), taking in pedagogical actions emphasizing the cultural artifacts that underscore new ways of subjectivation, the implementation of different modalities of digital technologies in teaching emphasizing the interactive dimension, also including concern about the peculiarities of psychic, moral and intellectual development of the students, and above all, the repeated defenses of interaction between teacher and student. Various pedagogical movements since the New School reaffirm the need to work with the differences without, however, considering the size of the problem adequately. These initiatives are part of our ideas, but do not apprehend the problem of alterity, because they run into structural difficulties, “debris” to use a term by Heidegger\(^3\), in which the other and the difference are referred to a normalization criterion. The question is not to treat alterity and the difference epistemologically or by the method, but by the ethical treatment which gives visibility to something that was covered up in the metaphysical tradition and, above all, seeks recognition from the other whose dignity was injured when he was excluded by the rigid moral principles. Traditional ethics does not evidence the other; on the contrary, either it is deposed by consciousness, or it is a concession of will. In both cases the difference is denied. In this measure, the individual tends to become disturbed at what is foreign to his structure and this happens in the educational processes, above all in the relationship between teachers and students. We are always surprised by the temptation of defining, delimiting the other. As Heidegger warned, no difference or uniqueness is made by us. In other words, it happens and we are placed in this difference, it is this difference that calls us. From this perspective, Waldenfels (1997) defends a peculiar logic of a response that perceives the other beyond our own understanding, that recognized their inevitability and uniqueness, and that will produce responses outside the existing normalizations.

The question to be asked, considering the demand for service to the uniqueness of the other and the difference is what happens with the demand presented by tradition to guide education according to universal norms. As we know, accepting the universal normativity or refusing it in favor of particularism is still one of the central themes in the contemporary philosophical debate, and it is especially relevant for philosophy of education, because normativity is indissociable from sociability, from the constitution of a common world which ensures the continuity of the social groups, knowledges, ethics and culture. Here an aporia interposes itself, since the norm represents something external, something common that generates the submission of the difference and forces our actions to a normalized response. To this question, however one can oppose the way in which norms are produced and

\(^2\) This is the case of Brazilian Law 10,639/3, a claim of the Black Social Movement (Movimento Social Negro) which establishes mandatory teaching of African-Brazilian History and Culture in elementary and middle school.

\(^3\) In paragraph 6 of Being and time, referring to the matter of the meaning of being as it was treated by metaphysics, Heidegger says: "it is then necessary to shake the rigidity and hardening of a petrified tradition and remove the accumulated debris “ (1995, p. 51).

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applied. If they are constituted in discursivity, by dialogue, and are continually challenged and revised, they are already displaced to a post-metaphysical scenario, they can incorporate new historical claims and not remain inflexible. In this sense Habermas says:

For us to free ourselves from the chains of a false and only presumable universality of principles selectively exhausted and applied insensibly to the context, social movements and political struggles have always been necessary and still are today, in the sense that we can learn, based on the painful experiences and the irreparable suffering of the humiliated and offended, the wounded and raped, that nobody can be excluded in the name of moral universalism – neither the underprivileged classes, nor the nations exploited, nor the domesticated women nor the marginalized minorities (1991, p. 115).

In this way, the confrontation between universality of the rules, existence of a common world and the uniqueness of the other underscores the paradoxical character of education. Without norms no sociability is possible and with them we tend to processes of appropriation and exclusion of the other. Would we be thus again facing the incommensurability of the worlds? Gadamer, especially in his later texts, reflects on this problem and appeals to what unites us, a sort of common world and a social tie. He says:

It seems to me a defect of our public mentality that one always raises the different, the discussed, the polemical and the doubtful to the consciousness of men, and that we, so to say, leave without a voice what is really common and binding. We have already harvested the fruits of broad education for what is different and the sensitivity which is required by the perception of differences. Our historical education goes in this direction (...). I have the impression that here it would be convenient to reflect on the solidarities that are deeply rooted in the standards of human life (...) Raising our consciousness to what unites us (2009, p. 120).

Habermas also highlights the solidarity that is “rooted in the experience of the necessary responsibility for the other, since all have to be equally interested as companions in the same cause, in the integrity of their common universe”(1991, p. 70). Thus, the norms are not neutral and non-historical, on the contrary, they express the existence of a reciprocal recognition of those who are part of a common world and are part of our moral self-understanding.

Recognizing the radical alterity of the other does not mean that we cannot understand him, and also, possibly we cannot do justice to their uniqueness. But the problem also invokes the question about the possibility of dialogue becoming a way to access the other, to establish a possible reciproducibility between the self and the other. This is a way for education to face its aporetic and tensional character. Hans-Georg Gadamer takes up the platonic dialogue again based on philosophical hermeneutics, retaining the logos that can be shared by all, in order to build a bridge between the self and the other. In this way, one can understand the tensional dimension present in education. On the one hand the educational efforts of accepting the other’s uniqueness require going beyond an appropriating metaphysical vision and the risks of insensitivity towards the other in applying universal norms. On the other hand, while we have language, we are beings who are always susceptible to new understandings of the other and of ourselves. And in this experience are lodged the expectations of an ethical opening that will maintain the relationship with alterity, overcome the universalism that assimilates and levels out, to create a common world.

Gadamer proposes an approach in which the dialogue does not disfigure alterity, in an attempt to appropriate its interior. On the contrary, “it is part of every true dialogue to really understand the other, to make their points of view count and put oneself in their place” (Gadamer, 1990, p. 389). The authentic dialogue, the one in which we are implicated and of
which we do not know what will result, presents the possibility of creating a common world, decisive for ethics in education, since it allows interaction, acceptance and the expansion of our own individuality. An attempt at going beyond the monosilabic view of the world, overcoming the same schematism that has already brought us so much arrogance and intransigence. We can only broaden our ethical perspectives because we have the capacity of putting ourselves in the other’s place, perceiving their expectations. Dialogue only begins because there is another, a base for all relationships, and in this there is an ethos.

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Narratives of educational relations. A study of representations of relations of teaching and learning in philosophy of education

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Research on relations in education is a broad field. Education deals with what societies emphasize as important for human beings. In this paper we intend to explore some structures in the representation of relations in philosophy of education. A central aspect of education is its function as a transfer of values and knowledge from one generation to the next. This fact draws attention to relations as a concept and also as a process describing transfer in education. Relations are thus used as a concept on different levels; describing interaction between agents of many types. A fairly recent book title ‘No Education Without Relation’ (Bingham and Sidorkin 2004) postulates this primacy of relations for pedagogy.

What we intend to explore in this paper is the possibility of categorising descriptions and conceptualisations of these relations between agents and agents and ‘content’ in education as we find them represented in philosophy of education. We start by categorising into three groups which represents different qualities of relations. These three qualities of relations we have named; experience, authority and care. The three qualities are derived at from a common conceptualisation of pedagogy in our Scandinavian context. Experience as a primary category is a common reference in literature on pedagogy, a classical references here being Dewey (1976). Our choice of authority and care as reference for relations in education is primarily derived from the work of the Norwegian philosopher of education Erling Lars Dale (1985, 1986, 2005). Our intention is to find out if and in what way differences of representations (qualities) of relations are central to the understanding of teaching and learning/education, and to what extent different conceptualisation either encompasses only one or more of these categories. Our presumption is that there seems to be a discrepancy in the large variations presented as representations of understandings of relations in philosophy of education. Thus in order to differentiate research related to conceptualisations of relations, as we can find it within research dedicated to a discussion on these foundational aspects of education/pedagogy we have selected three different qualities of (understandings of) relations; experience, authority, and care, and by this hope to explore in what way it can be said that philosophy of education mainly refer relations to one or more of these qualities. The three qualities of relations are thus:

1) Experience as a reference for an understanding of relations between agents and agents and ‘content’ in teaching and learning
2) Authority as a reference for an understanding of relations between agents and agents and ‘content’ in teaching and learning
3) Care as a reference for understanding relations between agents and agents and ‘content’ in teaching and learning

The first category, experience, means that relations are referred to and are represented through a relation between the agents and the content. The content is then expressed through the skills necessary to engage with this content, as we (traditionally) can find it in vocational education. In this type of education the model of understanding teaching and learning is usually based on the model of a master - apprentice relation (Lave and Wenger 1991). The second category means that relations are represented through the authority of the content and the authority of the teacher. The authority may be recognized as a content that represents truth as a result of science or as a gadamerian truth (2004). These different understandings of the world, through science or hermeneutics create different structures in the relation of authority in teaching and learning. The last category deals with the possibility
of establishing communication in relations, meaning interaction between the participants, e.i. as a teacher and as a student. This communication opens for intersubjectivity of some kind. This intersubjectivity does not seem to incorporate the content, because the primary relation is the one between the agents in education. Care as a quality of relations between agents in education, is then conceived as 'a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors' (Nodding 1992, p. 17, not italics in original). Our attention have been drawn to the possibility of making an analysis of this field of relations as a field within philosophy of education and see if this analysis can tell us something about understandings of representation of relations in education.

Methodological reflections
This study is a qualitative analysis of representations of relations in philosophy of education. By calling it a qualitative analysis we intend to address some foundational and conceptual underpinnings within the field. We are still at the initial phase of this project and therefore this paper is mainly going to elaborate the design for this study and then draw from a small number of examples. Our intention for doing this is first to gather more insight into ways in which relations are thematised in philosophy of education. We understand that there might be obvious aspects we miss by our choice of categories, but we assume that this is something which will be revealed as we become engaged in this work. Secondly we will do an analysis of the chosen texts in order to draw out some of the conceptual references that are used and if these can be referred to our chosen categories, but also to see what cross-over there are between the categories.

This study addresses representations of relations between agents and content in teaching and learning and intends to explore how these are represented in philosophy of education. This is a difficult task. By categorising relations in philosophy of education we enforce a structure onto a field of research which was not there initially. We also do not know at this stage how this plays out and if it is possible to make a more comprehensive categorization of the actual field of research. Furthermore relations are also something which is pre-structured through different practices. These practices will express themselves, or play along we might say, in research. This will be further elaborated in the paper.

Analyses
An analysis of a limited number of representations of relations in philosophy of education will be presented in this section. The idea is that we think an analysis of texts might give references to conceptualisations of relations that can be brought back to our categorisations. We have at the moment chosen three texts (Bridges 2009, Hogan 2010 and Noddings 1992). The reason for choosing Bridges (2009) ‘Education and the possibility of outsider understanding’ is that this text problematise and argue for an analytical philosophical positioning of experience and understanding. Hogan’s text is chosen because it addresses the teaching and learning processes directly. The reason for choosing Noddings work on care is that this approach has had significant impact for the notion of care in philosophy of education. A short presentation of these texts will be given in the paper. As this is an exploratory paper one of our intentions is also get an idea of how meaningful our categorisations are and to see what kind of understanding of relations in education can be reached through this analysis.

References:


A new school laboratory

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The concept of laboratory, which has been in the debate of the Italian pedagogy since mid twentieth century, is still today qualified as an innovative way to teach, to think the relationship between teaching and learning, as well as an occasion to learn and exercise the democracy. Open-mindedness, flexibility, the practical feasibility of experience, the synergic participation of the individuals, the social integration are some of the characteristics which make the laboratory context a democratic one (Dewey, 1989). However, today, it is necessary to think over and redefine the concept of laboratory in light of the changes that the digitality and new media have introduced in the society, in the habits of the young people and, consequently, in their ways of learning.

Pedagogy has to indicate some new ways of learning to the school. These ways of learning have to be in line with the students’ multimedia needs. Students are more and more attracted by the possibilities of social interaction and of the acquisition of knowledge related to technological devices, equipped with more and more sophisticated software.

Experimenting, digitizing, interacting, the modality of practical feasibility represent, for the young person, the “handy” world: a world which is, at the same time, unlimited and delimited, handheld, “contained” in a tablet or in another attractive multimedia device, without which the young people do not want and neither know they how to do without, any more (Calvani, 2007). Therefore, it is opportune that digital natives learn also through some ways of acquisition of knowledge, which are in harmony with these new opportunities. This has to be made in order to avoid dysfunctions between the knowledge offered by the school, which is perceived as distant, obsolete and, consequently, boring, and the knowledge (which is fragmentary and not established, but highly attractive) that the “time out of school”, that is the digitized free time, offers to the young student. Training the teachers to these new modalities of learning is the challenge which pedagogy and, therefore, the school have to deal with and win.

There are numerous pedagogues who look at the new media with interest, thus paying attention also to the world of videogames and, particularly, to the so called edutainment. The educational, cognitive, meta-cognitive implications and their characteristics of creativity, socialization, practicality, engagement, already recognized by all the experts in the field, qualify these sophisticated technology devices as an interesting occasion for learning and for laboratory learning. They should be used in support of the traditional didactic and educational activities in order to outline a new idea of laboratory and school. The school still appears too distant from the society, which, is, instead, ruled by the audiovisual and multimedia logics. This separation is often associated with a value judgement, of what is good and what is bad, necessary to be overcome. Succeeding in doing it would open new prospects of teaching, since teaching would be based on the primary need for “letting the student be fine” (Maragliano, 2001), for encouraging his/her interests and motivations.

Among the most delicate issues regarding the whole sector of education, attention has to be focused on the motivation, by students, in relation to learning. In fact, new media and videogames in particular easily succeed in motivating them, since they are highly captivating. Whereas the game designer chiefly aims at involving the player, teachers often overlook this aspect, thus focusing all their attention on education and on the transmission of notions. Learning through practice (practice allowed by multimedia) permits the student to learn in an effective, personal and amusing way and the teacher to think of a course of studies which is more appropriate, particular and satisfying. Dewey’s idea of laboratory, of the continuity
between school and family environment, of the relationship between student and quality of life, of the school in the society, would be reaffirmed in all its effectiveness. Learning, in this perspective, is, then, qualified still more as a laboratory learning, since it is incisive and significant, far apart from mainly communicable-reproductive ways, open to research and focused on the interest and motivation of the student (Maragliano, 2001). Furthermore, the school keeps on standing out as a laboratory of democracy, of a democracy which expands, broadens and strengthens through the use of computing, web, new technologies: together they promote it. And this enriches the course of the student’s studies still more: a student which is able to compete still more with himself/herself and with the others. Welcoming the new communication, interaction, information and game instruments and associating them with education means not “falling in the trap of a fruitless contrast between two life styles” (Oliverio Ferraris, 1998), which would condemn the school to a role of real marginality. The new media may really represent a constitutive element of that alliance with didactics that the student claims in the school recognition of his/her acquired rights and of the skills acquired during his/her personal history inside the technologies (Rivoltella, 2005). Moreover, they “qualify the curriculum, they appraise the cognitive languages and processes, above all those of childhood and adolescence, which mainly need visual concreteness, the globality of the representation and an intense perceptive strain up to the motivation for the logical, formal and aesthetic elaboration” (Frabboni, 2006). In particular, videogames initiate some innovative learning models which refer to metaphorical, abductive, not linear reasoning forms, which are unlikely to be adopted in classrooms. The line between experience and knowledge in videogames, above all in the well-devised ones, becomes finer, thus creating some immersive and experiential learning contexts. The players/students meet in a virtual and interactive laboratory where they learn through imitation, research and practice. In this manner, videogames let us know well the real way that typically children use for learning; therefore, what relates to knowledge, its meaning and sense is acquired as a result of their approach to it in real contexts of use. The use, inside schools, of the so-called Seriusgames, for example, may represent a resource for teaching, since it introduces, in a different way, a form of learning which allows the player/student to learn in a stimulating environment, through a procedure of “attempt and mistake”. Of course, experimenting continuously means learning by doing. In this respect, the videogame becomes a laboratory. It is necessary to highlight that new media technologies have to be used inside an integrated educational path which does not only focus on the technological aspect but which includes the instruments of the new technologies. These new technologies may modify the practice of learning and learning well, and, therefore, they make it become more effective and captivating. Learning through the new media means promoting the practice of the laboratory, in order to “re-dimension the lasting hegemony of the class-room as the unique context of capitalisation of knowledge, necessarily of that transmission-reproductive knowledge, and, consequently, in order to elevate, as a sign of the personal research, the quality of education. The new media outline a new proxemics, new languages of the space, in the class-room, where traditionally there is the classic lesson vis-à-vis. By doing so, they cause fertile secondary effects on the group dynamics, on the relationship between teacher and students and on the interactive and motivation communications traffic of the group-class” (Frabboni, 2004). In conclusion, digital media qualify as laboratory learning to be integrated with the most traditional ways of learning which are present in the didactics, according to a perspective of integration between new instruments and modalities of teaching-learning already present and consolidated. It is important that the student (who is engaged with very serious activities - his/her growth, adaptation, learning, solution of problems, reality trial, decoding and understanding of emotions and feelings, impulses control, the respect of rules) learns also through some “amusing modalities”, which use words, his/her hands, objects, technologies, in an osmotic relationship with the others. The others may be either students or teachers. Anyway, this does not mean that the disciplines become “recreational”, but it means starting introducing the topic of study in a different way and, at the same time, it means ensuring that information, which is acquired through the game, may be used again by students in a successive phase. In this way, the relationship between school and society, real and virtual environment
becomes closer and closer. “Only a structure which is lively for productive activities and which is appropriately equipped may be defined as a laboratory. A multimedia laboratory, which is more and more complete, organized and well-advanced, should certainly have a key place not only in an educational system, but in any initiative aiming at productively “engaging” the most advanced technologies” (De Bartolomeis, 2000).

References
Between education and disclosure. Rethinking democratic commitments to teaching philosophy

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The standard understanding of democratic political education has been based on an acknowledgment of the instrumental value of democratic political institutions, political participation and democratic practices. (Addams: 1990, Mitchell: 2001, Davies et al: 2005) Here I want to go one step further and argue that the purpose of civic education is also to cast a new light on historical and social injustices. I argue that proper political education can generate awareness among students and working professionals of social injustices and their own direct (or indirect) complicity in perpetuating them. I argue that one of the possible outcomes of such an encounter may result in a motivation of the public body to recognize and fulfill their subsequent moral and ethical responsibilities towards the marginalized sectors of society (both locally and globally). (Callan: 1997, Macedo: 1990, Young: 2000, Esquith: 2010) Such a project is not without its own challenges, especially if we consider its specific classroom format, and most of my elaboration here will pivot on questions concerning what can be salvaged from the project’s concrete theoretical appearance, and how a technological framework may prove to be an effective medium in addressing contemporary social maladies (e.g. using an online alternative instead of face to face classroom). In order to achieve this task, the structure of my analysis is divided into the following: (1) a general analysis of the concepts of disclosure and critical reenactment and their possible application in a classroom or an online environment, (2) an analysis of concrete theoretical (and material) obstacles for such a project, and (3) an evaluation of the relevance of an online educational alternative in overcoming some of today’s social inequalities. In order to achieve this task, the structure of my analysis is divided into the following: (1) a general analysis of the concepts of disclosure and critical reenactment and their possible application in a classroom or an online environment, (2) an analysis of concrete theoretical (and material) obstacles for such a project, and (3) an evaluation of the relevance of an online educational alternative in overcoming some of today’s social inequalities. In addressing different aspects of this theoretical construct, the central aim of my examination is to develop a philosophical framework that illuminates the former’s main features and to highlight the relevance it may hold for educational theory, critical reasoning and social justice in general.

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The concept of (democratic) political education, which has received much intellectual and political attention in the first half of 20th Century, has been in recent decades largely disregarded. For the most part, the cause of this is an inherent ambiguity in the concept itself, as well as the range of issues that it tries to encompass. Nonetheless, recent academic revivals of this theme remind us of the importance that it still has for contemporary social criticism and civic education in general. Taking into the account the significance that democratic self-government has for political participation and the need of the educational system to deal with increasing social (and cultural) diversity, it seems that the autonomy of individuals depends not only on the success of social structure(s) to incalculate virtues of tolerance, mutual respect, and fairness, but also to successfully accommodate ever an increasing dependency of learning media on developing technologies.

In what follows, I advance and defend the claim that proper political education can generate awareness among students and working professionals of social injustices and their own complicity in perpetuating them. I argue that one of the possible outcomes of such an encounter may result in the motivation of an academic body to recognize and fulfill their subsequent moral and ethical responsibilities towards the marginalized sectors of society.

1 For example Jane Addams, Theodor Adorno, etc.
Such a project is not without its own challenges, especially if we consider its specific online format, and most of my elaboration here will pivot on questions concerning what can be salvaged from the project's concrete theoretical appearance, and how a technological framework may prove to be an effective medium in addressing contemporary social maladies. In order to achieve this task, the structure of my analysis is divided into the following: (a) a general analysis of the concepts of disclosure and critical reenactment and their possible application in an online or classroom environment, (b) an analysis of concrete theoretical (and material) obstacles for such a project, and (c) an evaluation of its relevance in overcoming some of today's social inequalities. In addressing different aspects of this theoretical construct, the central aim of my examination is to develop a framework that illuminates its main features and to highlight the relevance that it may hold for educational theory, critical reasoning and social justice in general.

(a) The standard understanding of (democratic) political education has been based on an acknowledgment of the instrumental value of democratic political institutions, political participation and democratic practices. Here I want to go one step further and argue that the purpose of civic education is also to cast a new light on historical and social injustices transcending the narrow notion of responsibility that we encounter in contemporary liberal literature. Faced with increasing social diversity, one can argue that phenomena of globalization and multiculturalism are changing the ways we understand the relationship between agency, responsibility and justice. How, then, can the responsibilities of everyday bystanders (our students, neighbors, common people, etc.) be reframed in a way that will raise awareness to their ongoing participation and the benefits they derive from current (unjust) social conditions? If we translate this question into a classroom or an online educational environment: what are the ways in which online learning can adequately disclose underlying power structures and how specific political interests are rationalized, internalized and legitimized by the public body? Can this be achieved without infringing on someone’s rights if the target of disclosure and immanent criticism may be the norms deeply ingrained in their particular cultures? Finally, does/can an online education, in one form or another, adequately overcome obstacles to the recognition of a student’s own responsibilities for structural and symbolic violence within a society? In an attempt to address these concerns, I introduce, as one alternative to traditional approach to classroom dynamics and education in general, the notions of critical disclosure and reenactment.

Exposing students to representations of human suffering, clarifying the links between different aspects of cultural and economic structures, highlighting students’ (or of their families) privileged position and institutionally based complicity in the upkeep of social conditions that marginalize and subordinate certain group of people based on race, culture or gender, may be the first step in teaching a successful critical social and political class in philosophy. Revealing the fact that the web of responsibility can extend in surprising directions, this notion of critical disclosure doesn’t exhaust itself in criticisms of the pathological tendencies of modern society and pathogenesis of human agency. Rather, such a survey of the increasing social indifference to structural injustices carries out the diagnosis of social conditions far beyond the surface manifestations that are represented in media or general public opinion. By condensing or shifting meanings, and revealing facts hitherto

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2 The common understanding of this relationship largely associates accountability with moral and legal liability, and therefore subordinates this complex relation to the institutionalized set of norms and practices that regulate individual behavior. Such norms, then, are not only taken as constitutive and evaluative categories that inform and help define (and regulate) the practices of social agents, but also narrowly situate questions of the subject’s agency and responsibility within institutionalized legal (and political) structures of society. I think that such an understanding of the scope and nature of political responsibility unfairly downplays the conceptual and normative complexity of social conditions and their affects on our sense of justice and perceptions of other subjects.
unperceived in social reality, students are taken back to a stock of social, economic and political opportunities and resources that beneficiaries of past injustices have access to.\(^3\)

There are a number of ways to address this process. Taking into account how different segments of political structures constitute personal agency by virtue of exposure to cultural predilections and their ideologically saturated publicity, it is important that critical disclosure \textit{reenacts} critical aspects of a subject’s historical, cultural and political reality. What I understand under reenactment is an investigative process that deals with guilt and responsibility by transcending the narrow \textit{perpetrator} – \textit{victim} framework of moral and legal liability. They are performative critical self-reflections that prompt an audience to adopt a more active, participatory role when exposed to evidence of structural and symbolic violence. Taking into account that most discussions of responsibilities for systemic structural suffering emphasizes the contributions that parties make either through their actions or failures to act, critical reenactment extends our understanding of responsibility by indicating different angles of the bystander’s predicament that most of us share. Such a predicament rotates around different dimensions of responsibilities and a hope that reenactment can serve as catalyst for the political education of bystander beneficiaries and those from whom they have benefited. In the end, such a process depends heavily on media that further conveys the meaning that reenactment wants to advance: a movie, a novel, a painting, a parade, a theatrical performance, etc. They all have a symbolic dimension, because their primary aim is to address not so much the cognitive processes as the emotional capacities of the target audience.

(b) The previous pages offered a hint that a successful democratic education depends on our capacity to engage students with a complex web of cultural, economic, legal and political responsibilities that we all share. Now it’s time to draw attention to some of the issues that undermine the force of this approach.

- One can argue that this view is overly optimistic about the positive impact that democratic education can have on students. Such optimism may seem questionable when we situate our own role as social critics and educators in a broader social context. Taking into account that every social (and political) theory presupposes a particular notion of agency, what gives us assurance that structural and symbolic factors will not prevent our efforts to be taken seriously or even acknowledged by students?

- There is a danger that such an attempt to raise critical awareness about social conditions may be oblivious to the differences that remain among students themselves. Are there reasons to believe that critical reenactments through art, or exposure to atrocities via the media may cultivate their ability to understand the complex web of responsibilities and structural suffering if we take in account that their interests, and capacity to appropriate what’s unfolding in front of their eyes may vary and be very limited due to previous exposure to cultural and educational predilections?

- The increasing desensitization of general public that results from constant exposure to media broadcasts raises concerns about the mechanisms that may play a role in general negligence and lack of interest regarding mass atrocities and human suffering.

\(^3\) For example, inherited wealth and political/educational capital generates a growing comparative advantage in many ways over those who have been forcibly displaced, marginalized and denied recognition within cultural and political spheres of society. This approach to teaching entails a potential in raising awareness of their own position in a web of historical and social conditions, and may contribute to their understanding how interconnected and morally sensitive our world actually is.
in general. Considering that desensitization involves the capacity to numb the affective capacity of subjects, the positive and negative feelings that combine with reasoned analysis to guide our judgments, decisions, and actions may result in increasing detachment and lack of willingness to take a critical stance and provide aid.

- Overcoming the denial of responsibilities and self-deception may demand more resources (and energy) than an online/class environment allows. We should consider that through a complex setup of representations (media, internet, public campaigns), the embodiment of social powers in public broadcasts are references not just to social dynamics and events that unfold on a neutral political landscape, but rather to a situated practice of opportunities, performance and control. It remains a constant danger that those agents whose behavior media exposure aims to affect remain vulnerable to the forces of predominant political and cultural narratives that cognitively and emotionally structure individuals according to a particular social context that institutional powers want to convey. Exposing these agents to an opposing or alternative view may result in individual or collective denial, even aggressivity towards the educator.

In the end, these are only some of challenges that such a project of critical education may encounter in both the classroom and an online environment. Although they may seem sufficient to dishearten us from even attempting to pursue such a project, I still want to remain persistent that facilitating such an encounter between human suffering and an audience helps them to recognize their inherent relationship to different aspects of social injustice and, through this acknowledgment, some of them may go beyond such conditions.

(c) In the end, however plausible the previous insights may be (and despite challenges that such insights may encounter in their realization), we are now confronted with the task of articulating the potential that such a complex and highly abstract framework may have on education and social justice in general, especially if we take its online format in consideration. We tend to conceive online learning through the prism of academic challenges, economic benefits, personal achievements, etc. and not through its capacity to bring about social change. One of the basic aspects of social research is that education itself must be taken as a form of capital in neoliberal society. Thus, most structural injustices (poverty, racial, class and gender segregation and marginalization, violence, etc.) have their source in the lack of (or limited) access to meaningful education. If we look at socioeconomic diversity in the US, we see that most of the marginalized sectors of our society can’t afford to go to schools that provide for them a fair and equal access to opportunities (jobs, access to social institutions, legal equality, social equality, etc.). This situation in turn creates a vicious circle where living choices are supposedly limited by class, race or gender patterns, but actually have deeper social roots of subordination and oppression. What I understand by these social roots is the simple fact that most of the time these unfortunate patterns transform to patterns of crime, violence and human deprivation, ending in a social environment wherein dynamics of inclusion and exclusion work through a public capacity to acknowledge (or remain ignorant about) the fact that most of these unjust aspects of social conditions are not accidental but instead rely on the political (and moral) choices individuals in power make. These choices unfortunately have the support of the majority of the population.⁴

⁴ The question of responsibility is then raised not only for our government officials, but also for the bystanders who vote for these people, support the institutions and personally perpetuate ongoing marginalization.
Now, how can online learning alleviate such a state of affairs? Well, online education offers a cheap and feasible alternative compared to public school systems. The Internet to some extent transcends class, gender and racial boundaries that are evident in our societies. Offering affordable (if not free) online education to marginalized sectors is a way to overcome some of the structural injustices that are evident in our communities. Is it necessary that privileged groups hold a monopoly on education and knowledge? I can’t imagine that it would be very difficult to establish a social program that can make this idea a reality. The only question that remains is why our governments don’t do it.

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Multiculturalism and democracy: Diversity and difference in Hong Kong’s liberal studies

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One aim of education is to teach young people about diversity in society and around the world. Today, this entails exploring the impact of globalization on local cultural, economic, and political life. Hong Kong’s new Senior Secondary “Liberal Studies” curriculum works toward these ends, as the required subject in secondary that deals with social studies topics, in modules including “Hong Kong Today,” “Modern China,” and “Globalization.” Liberal Studies’ goals are philosophical and practical. Some are specifically multicultural, such as “to help students appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society” (CDC 2007, 5). Such multicultural education, for developing understanding and positive toleration and recognition toward diversity in society, is held as paramount to educators concerned with civics and social justice. It is seen as a tool to fight prejudice, discrimination, and racism within societies, and to increase the positive potential of globalization, as people commonly move across borders today (Banks 2008; Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997).

Additionally, multicultural representation of diversity in education can echo and reshape notions of citizenship and authentic inclusion within a society, as it can help to reconceive the character of communities, and one’s rights and responsibilities toward others within them.

This essay provides an overview of how ethnic, national, and religious diversity are represented in Hong Kong curriculum, analyzing in particular how diversity and cultural difference in Hong Kong is made visible and absent, and positive and negative, in the most commonly used Liberal Studies text sets. The analysis will consider how Hong Kong’s diversity is expressed in the textbooks, and how different religious, ethnic, and national groups are depicted in relation to the society, overall—politically, socially, and culturally. Textbooks are often the primary classroom resource teachers use, as they are typically regarded as official sources of curriculum content. However, textbooks can also be seen, especially in social studies subjects (such as history, geography, and Liberal Studies), to reflect prevalent attitudes, beliefs, and norms, as latent, or unintentional knowledge can be seen to emerge when one critically examines what is and is not included in portraying the social world (Jackson 2011; Mikk 2000). Thus, although the subject of Liberal Studies clearly has multicultural aims, a lack of meaningful exploration of diversity within the content of the textbooks can reflect ambivalence among educational leaders in Hong Kong about the value of diversity and positive recognition of difference in society. Indeed, this analysis suggests such ambivalence is common, given sparse, sporadic, and negative attention given to religion in Liberal Studies textbooks.

Liberal Studies Curriculum and Textbooks

Introduced in 2009, Senior Secondary Liberal Studies (SSLS) offers the most ambitious, systematic curriculum with regard to student multicultural engagement with diversity within Hong Kong’s (government schools’) required curriculum. Its multicultural aims include:

- …enhance students’ understanding of themselves, their society, their nation, the human world…
- …develop multiple perspectives on perennial and contemporary issues in different contexts (e.g. cultural, social, economic, political…)…
- …appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society and handle conflicting values…
- …demonstrate respect for evidence, open-mindedness and tolerance towards the views and values held by other people…
- …demonstrate an appreciation for the values of their own and other cultures …
However, specific references to diverse cultures and religions are rather scarce in the 216-page curriculum guide. Typically, religion and ethnicity are listed among myriad other factors influencing people’s views, which educators might address. The first reference to curriculum dealing with religion or ethnicity states, for instance, with regard to government and “different interest groups,” that teachers explore,

the demands from people, organizations and interests groups with different characteristics, backgrounds, ideals and endowments, e.g. political groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the disadvantaged, professional bodies, industry and business, the middle class, people of different gender, ethnicity and religion. (CDC 2007, 30).

Religion and ethnicity appears as afterthoughts within such a list of people and entities that have or make “demands.” Religion and ethnicity are also mentioned in relation to learning about China and Chinese culture, and in connection to the opportunities and challenges posed by globalization. Yet these references are also in lists: e.g., “Does the spread of globalization promote international understanding or cause greater conflict among ethnic groups, religions, cultures and political entities?” (CDC 2007, 41).

According to Liberal Studies textbooks, Hong Kong society is proudly free with regard to ethnic and national difference and diversity of religious expression; it is a blended hybrid culture of East and West, Chinese and international, which meets the challenges of globalization with tolerance and a liberal, rights-based perspective toward difference (Jackson, 2014). Such a self-image is aligned with the curriculum’s multicultural aims, to understand and appreciate social diversity and plural values and cultures. This optimistic outlook about diversity and globalization paves the way for more inclusive notions of what Hong Kong society is, who Hong Kongers are, and how to develop the society as a model of multiculturalism, tolerance, and dynamism. Additionally, it casts students as future decision makers, who should protect minorities, ensure equality and eliminate discrimination, and uphold related multicultural attitudes and values.

However, like the curriculum guidelines, the textbooks remain highly vague in relation the details of the benefits of diversity in contemporary society. Despite the importance of religion to diverse people’s beliefs, values, and practices today (Nord, 1995), the ins and outs of religious diversity in Hong Kong and worldwide is barely addressed. There is no explanation in any of the Liberal Studies textbooks of the main beliefs and practices of any religious community—or of the religious make-up of Hong Kong, or the demographics of its religious believers (for instance, that ethnic-Chinese people may also participate in minority [or mainstream] religions in society).

Where coverage is more substantive, in discussing Islam, discourse is often heavily negatively biased. Muslims are cast as sexist, patriarchal, and backwards.

The social order of Islam is opposed to some prominent western values. For example, human rights, democracy and gender equality are incompatible with the Muslim religious doctrine. In Islam, it is not the individual and his free will that counts, but faith and religious struggle. (Wong, 2010, 51)

Representations of Muslims are not diverse. Liberal Muslims, feminist Muslims, Chinese Muslims, and Muslim women who do not wear hijab do not exist in the textbooks. Several images emphasize Muslim terrorists (anonymous, well-known, and lesser-known), and other clearly angry Muslims. Students can hardly learn how to understand and appreciate religious difference in their society or worldwide from such textbooks. Instead, they may enable bias
and prejudice, as students are likely to imagine that all Muslims are the same from such overgeneralized, oversimplified discussions.

Ethnic and national diversity is also treated scarcely in the textbooks, and with some ambivalence (Jackson and Shao, 2013). In relation to the representation of Islam, the discourse of Samuel Huntington's (1993) “clash of civilizations” (the phrase is taken from Bernard Lewis) is heavily emphasized in text discussions of cultural difference within and across cultures. This discourse encourages skepticism toward any type of harmonious intercultural multiculturalism within a society, yet is described in texts as confirmed (Wong, 2010), “widely accepted.” and “vindicated” (Ngai, 2010, 96; for contrast see Rosaldo, 1989; Said, 1997). In discussing politics and ethnic and national diversity in Hong Kong, the texts are also ambivalent, accepting as natural and inevitable that Chinese Hong Kongers will dominate in local politics despite the growing significance of ethnic minority groups:

Hong Kong is mainly populated by Chinese people.... Those who participate in local social and political affairs are mainly Chinese. Hong Kong is also the home of people of other ethnicities, but they receive less social support than local Chinese because of their different languages and lifestyles, so their socio-political participation rate is lower. (Hui, 2009, 13)

Often, ethnic and national diversity in Hong Kong is portrayed as a challenge for individuals, who are described as disadvantaged and “grassroots” despite the diversity of non-Chinese Hongkongers in political and socioeconomic terms (see McInerney, 2010). Taken in context, such discussions seem to promote an assimilationist discourse that understands difference as a barrier or stigma, rather than a source of pride or creative collaborative possibility in society. In sum, diversity appears good in the abstract, or when it comes to food and drink (milk tea is mentioned in several texts) or local law; however, actual diverse people appear as problematic, challenged, and challenging, painting diversity in society as blessing and curse.

Discussion
The lack of balanced, clear explanations about diversity in the textbooks is detrimental to the multicultural aims of the curriculum, given Liberal Studies educators' continued reliance on textbooks in teaching the course (Wong, Chan and Ho, 2012). Though overuse of textbooks is typical early in a subject's history (Barker, 1992), the Education Bureau discourages reliance on textbooks particularly for Liberal Studies, and therefore does not regulate textbook use for the subject (CDC, 2007). However, as reflections of Hong Kong educators’ common knowledge, the lack of sensitivity and specificity with regard to religious and ethnic expressions and experiences is disturbing. To continually express pride in equality, diversity, and nondiscrimination, without systematically describing minority experiences, is to encourage a shallow engagement with diversity, in place of constructive dialogue and reasoned analysis of important issues of social difference in good faith.

In this context, one cannot expect Liberal Studies teachers to be experts where textbook publishers are not. For Liberal Studies to ensure its multicultural aims are met, textbooks should be written with the advice of multicultural curricular experts and/or through consultation with minority groups in society. Furthermore, as teachers continue to rely on the textbooks, the Education Bureau should regulate and approve the textbooks as they do in all other required subjects. Finally, more should be done in teacher education and inservice training to elaborate methods, practices, and resources for teaching students about diversity. Lacking these provisions, it is unlikely students will learn to understand religious and ethnic difference, as required to meet Hong Kong’s interests in sustaining an open, liberal democratic society.
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The end of teachers’ authority or only its metamorphosis?

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Today, it is often possible to hear or read the claim that in schools things go wrong simply because teachers no longer have any authority. This claim is usually not meant as a value neutral statement of fact, but rather as a negative value judgment which expresses a severe critique of the present situation in education and schools. Some critics see the culprit for this situation in the teachers themselves, while others, just the opposite, in the causes on which teachers many times have no influence at all. In both cases, this criticism necessarily follows from two presuppositions: firstly, that authority is something good, and secondly, that it is nowadays still possible. But the question is whether or not this assumption is correct. The answer is not as easy as it might seem to be at first glance. For, some important and well-reasoned philosophical studies of the concept of authority have ended with the conclusion that we are living in the time of the end of authority, or in other words, that today, authority is either no longer possible or is no longer acceptable. If these claims, which refer to authority in general, are correct, then they should be valid also in the case of teachers’ authority and it is therefore pointless to criticize teachers for either not having something that they cannot have any more, or for lacking something that in modern democratic society and schools is unacceptable. And the opposite, if the aforementioned claims can be rejected with convincing arguments, the complaints against the teachers may be reasonable and justified. But only if the teachers themselves are guilty for the loss of their authority. Otherwise, only the criticism of the situation in schools, which is characterized by the disappearance of teachers’ authority, is reasonable and justified.

In any case, we can make a judgment about this matter only on the basis of the arguments for and against the proposition that authority in contemporary society is impossible and unacceptable. Authority is supposed to be unacceptable for at least two reasons. Firstly, because, according to Renaut, in democracy – looking from the logical point of view – no authority at all is acceptable, since in a democracy no legitimate power can be imposed in an indisputable way. For, each command must be based on rational justification and every relationship which includes commands and obedience must be voluntarily accepted. But such an interpretation may be endorsed only if authority is understood as blind obedience to commands, and, as such, as diametrically opposed to freedom and reason. However, Gadamer has already challenged this conception of authority, by arguing that “the authority of persons is ultimately based not on the subjection and abdication of reason but on an act of acknowledgement and knowledge – the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment … has priority over one’s own”.2

Secondly, authority is supposed to be unacceptable because it can have a negative impact on the educational process. It can lead, for instance, to the formation of an authoritarian personality. In addition, as a form of heteronomy, authority seems always to be unacceptable when the aim of education is the formation of an autonomous person, that is, one who has – as Kant says – the courage to make use of his or her own understanding.

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But if it is true that authority is because of this or any other reason unacceptable, then precisely this fact is the proof that authority is possible. For, if it were not possible, it could not have a negative impact on education.

However, the reason why authority is seen as impossible in a contemporary society lies in the thesis that religion and tradition – to which authority is inseparably linked – have disappeared in modern society, or at least have lost the status of indisputable realities to which man must unconditionally submit himself. Enlightenment has namely thwarted the basis of every authority that is not rooted in reason. But the problem is that even if we accept the interpretation that the foundation of authority in modern society can be neither religion nor tradition, but only human reason, from this interpretation it does not follow that authority is no longer possible. It follows only the conclusion, as Gauchet stresses, that the two dominant embodiments of authority in history: religion and tradition, are no longer seen as authority. This conclusion seems to me acceptable. Equally persuasive is Gadamer’s aforementioned interpretation of authority. Therefore, it is probably more reasonable to talk about the metamorphosis or transformation of authority in modern society than about its end. In favor of such a conclusion can be used even the thesis defended by Arendt – who first developed the theory of the end of authority in modern society – namely, that children, by emancipating themselves from the authority of adults, have not at all freed themselves from authority, but have been subjected to a much more horrifying and truly tyrannical authority: the tyranny of the majority, that is, the authority of a children’s group.

However, the fact that children have emancipated themselves from the authority of adults, and thus from the authority of teachers as well, does not mean that teachers no longer have authority. Just the opposite, they can have different sorts of authority: moral, epistemic, executive, legal etc. In this paper the main attention will be focused on the so called epistemic authority since a teacher is usually primarily seen as an epistemic authority. According to De George, someone is an epistemic authority if he is an authority in a specific field of knowledge. Since a teacher (of history, science, philosophy and so on) is an authority in a specific area of knowledge, he is an epistemic authority as well. Usually we think that what makes him an epistemic authority is his de facto knowledge. But his knowledge itself is not sufficient for being an epistemic authority, or more precisely, for being a de facto epistemic authority as De George interprets it. In his opinion, “we make someone a de facto authority by believing what he says”. Therefore, a teacher is for his students a de facto epistemic authority if, and only if, they believe – at least to some extent – “what he says when he teaches. If there is no such” student, “then no matter how” knowledgeable the teacher is, he “is not a de facto epistemic authority”. Thus, that what makes him a de facto epistemic authority is not his knowledge, but rather his students’ belief. However, they would not believe if they knew that he did not have the knowledge they supposed he had.

Therefore, they give him this authority because they believe that he has a supposed knowledge. Whether their belief is justified is another question. In any case, his de facto epistemic authority is possible only if students trust what he says as credible because of their

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3 H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, Penguin Books, London 2006, p. 91. In her opinion “the loss of authority is merely the final, though decisive, phase of a development which for centuries undermined primarily religion and tradition” (ibid., p. 93). Since she sees authority, religion and tradition as inseparable, the loss of tradition and religion in the modern world has provoked the loss of authority as well (ibid., p. 94-95).
6 Ibid., p. 29.
7 Ibid.
8 This problem is, for instance, discussed in: De George, *Nature and Limits of Authority*, 38-42.
trust in him. For, when a teacher as authority is asked to explain why what he says is as he says “and responds to that request by arguing in earnest rather than simply reasserting” himself, that is, to say that something is so because he said so, he “ceases to be authority”.  

Two things are important to stress here. First, that in such cases teacher ceases only to be an epistemic authority and not also a moral, executive or other authority. Second, he usually ceases to be an epistemic authority only temporarily, because “when an explanation is required … the relation of trust … characteristic of authority is suspended, at least temporarily, in that moment”. Therefore, this does not mean that he ceases to be epistemic authority to his students forever. If his answers to the students’ questions are based on good and persuasive arguments which show that he possesses comprehensive and profound knowledge about a discussed topic; that what he claims is conforms to facts, to the rules of logic, and so on, then such a temporarily loss of epistemic authority can neither lead to permanent one (regardless of how frequently it happens), nor to diminish it. On the contrary, it can increase it since a teacher’s good answers: justify the students’ belief that he is a trustworthy epistemic authority; they give them good reasons to trust him and to believe that what he says is as he says. Thus, although it is true that a teacher temporarily undermines his epistemic authority when he enters into critical dialogue over substantive issues with his students, it would be wrong if he were to try to avoid such dialogues or polemics in order to defend his authority. It would be wrong not only because he could in this way provoke students’ mistrust in him and consequently the decline of his epistemic authority as well, but predominantly because the main aim of teaching is not to prepare students to believe that what a teacher says is true simply because he claims that it is true. Just the opposite, the main aim of teaching is, as Kant says, to prepare students to use their own understanding.

However, authority does not disappear only when it becomes persuasion, but also when it is not based on trust but rather on coercive power, since in such a case it ceases to be authority and becomes coercion. But this short and partial analysis of some aspects of authority and its relation to power and persuasion might be misleading if it leads to the conclusion that power and persuasion are something outside authority since authority is between them. In fact, both power and persuasion, “exist as capacities or potentialities implicit within authority, but are actualized only when those who claim authority sense that they have begun to lose the trust of those constitutive parts of authority, but once actualized and rendered explicit they … are its negation”.  

This interpretation leads us closer to an understanding of the previously mentioned claim that the correlative of authority is not obedience but trust. Even when obedience is achieved by virtue of acknowledgment of authority, this acknowledgment would not be possible if the possessor of authority were not trusted. And a teacher can be trusted only if he or she is trustworthy.

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10 Ibid.
12 Lincoln, Authority: Construction and Corrosion, p. 6.
13 Ibid.
14 I have discussed this relation between authority and trust in the article: Z. Kodelja, Authority, the autonomy of the university, and neoliberal politics. Educational theory, 2013, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 317-330.
About self-knowledge motivation as the task of philosophy

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The article deals with the theory and practice of development of motivation to self-knowledge as the study of philosophy.

Philosophy, in the famous words of Hegel, is an epoch, grasped in thought. But if trying to understand yourself, your consciousness and thinking can be based on this statement? Perhaps we should say "yes", this way you can know oneself, if one realizes that the knowledge era – this is my knowledge, my thoughts, even if they are drawn from the storeroom of human thought. Individual knowledge is always limited yet, though it allows living successfully in world, like many other people, especially without thinking about the limits of their knowledge, about the horizons of knowledge, as well as the infinity of the universe. However, if we accept the last judgment as truth, the question about the role of philosophy in human life arises: what for to study this discipline? Or even this: do you really need to know yourself?

The question «do I need to know of the others?», of those who surround me, by contrast, has always been in demand, always interested. Responding to it, most of us trust the evidence of the Evangelist Matthew, "You Will Know Them by Their Fruits" (The Gospel of Matthew. Chap. 7, 16). However, we do not judge ourselves by the fruit of our deeds in outside world. Cause what lies probably in the presence of internal life, internal acts of the fruits that we do not judge so strictly, as the fruits of other acts. That is not only a friendly relation to itself, but rather the lack of motivation to self-assessment. However, if someone were motivated, then his implementation would need the knowledge, skills for its implementation. That is the difference between skills and knowledge of a student and a teacher, it appears on the exam for any course, philosophy is no exception. We can assume that the task of philosophy is building skills and self-esteem human incentives.

One of the possible reasons for the formation of motivation to self-knowledge is the understanding and assessment of our own position in the world, the possibilities of its improvement. The sense of Immanuel Kant’s questions, «What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?» lies in identification of opportunities for self-determination in the world (Kant, 1996: 438). And the premise of answering them is to answer the question "What is man?" (Kant, 1996: 438). If awareness of position in the world presupposes knowledge of the world, than the base assessment of that position is relation to values. Consequently, axiology is one of the bases of thinking through all of this process. The Knowledge of era in this case is the condition for the motivation to self-knowledge.

Is it correct? We would like to say "yes", for it is no accident that reflection today is recognized as a specific function of philosophy, and the problem of identity is one of the key problems of education. We can say that the problem of self-knowledge was paid close attention at all times in contradistinction to problem of motivation.

Not only capabilities and responsibilities of person must be perceived, but desires too, as evidenced by questions of Kant, "What do I want to do?", "How do I want to live?" "What is the meaning of my life?" Searching for answers to these questions not only helps to self-knowledge, but also promotes autonomy as the basis of personality. Since man is a creature not only spiritual but also physical, it also applies to self-knowledge of the material sphere of human life, its natural and acquired needs. The outcome of this statement can be the Maslow's pyramid of needs, which depends on self-knowledge (Maslow, 1999: 77-105).
What explains the difference in assessing the significance of self-knowledge and motivation to it in different historical times? First, the fact that knowledge of the world historically primarily because it contributes to the satisfaction of primary human needs. Only awareness of the human position in the world, its mythological and religious explanation leads to self-knowledge. Ancient Greeks and Romans Question of the gods nature, has been transformed into the question of gods role in live, of the interaction between man and God (Plessner, 2004: 368). Understanding ratio between single and plural in Greek philosophy is a basis for understanding of the unity of God and man, as well as the unity of society and man. But the knowledge of this unity does not reveal special features of the individual. It is possible on another basis – the doctrine of three worlds in human life: the inner world, the world of entourage and the outer world (Cicero, 1985: 60–190). The Changing role of this worlds while person grows encourages to self-knowledge, and if it happens, then life becomes harmonious and person – more independent. Self-knowledge is not an ideal process necessarily. An actor knows himself onstage, an athlete – in the sports arena, and a military pilot – in a dogfight. It is possible to say «I know myself by own deeds», and the results motivate further self-knowledge.

External conditions of life (state, society), of course, affect the person's inner world, increasing or decreasing the motivation to self-knowledge. Characteristic of modern society sharp increasing role of the information role has the effect, in our opinion, of reducing the motivation for acquiring knowledge. To resist this trend is the task of education.

Now we turn our attention to the training-methodical side of the base for our discussion of the problem. How can I know the age? How to grab it in my thoughts? We are aware of the existence of the forms of thought – the idea, concept, judgment. Due to them person builds own ideal reality that confronts the reality of the material. The essence of education is that a person must know perfect reality as well as external material reality, and their relationship. Consequently, the one who can grasp the era in thoughts is the one who sees the difference between ideality and materiality.

Do human feelings participate in the cognition? Yes, of course, but each person has its own sense, its perception of color, sound, smell. However, there is a general perception in the sensible world, noticed by poets in the famous saying: if the world has crack, it passes through the heart of the poet (Heine, Goethe). Shall we exclude the common sense of the characteristics of the era? Believe, no. Agree with a possible objection: the most expressive form of community feelings attached art, but if philosophy is indifferent to it? Again, say no. Otherwise philosophy was not engaged to the knowledge of good, beauty, soul and spirit. Apparently, in the characterization of philosophy as age, caught up in thought, Hegel reflected only one (rational) side of the philosophical knowledge of the world. However, the accusation of unilateralism characteristics of an object contrary to the essence of dialectical philosophical thinking of Hegel.

In the characteristic of the modern era we find a range of different social doctrines (industrial, post-industrial, information, individualized, network community), representing different dimensions, but not grasping the integrity of the era. So let us look for another criterion, which characterizes philosophy. Hegel's work allows to call it – the attitude to solving the major issue of philosophy, the relation of thinking and being, or the question of relation between what happens in the human mind and the reality that is outside of head.

I would like to share a way to increase the self-knowledge motivation. Its essence is simple. I suggest students to solve two problems at the determination of the kind of reality: the ideal or material. In one case, I chalk on a blackboard a triangle, a circle and a square, and ask students of what they see on the board. Specific answer - geometric shapes. The students talk of what they are aware but not of what they see. In other words, they see an ideal reality
– geometric shapes, and don’t think of chalk on a blackboard as a material reality. Another
task is logical: the relationship between the denotations of "a chair" and "legs of a chair".
Obviously, in this case we are talking about ideal reality, which is in the human head.
However, as a rule, students are guided by the ratio of the chair legs and chair as tangible
objects. Thus, the perception of material objects as ideal and vice versa is the characteristic
for the modern student thinking. Awareness of this mixing (ideal and material), I believe,
contributes to the development of a critical attitude to our own thinking, and hence to self-
knowledge. Certainly, there are other ways to increase motivation to study philosophy and
this article is focused on search of them.

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(Trans)disciplinarity: Some implications for education

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Abstract
Much has been written about transdisciplinary research in recent times. Across the globe we are witnessing the growth of transdisciplinary institutes and academics leaving their traditional departmental offices/laboratories (on certain days) to work in such institutes. The emergence of transdisciplinary research might be understood as the consequence of at least three separate but related developments:

- the rupturing of disciplines due to forces internal to disciplines
- the massification of higher education and the emergence of a socially distributed knowledge system
- the inadequacy of disciplinary knowledge to address the complex problems of our times

The emergence of transdisciplinarity is one aspect of the changing landscape of the contemporary university. This particular change has some association with democracy. The massification of higher education and its upshot, a socially distributed knowledge system, means that universities no longer have the monopoly over the production of knowledge – that there is wider societal participation in knowledge production. This participation, however, remains largely confined to those who are products of the university (located elsewhere after graduating). Therefore, I shall argue for an expanded notion of a socially distributed knowledge system which includes citizens and their local knowledges.

In this paper I discuss: the emergence of the transdisciplinary trajectory in higher education; insights that Deleuze & Guattari (1997) might bring to the debate; some implications for education, particularly curriculum ones.

Towards a transdisciplinary trajectory
Gibbons et al. (1994:11) point out that the massification of higher education after the Second World War is a key contributor to the emergence of mode 2 knowledge. Massification of higher education led to increases in the number of graduates, whom universities could no longer employ. This resulted in people with research skills and specialized knowledge being widely distributed in society. Consequently, knowledge production is not only pursued in universities, but also “in industry and government laboratories, in think-tanks, research institutions and consultancies, etc.” We now have what is called a socially distributed knowledge system. Gibbons et al. (1994:11) suggest that the more graduates the university produces, the more it undermines its monopoly as knowledge producer.

Gibbons et al. (1994) identify some of the key characteristics of mode 2 knowledge. Firstly, mode 2 knowledge is produced in the context of its application. In the case of mode 1 knowledge, the context is defined in relation to the cognitive and social norms that govern basic research – the pursuit of knowledge is mainly carried out in the absence of a practical goal. In contrast, mode 2 knowledge is intended to be useful, whether to government, industry or society more generally. The imperative to produce knowledge that is useful is determined at the inception of the project and knowledge is produced through a process of continual negotiation. Secondly, mode 2 knowledge is transdisciplinary, which entails the use of a variety of theoretical perspectives and practical methodologies to solve problems. In contrast to interdisciplinary knowledge, transdisciplinary knowledge does not derive from pre-existing disciplines, nor does it contribute to the formation of new disciplines. Thirdly, mode 2
knowledge production is heterogeneous in terms of the skills and the experience people bring and the composition of the research team can change over time as the requirements evolve. Knowledge is also produced in a variety of sites and in new environments, producing new ways of organizing knowledge. In this regard, Notwotny, Scott and Gibbons (2001) introduce the term agora which means, a “heterogeneous arena populated by all kinds of organizations, as well as the public at large. These include activists, pressure groups, protesters of all kinds, as well as State agencies and multi-national corporations” (Scott 2003, p.80). Fourthly, mode 2 knowledge is characterized by heightened social accountability and reflexivity. Because knowledge is produced in the context of application, researchers’ sensitivity to the implications of what they are doing is heightened. Fifthly, mode 2 knowledge is characterized by new forms of quality control. These involve wider criteria than those used in disciplinary knowledge, because scientific peers can no longer be reliably identified and reductionist forms of quality control can in any case not be applied easily.

The theoretical intervention of Gibbons et al. (1994) has, however, not gone unchallenged. Peters (2007, p.9) argues that Gibbons adopts a neoclassical economic perspective of knowledge, that his position is theoretically skewed, and that the nature of his evidence is both limited and debatable – that Gibbons puts forward little by way of empirical studies or analysis of data. Peters (2007, p.9) argues that Gibbons’s theory functions like a neoliberal World Bank policy prescription. Furthermore, Peters quotes Fuller (2000, p.xii) who writes:

The most pernicious feature of the “Myth of the Modes” is that the two modes are seen as not merely mutually exclusive, but jointly exhaustive – that is, not admitting of other possibilities.

To support his scepticism about the exhaustiveness of mode 1 knowledge, Peters (2007, p.9) points to the emerging economy of disciplines in cultural studies – new disciplines are still emerging. I go along with Peters that the emergence of the modes debate should not be understood in isolation from the ascendancy of neoliberal politics, an emerging knowledge society and the capitalization of knowledge. However, there might be insights gained from Gibbons’s work, if we were to rethink some of his ideas through eliciting the conceptual vocabulary that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) provide. I shall pick up on this later.

There are two other aspects in Gibbons’s work that I wish to touch on: his notion of a socially distributed knowledge system and new forms of quality control. Gibbons (2000, p.41) points out that in a socially distributed knowledge system higher education institutions are no longer the only role players in knowledge production processes. The future survival of universities is therefore dependent on research done in partnership with government and industry. Nevertheless, I would argue that Gibbons’s notion of a socially distributed knowledge system might be reconceptualised to include ordinary citizens (including indigenous communities), who are in the best position to know and understand the complexity of the socio-environmental problems that they face daily. Instead of a socially distributed knowledge system that serves the interest of the global knowledge economy driven by a neoliberal agenda, we might think of a socially distributed knowledge system that invigorates lines of escape from dominant neoliberal discourses, where the role players might be disparate but connect in various ways in opposition to the homogenizing and normalization effects of globalisation, or what Guattari (2001) called Integrated World Capitalism (IWC). As Irwin (2003, p.329) writes:

Contemporary anti-globalisation protest is a remarkable ‘rhizome’ of radical groups, upstanding citizens, charities, long standing emancipatory organizations, environmental groups, right wing organizations, anarchists, communists and so forth, who have all found a common thread which weaves together their disgust as the solidified locus of financial, discursive and policy flows which have coagulated in supra-national organization such as the WTO, World Bank, IMF ....
This brings to me to the aspect of quality control. Gibbons et al. (1994) argue that as problems become more complex it is increasingly difficult to find suitable scientific peers (who are discipline based) and that new ways of validating knowledge should be explored. Processes of peer review will of course still play a role, but will be augmented by other ways of legitimizing knowledge. Gibbons et al. (1994) suggest that such processes might serve the interest of bureaucrats or those in industry – those who own the means of production. However, in the alternative distribution system that I argue for, processes of quality control might be decentralised to include not only processes of peer review by academics, but might also include the interests of local communities/ordinary citizens, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations, etc. – that quality control processes will be the outcome of partnerships between universities and various civil society groups to produce research that is authentically ‘multicultural’. In Foucault’s terms, this would imply that the mechanisms for regulating the production meaning would also change.

**Deleuzo-Guattarian insights**

Drawing of the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Smith (2005) notes that the assemblage of disciplinary knowledge may be understood as movements that constitute them as territories and fields of interiority, but also as having points of deterritorialization and lines of flight along which the assemblages of disciplinary knowledge are fragmenting and losing coherence, giving rise to transdisciplinary knowledge networks. Where Gibbons is right (and I am sure Peters and Fuller would agree) is that we are witnessing the deterritorialization of disciplinary knowledge and the emergence of transdisciplinary networks in the light of the complex problems facing contemporary society that disciplines cannot capture – problems such as climate change, HIV and AIDS etc. Where Gibbons is wrong is his view that mode 1 knowledge and mode 2 knowledge are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. Again Deleuze and Guattari are helpful. In juxtaposing their notions of the arborescent and the rhizomatic, they identify six key principles. One of these principles is “assigning rupture” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p.9). They argue that a rhizome might become broken, shattered at a given place, but it will again grow along one of its old lines, or on new lines. They write:

> You can never get rid of ants because they form an animal rhizome that can rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed. Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in a rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p.9)

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p.10) use the example of the orchid and the wasp to describe movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization to show how the two species are always connected, that is, caught up in one another. They write:

> The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it deterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p.10).

In the same way we might think of mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge (by association disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity) as connected and caught up with one another – yet with propensities of deterritorializing and reterritorializing.
Some education implications
One implication of transciplinarity that I shall refer to is its effects on teaching and learning programmes, which have traditionally been organized along disciplinary lines. We are certainly witnessing the disappearance of some traditional disciplines in undergraduate programmes, e.g. botany and zoology and the emergence of transciplinary themes such as biodiversity. I shall also reflect how its impact on school subjects, which in many instances are derived from parent disciplines developed at universities.

Moreover, transciplinarity might provide greater opportunities for the democratization of knowledge production and opportunities for citizens (local communities) to participate in knowledge production and the making of school and university curricula such as in the case of the hybrid discipline ‘ethnobotany’.

References
Pedagogical responsibility and political act

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Abstract

Hans Jonas (1979) is the one who offers us a pedagogical interpretation about two responsibility standards: parental responsibility and political responsibility which, although opposite poles, under certain aspects, (the first is intimate, the other objective; random, direct or intentional the first, freely chosen the other) permit a convergence in the integral representation of the concept of responsibility. “Homo politicus (…) will catch sight of his fame (…) in order to be able to say that he had worked for the good of those he had power over (and for those whom he evidently did) (Jonas H. 2002, 122): this is the passage from On to For that constitutes, according to Jonas, the essence of responsibility which, in a pedagogical reading, recalls parental guidance as a "pro-ontogenetic archetype" of all responsibility.

The peculiarity of these two standards declines in the characters of wholeness, continuity, a future that shows how these responsibilities, although so different, can penetrate in a unique way the utmost extremes of maximum generality and particularity." (Jonas H. 2002, 129).

The public dimension of political responsibility and private parental responsibility completely converge when, as written by Jonas, "embrace the whole being of their objects” (Jonas H. 2002, 128) precisely education. In fact education demonstrates the totalizing nature of responsibility.

A total responsibility that cannot cease, not even temporarily, the exercise of its function. As a matter of fact it must guarantee continuity in order to enable the dimension of its aim: the future.

Analyzing Hans Jonas’ standards of responsibility in light of the new legal provisions enacted by the Italian Legislative Decree December 28, 2013, n. 154 (published in the Official Gazette January 8, 2014, n. 5) in which the term “parental power” is replaced with “parental responsibility”, becomes a pedagogical metaphor which narrates how scenarios change between private and public educational and parental dimensions.

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Among the scenarios that change in the public and private dimension of parental education, the concept of responsibility, in the declination of the two paradigms developed by Hans Jonas (1979), becomes a moment of reflection in pedagogical research, especially in light of the new Italian legal provisions promulgated by the Legislative Decree December 28, 2013, n. 154 (published in the Official Gazette January 8, 2014, n. 5), replacing the term "parental power" with that of "parental responsibility".


Is the historical evolution from “parental rights” to “parental responsibility” really just terminological?

The fundamental question concerns the relationship between ethics and law and the consequential socio-political possibilities in the design of an increase in the level of responsibility.
Undoubtedly, if we analyze our normative evolution as a form of "social narrative" (Clarizia 2002), the transition of legal use from one term to another indicates a semantic evolution of the level of social responsibility. On one hand law and political affairs stress for a social evolution in ethics; on the other hand we have the increase in the already perceived social progress stimulated by the legislative and the related use of appropriate semantic terms regarding the ethical sensitivity of a social time.

Take, for example, the legal and political developments that brought attention to childhood and the related level of social and intergenerational responsibility.


Without going into the discipline’s merits, the only one that seems appropriate to point out here is the connection between pedagogical responsibility and political action underlying this not only terminological shift but the overall hermeneutic social-political design.

The essence that is captured in the evolution of political and legislative action is the raising of the standard of liability which allows us “to distinguish and understand the entire increasing evolution regarding the attention given to non-adults in inter-relatedness / interpersonal and, conversely, institutional-legal relationships” (Clarizia 2002, 47).

Hans Jonas’ (1979) Theory of Responsibility is part of this legal-political and historical evolution that, in many ways, reveals the scenarios that change between the private and public dimensions of parenting and education. This Theory analyzes “well-being, the need to be and being” (Jonas 2002, 101) and it combines parental responsibility with political responsibility by highlighting what they “have, despite being placed at the antipodes of a scale, much in common, and together they can tell us a lot about the essence of responsibility” (Jonas 2002, 123).

When Jonas describes the statesman, in fact, he points out that “Homo Politicus (...) will catch sight of his fame (...) in order to say that he had worked for the good of those he had power over (and for which he apparently did) (Jonas H. 2002, 122): this is the passage On to for that constitutes, according to Jonas, the essence of the principle of responsibility that, in an all pedagogical reading, refers to parental guidance as an "archetype pro-ontogenetic " responsibility.

The specificity of the two paradigms and the diversity with which those responsibilities arise are evident in the structuring of the two paradigms: If parental responsibility is, as Jonas writes, natural in the sense of existing in nature, “being a family” (Jonas 2002, 120) and direct causal and /or intentional, political responsibility is created artificially in the sense of hiring a commitment or, more specifically, "partially selecting (in accordance with a contract), said agreement, (or even required) "(Jonas 2002, 121).

Its purpose is to highlight how political responsibility is freely chosen, while parental responsibility emerges from a more constrained natural relationship .(...) It follows the most basic naturalness of the first and the most extreme artificiality of the second: therefore one is exercised in a direct intimate relationship, the other through the mediation and alienation of organizational systems "(Jonas 2002, 123-124).
A combined consideration regarding these two dimensions: political and parental which, under certain aspects, are also to be found in the Two Treatises of Government Locke (1689). It is clear that the objectives of the two works are incomparable, if Jonas elaborates a theory of liability as technological civilization ethics, both Treatises of Locke’s Government which today constitute the foundational text of liberalism, analyzes social relations as the ability of individuals to coordinate among themselves and the theory of property as a natural right based on individual work.

However, Locke himself compares, defining it power, parental and political liability in his work which are jointly considered. "Nature empowers the first of said powers, that of paternal power, to parents, for the sake of their children during their minority, in order to compensate for the lack of ability and intelligence about how to manage their property (for property, here as elsewhere, I mean that men have as much of their people as their property). A voluntary agreement empowers the second, it being political power, to rulers, for the good of their subjects in order to ensure their possession and use of their property." (Locke 2011, 142).

Even Locke’s political philosophy can therefore be read in a pedagogical tone bringing out the fact that responsibility has its origins in an intimate dimension of parental and public policy.

To conclude our brief thoughts on private and public dimensions of education and parenting, as expressed through the paradigm of responsibility, we want to focus on the peculiarities of these two paradigms: the character of wholeness, continuity and future which point out how these two responsibilities, although so different, can merge in a unique way at the utmost extremes of maximum generality and particularity. (Jonas H. 2002, 129).

The public dimension of political responsibility and the private one of parental responsibility converge on the totality when, as Jonas writes, “they embrace the whole being of their objects” (Jonas H. 2003, 128) in this case, education. As a matter of fact education illustrates the overpowering nature of the liability.

A total responsibility that cannot cease, not even temporarily, the exercise of its function. In fact it must ensure a continuity to enable the goals of its dimension: the future. This responsibility, whether public or private, intimate or objective, causal, direct or intentional cannot be declined in the variable of presentism meaning the "inability to move their perception of time in the future, and even in the past, in memories, outside the immediacy of the present." (Foa 2008, 33).

The pedagogical purpose of the political and parental paradigm and declines in the ability to jointly direct the time variable to the past, present and future.

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The inter-generational pact: Looking after relationships and educational responsibility

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This paper aims to analyse the issue of education as an “inter-generational pact”, the fact that it is simultaneously a resource and problematic issue, since training takes place in an inter-personal dimension that involves the complex link between the past, present and future. The “inter-generational pact” is interpreted here not as a simple instrument, but as a cultural perspective, as a normative idea, through which to address the quality of the social and educational relationship between children, teens and adults. This is done in order to examine in depth the value-based, social and pedagogical motives that sustain it in its role as a device, the methodological characteristics of which it is possible to outline.

From this perspective the added value of the family is that of "making human beings human" (Bronfenbrenner, 2010), that is, to generate desire. This process of the humanisation of life which, in reality education (Dolto, 1984), provides children with the testimony and example, their sense of belonging and humanity lived daily and from which they can learn the language of relationships and internalise the quality of the bond (Corsi, 2003; Recalcati, 2011).

The generative experience of desire and that of difference are determined by the symbolic framework of the family bond, as a fundamental place for the development of the inter-personal dimension (Terminio, 2011). This bond has for the person an important educational function since it allows them to take part in a group culture, gives them a sense of belonging and makes possible the differentiation and loss: it is home, alliance, roots and indicates a willingness to give care and be present despite and apart from the historical period marked by an increasingly radical and generalised crisis in educational discourse. The family is the cradle of the human capital where each person may develop the cognitive, emotional and social skills which allow the individual to make their contribution to the community (Heckman, 2010).

Our work highlights the necessity to construct a “restoration” among the generations through care for interpersonal relationships and debate between the generations in order to activate a process of involving the spreading of awareness which leads to an appreciation of the strength of relations between the generations and to the responsible assumption of these relationships (Spivak, 1999).

The aim is to increase the vitality and meaning of this care through everyday practices, in which the new technologies are utilised in an increasingly meaningful way as triggers of educational interactions (Marone, Napolitano 2012).

A further aim of the work is to explore the possibilities of using the internet and online communities as virtual tools to promote sustainable models of an intra- and inter-generational togetherness as well as the introduction of innovative reference methods of support for the relationships between adolescents and adults, which take account of the needs and development activities of each phase of the cycle of life. The paper examines the role of the family as a space for this transmission with the function of discussing lineage as a practice of memory, mediated or mediatised, which mobilises the traces of the past through the idiom of the family that can also be found in digital narratives and in the new media as training devices.
The aim of this is to foster the meeting between the generations and the different systems of life, which currently run the risk of being isolated both in real space and in the virtual worlds (McAdams, de St. Aubin 1992). Indeed, the belief is that the construction of a shared space may allow an inter-generational and inter-systemic approach, hardly appreciable in the present context in which young people and adults are isolated groups characterised by the tendency to close themselves off from the other.

School and university education offers a privileged position from which to re-examine experience and social phenomena in original and critical ways.

From here arises the hypothesis of an investigation centred on the importance of the story in an educational community through a project of inter-generational storytelling.

The purpose of such research has been to facilitate reflection on the prejudices, stereotypes and prohibitions that span the generations and that are transmitted mainly by the popular press and by the electronic media. The focus has been on relations, links and interconnections which could be reconstructed as existential resources among the generations, thanks to the exchange of a memory which becomes a common patrimony through the creation of stories.

The methodology of digital storytelling in particular, which consists of the telling of stories by making use of digital tools, was shown to be an effective educational device for connecting genders and generations united by the the continuous thread of narration.

For this reason we wanted to experiment with a digital Storytelling activity, directly involving male and female third-year psychology students in a workshop that took place from 2013-2014, during the Pedagogy of family relations course at the Federico II University of Naples. This was a participatory course of workshops aimed at constructing and reviewing the identity of the participants for the purpose of rememory, cultural reinvention and re-mixing, by confronting the issues of gender and generation.

The technique of digital storytelling here was aimed at integrating narrative practices, stories and mashups of media content (fiction, film, books, news of current events) for the purpose of sharing social values, analysing myths handed down from generation to generation and constructing a cultural path which had a further implication at the end of the work: i.e. to transform the use of the web and new media into an educational, social and creative practice.

This aspect of the social use of new media is particularly interesting in the education of the young generations for the purpose of reinventing the forms of its political commitment and responsible co-existence, by promoting experiences of interactive citizenship.

In this sense storytelling has been utilised as a key for understanding the conceptions of the family relations of the participants. This is with regard to their positions in systems of gender and power, of relations of dependence but also of care, by exploring at the same time the manifestations of independence, the factors of protection and resilience. A further aim was to experiment with the use of the narrative device for connecting the memories, practices and skills of the generations for the purpose of constructing an individual and collective patrimony to draw on from the point of view of emotional and cognitive literacy, as a device for well-being.

The theoretical-methodological paradigm of choice that has guided us on this path is the critical feminist pedagogy applied to transmedia education according to which it is the responsibility of the teacher to create learning environments focussed on the promotion of difference and experience by means of a thoughtful methodology and a practice in which
socalisation is founded on the community rather than on domination and aggressiveness (Luke, 1994). The “media educator” has the task of using the voices of the students to deconstruct the media; just like a student-centred bottom-up approach, it is necessary to permit them to express their own discoveries, encouraging the student to find her/his own voice in criticising the culture of the media and to produce alternatives to it (Luke, 2004). In so doing they develop literacy and, therefore, responsibility and democracy (Goodman, 2003).

This approach can be defined as a way of looking at teaching and learning; consider the experience of teachers and pupils a resource whereby, apart from using the traditional sources of information, such as academic reviews and books, students and teachers draw on their own experiences as teaching materials; promote transformative learning, in the sense that it has the aim of facilitating in the participants in the group/class, not only the acquisition of new knowledge, but also of new ways of thinking; consider the action of educating as an experience that, in turn, produces experience; move from the position of “starting from oneself” where the ideals of democratic education are frequently based on a logic of identity which denies and represses differences through a comparison between the public and private dimensions of human life, which corresponds to a comparison between reason, on the one hand, and the body, affectivity, and desire on the other; finally, assign a cardinal role to storytelling in educational practice.

After having chosen an adult of reference belonging to the the person’s own family system about whom to tell the story and discuss its implications with respect to their identity and educational path, the students went on to create a template for the narrative interview to submit to their own family member. The collected story, for the purpose of recovering narrative material which is useful for students’ work focuses on the following issues: the recounting of one’s own childhood; personal geography and the historical and social context of reference; one’s own educational path and the resources used at difficult times; emotional and sentimental relations; the choice of profession and work; the link with the family of origin, generativity and the relationship with successive generations.

The collected stories were discussed in the working group, which added reflections and references to other stories. Finally, the phase of the drafting of the storyboard where the narration took shape in sequences that were then developed in a multimedia sense, followed by an emotive process that pushed the storytellers towards a change due to the re-working of their own identity path triggered by the testimony of the Other significant adult.

The stories, lasting five minutes at most, were then shared and the prevalent themes were identified on the aspect of the generations, sex, regional influences and other areas of differentiation.

In particular, in the sharing phase some discussion points emerged pertaining to the salient moments of life learning told in the stories; the methods of learning from an old person of the family or a young person; the meaning and resonances of these types of learning for the subject; the elements that can sustain or obstruct these types of learning; the role of learning environments.

An initial result of this project was the creation of a collection of stories that document the experiences of everyday life through what makes us human, passing between the generations so as to create a continuum of learning without the impediments of age.

Our main aim was to pass on “life lessons”. The students have had the opportunity to share the lessons that they have learned from their elders just as the old generations have had the opportunity to pass on the lessons to the young generations, by learning in turn from younger
generations and further having the chance to reflect thanks to the product that has returned to them by seeing it on the web.

Digital Storytelling therefore, is not simply a multimedia product, but is a veritable process that does not end with its creation, but fits into and continues to live in a fabric formed by social actors, technological artefacts and precise intentions (Petrucco, De Rossi, 2009).

The more personal and authentic, the more the stories present an emotionally valid and involving content. To that end, apart from the use of images and sounds, it is important to use the voice, both that of the interviewee and that of the interviewer (as they wish). The human voice is a fundamental element and all of the typical ingredients of the multimedia story must be used so as to interact between themselves and open up to the implicit, to metaphors and to the imagination.

On an emotional level, therefore, the narrative-digital dimension facilitates the fruition of the message, puts the capacity for attentiveness into practice and fosters both both creative and logical thought.

The multimedia story, in conclusion, is certainly a great opportunity for protecting the legacy, that is, to keep alive the memory of one’s origins and know how to critically recognise traumas and values, deficits and resources. In truth, it is a space for testimony in which there are no ideal models but which can open us up to possible solutions.

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What and how to form future teachers in the ethical dimension?1

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Today, just like yesterday, it is expected from teachers not only to instruct their students but also to form them (Rousseau, 1762, 1995; Kant, 1803, 2003, Key, 1900, 2000, Dewey, 1916, 1998; Delors, 1996, Morin, 2001). Formation is normally assumed to educate both the personal dimension, allowing the realization of individuals, as well as the public dimension, which in democratic societies, can facilitate and perpetuate life in common. Therefore formation usually involves both moral and democratic formation.

Throughout the past 20 years, many countries have established new goals and challenges in terms of education, and teachers in terms of development of the moral and democratic dimensions. In the case of Chile, for example, there has been a major reform of the school curriculum in 1996, including a new conceptualization of content covering not only concepts and skills, but also procedures and attitudes (which can be read as virtues), additionally included are cross fundamental objectives oriented towards moral formation which includes self-care, care of nature and democratic coexistence (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Furthermore, policies aimed at schools are enacted, such as the Policy of Participation of parents and guardians (Ministry of Education, 2002) which imposes challenges in terms of participation in educational communities; the School Coexistence Policy (Ministry of Education, 2002), which poses the need to regulate coexistence in schools and, the Law on School Violence (Ministry of Education, 2011) which poses specific challenges regarding the management of conflicts and the lifting of regulations that regulate life in common in schools. In 2003, the Chilean Ministry of Education enacted a regulatory framework of what will be regarded as good teaching (Framework for Good Teaching), and 2011 brings performance standards for graduates of education at all levels, posing challenges in terms of the development of the ethical dimension.

Finally in 2012, the Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education 2012 are disclosed, which specify Transverse Learning Objectives aimed specifically at the moral dimension (General Law of Education, Article 19) defined as the dimension that "promotes moral development, so that students are able to formulate an ethical judgment about reality, standing in it as moral subjects" (Ministry of Education, 2012, page 19), and which elicits the need for a graduate professional which possesses "a strong background of values, and who presents an appropriate ethical behavior" (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 13).

Within Educational Standards, Standard 2 says: "The future teacher understands the importance of teaching about values and is prepared to form responsible children, children with principles who take care of themselves, of their surroundings and the environment. He or she understands the role of the teacher as a model, and the relevance of his/her role for the school community. He or she is ready to resolve emerging issues such as sex education, prevention in the use of drugs, bullying and harassment through the web, as part of an approach at school level and on his or her Institutional Educational Project (PEI in Spanish) to provide learning experiences related to values" (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 25).

The first part of Standard 5 states: "The future teacher recognizes the importance of establishing an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, trust and fairness in the classroom and is

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prepared to create and maintain it". (Ministry of Education, 2011, p 30.) And finally, Standard 8 states: "The future teacher understands that education is a right of all students and that diversity is a source of wealth for the development and learning of educational communities. For this, the teacher is prepared to design, implement and evaluate educational strategies that contribute to opportunities and to avoid discrimination" (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 35).

Several practical questions arise from these demands, such as: How is the formation of teachers facing such demands? How has the curriculum of formation of teachers incorporated strategies, contents and development of capacities for future teachers to undertake such tasks? In what way are teachers trained so they begin including parents and guardians into the school community? How do we train prospective teachers to resolve conflicts of coexistence and address problems of school violence? How and under which circumstances do we deliver tools to establish standards and raise criteria to participate in the development of rules of discipline in educational institutions in order to collaborate with the autonomy and participation of all people without falling into contradictions with the educational ideals of the country?

However, additional theoretical-practical questions arise, specific to the field of philosophy of education when we ask ourselves: Are these the demands of democratic-moral education required by our society? Does the moral knowledge posed as necessary for new generations respond to the needs and challenges of our modern democratic societies? What kind of moral formation would be consistent with the answer to that question?

This work aims to contribute to the development of such educational philosophical questions: 1. performing a reflection on the ethical needs of our time from the analysis of some iconic proposals and 2. reviewing the contribution that can be made by the approach of education of the moral judgment proposed by the Konstanz Method of Moral Dilemma Discussion.

Below is the outline of the development of the subject.

1. An important milestone of the reflection on the ethical dimension was raised in 1996 by the committee commissioned by UNESCO to reflect on education and learning in the XXI century. The committee announced that moral formation traversed all educational issues relevant to education in the XXI century (Delors, Al Mufti, 1996). Given the challenges of sustainable human development, understanding between peoples and the need to renew democracy that was actually lived, the Commission states that moral and ethical education is central. These will be the three axes that articulate the dimensions of ethical needs today. Ideas that respect the diversity of individuals and don’t respond to patterns of uniformity in the sense that Beck (2006) expresses and that can be recognized in the work of Edgar Morin (2001) in which are proposed, from an anthropological view and its current condition, the ethical needs of our time.

The axis of sustainable development has been especially revealed by the recent winner of the alternative Nobel award Hans Peter Dürr (2012) who suggested that one of the most serious problems we face today is that we live in the XXI century still with the mentality of the XIX century. It seems necessary to change the mindset of the younger generations in the sense of winning more and more freedoms through the development of judgment itself within the meaning of the "Aufklärung" – (Enlightenment in English) and sharing some common values of democracy.

2. Georg Lind a disciple of Kohlberg has developed the Konstanz Method of Moral Dilemma Discussion, focusing on the approach to develop moral judgment in regard to the development of autonomy. The strategy developed tries to save some of the main criticisms of the Kohlberg theory: the strategy especially integrates emotions, social aspects and respect for individuals.
“What would be some of the necessary contents of democratic moral education required by our society and how can the strategy of Moral Dilemma Discussion of Konstanz contribute to their achievement” - is what will be developed in this work.
Education of the 21st century as a factor of development of democracy

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As is known, education reproduces democracy to the same extent as democracy constructs a qualitatively new level of education in terms of decision-making, responsibility and ability to make choices. We understand democratization of education as the process of engaging into education of wide segments of population, on one hand, and, on the other hand, as the democratic transformations of the education system itself and the very approaches to training and upbringing.

John Dewey wrote that education is democratic according to its very nature, since it is built on a common interest and includes communication with other people about the problem-solving. He emphasized that education does not just prepare citizens for democratic life, but also realizes a crucial goal of democracy: to make the human being free and give him/her an opportunity to fully realize his/her abilities. It is important that Dewey did not have in mind just any kind of education, but the progressive education proposed by him [1, p. 112]. "A democratic community (is) more interested than other communities … in deliberate and systematic education. The devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact. The superficial explanation is that a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated. Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. … A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience." [2, chapter VII].

The presence of democracy means that people in the given society, individually and collectively, are able to realize their right of choice, for which they are themselves responsible and which they are willing to reconsider if necessary. Democracy needs both social institutions and citizens who have the knowledge, skills and values of democratic life, without which democratic culture cannot be prosperous. Democratic education is a factor of protection, support, integration and development of democratic achievements in all countries and especially in the societies during the transformation periods. "Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" [2, chapter VII]. The traditional cultural patterns of the human being, reproduced by education, include such norms as mercy, humility, courage, honesty, etc. They are the foundation of modern culture, the form of transmission of the most significant spiritual values from generation to generation. Assimilation of democratic values should be an integral part of education of every citizen in all countries and should be considered as significant as reading, writing, science and humanities.

The potential of modern Russian education system is one of the preconditions for the transition to a democratic society, a factor that can foster the transition of Russian society to a qualitatively new state. The developing society needs educated, moral, enterprising, mobile people who can make their own decisions in the situation of choice, are capable of cooperation, characterized by constructiveness, ready for intercultural interaction, have a sense of responsibility for the destiny of the country, its social-economic prosperity. We consider it important that in Russia in the period from 1990 to 2011, the number of higher education institutions has increased (more than twofold), as well as the number of students (by 2.3 times). While back in 1990, for each 10 thousand employees in the economy only 53 specialists graduated with higher education diploma, in 2011 there were already 213 such specialists. Among the manifestations of increasingly democratic character of the education
system there is the process of growth of the non-governmental higher educational institutions (from zero in 1990 up to 446 in 2011) [3, p. 35-36]. As an indicator of democratization of Russian education and society we can mention the nation-wide discussion on the new Law on Education, which involved the majority of higher educational institutions, parents and teachers.

However, in Russia the democratization processes in the society and education are developing in a complex and contradictory manner. There takes place the process of conscious rejection of value-based criteria; the traditional patterns are gradually losing their dominant positions. There develops the value inversion, manifested in breaking traditions, destroying the value hierarchy, accompanied by fundamental changes in behavior, when the so-called "low values" begin to dominate culture and play the role of the defining ones; this engenders indifference, narrowness of spiritual aspirations, social parasitism and so on.

The manipulative component of the consumer culture manifests itself in imposing the behavioral stereotypes which are far from humanistic goals. More and more clearly one can see the pursuit of not harmony but disharmony, natural and social chaos and decomposition. Obviously, the consumer mass culture pursues overtly commercial goals. As a consequence, education ceases to fulfill one of its main functions as a "mediator" between the individual and the best spiritual heritage of the society. The anti-values of consumer culture undermine social order, which cannot but give rise to justified concern. N.S. Rozov correctly writes that "... Now the situation is dramatically changing: there arises a quite real danger of the world becoming flooded with aggressive nationalist ideologies, which will rule the roost amidst the general social apathy. Already, there are signs of impoverishment and degeneration of cultural diversity under the roller of modern movie, video, pop and show industry" [5, p.152]. We see exactly this in today’s youth as a widespread phenomenon, which often leads to alarmism and its extreme version, the deviant behavior. (For example, the influx of drugs into Russia has increased today a hundredfold. According to the official data, just for a year, 100 thousand Russian young people under the age of 30 die from drugs [4, p. 120]). In these conditions, there is needed a philosophical substantiation of the priority democratically oriented concepts and practices in education, which are adequate to the objective development of the society where the rights and freedoms of the person and citizen will be really paramount.

One of these concepts can be a scientifically and philosophically substantiated concept of civic education. Civic education is an independent organized system, characterized by stability of its structure, integration of elements and a certain variability of functions. It includes the universal human, multicultural, ethical, legal, patriotic, and the proper civic education-upbringing areas. The holistic systemic vision of civic education as a social-cultural phenomenon allows distinguishing its functional components: a method of spiritual and practical mastering of reality; accumulation and reproduction of basic social values; normalization of the actions of citizens; exchange and interaction; development and cognition; upbringing, socialization and the formation of worldview, critical thinking, etc.

“The essence of a democratic ideal of education can be formulated rather simply. It consists in the fact that a democratic school can and must prepare students for the life in democratic society” [6, p. 97]. It can be claimed that the definition of “democratic education” can be reduced to two aspects. On one hand, it is the preparation of the young generation for the life in democratic society and the reproduction of democratic values; on the other, it is providing functioning and development of the education system (and all of its institutions) as a democratically organized sphere. The first aspect realizes the following tasks: the goal-oriented transfer of knowledge and skills necessary for the full-fledged civil activity in democratic society, education in the values of democracy, gaining experience of democratic life. The second aspect implements the following tasks: ensuring equal educational rights of all citizens; democratization of governance of the system of public (state) education and its
individual institutions (the directive-bureaucratic methods of control are contrary to the humanistic mission of education); implementation of democratic values in the organization of the training process and the life of educational institutions; freeing the young generation from excessive adult influence during their development (free education), etc.

Talking about free education or free upbringing, we see that the idea of immersion of the child into free democratic environment is based on two important assumptions: the anthropological assumption that the social-biological nature of the child is such that it is realized harmoniously and intelligently in the conditions of freedom. The second assumption of a social kind assumes that the existing society imposes unfree development on the person through the education system; however, there are possible such forms and contents of education that are not subject to this enslaving influence of the society and, moreover, produce a new type of society. The school “is treated not as a mirror of the existing society, but as an agent of changes in the society, a kind of ‘island of freedom’; whereas teachers are engaged with a twofold task: they freely nurture the person, creating a precedent of freedom in an unfree environment in order to later convert an unfree society into a free one. The modern civilizational changes; universal education, which level has been steadily improving; the shift to the interactive ways of learning; the transition from the transfer of ready knowledge to the formation of the ways of their independent gaining and usage, and the like – all this creates a new situation in which the results of education more and more depend on the person’s own activity which is at the center of the ideology of free education”. [7]

Thus, democratization of education includes the desire to combine the vectors of democracy training and democratic arrangement of the school, to make training the most informal, active, attractive, meaningful; this will promote the values of freedom and participation. In such educational institution, formal relations and constraints are minimized, the opportunities are created to learn both the sources of knowledge and the life itself, to bring up and educate the integral person, to excite interest of all students in creation and development of the school community which is open to outside world, to link education in the school and outside of it. The democratic learning process should shift the emphasis from the problem of translation of culture to the problem of reproduction of culture.

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Re-thinking the concept of educational responsibility

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The reflection we want to take on is about the concept of responsibility in the educational relation. As the pedagogical discourse cannot be independent, but is always related to the constitutive features of society, the unavoidable question we need to take start from concerns the dominant rationality of the present. How does it, implicitly, condition our existence?

We will answer the question guided by some conceptual categories of the Frankfurt School, aiming to reveal the falsity of our present. Specifically we will analyze how the naturalization of the technological experience, which invades culture as well, cancels the tension between reality and utopia, fundamental ingredient of pedagogy. By deleting this tension, our educational acts risk to become repetitive gestures originating the pseudo-bred individual (Adorno, TH). An individual who has neither the ontological freedom of being nor the social freedom of existing. This is what we recognize as educational emergency of our time, which leads us to re-question ourselves about the responsibility of the educator.

Who is the responsible educator? What is the task to conduct? We will try to give an answer to these questions referring to a source which is still little explored in our field: the ideal of the persuaded man as it is expressed in The persuasion and the rethoric, by the young Carlo Michelstaedter (Michelstaedter, 2004) The thesis we support is that facing the social barbarization we are in, the educator’s task is to promote in the educated person a life will, seen as possession of oneself, which is not reachable through imitation of others, but being, socratically, self-identical.

Let’s start our path reflecting on the rationality dominating our present: the technological rationality. How does it condition our existence? In Dialectic of Enlightenment, Horkeimer and Adorno carry out a sharp and complete analysis of how the rationality of the technic, seen a dominant rationality, reduces culture to being a commodity. This is the specific meaning of the expression cultural industry. Culture, as a constant of human thought and spirit which demands to be nurtured, is mutilated of its peculiarity: its critic function. Erasing the dialectic culture/society, what is identified as cultural good is nothing different to a mass consumer good, immediately usable as immediately identifiable with the given reality. That is to say, the cultural action is no longer characterized by the ideal criteria of truth and beauty of the culture of the past, which was critic of the society; conversely, the production of the consumer good is guided by a blindly pragmatised thought, which must be able to meet the supremacy of the persuasive efficacy. Culture is no longer animated by a tension to ideality, to the representation of the universal, the only from able to burst into the givennes of the contingency. Conversely, in mass culture, we assist to an excessive reproduction of real life aspects, more and more parcelized, which the subject can’t identify with. The mass cultural experience doesn’t allow the individual to adjust its conceptual schemes anymore, but rather to reconfirm them continuously. This way the imagination and spontaneity of the individual become impoverished as time goes by and the person is more and more self-abstract. Human behaviors become stereotypical and predictable: what determines our act is a need of consensus, of recognition of oneself as similar to others.

The consequent education principle is based on the adaptation concept. A praise of adaptation: you must adapt to what is, to what is the common thought. Which, ultimately, means exercising a form of auto conservation, a cancellation of singularity, specifically what exceeds the established situation, which is the most truthful part of the subject. This cultural barbarization, inevitably, has consequences on education too. As said by Adorno in Thery of
Halbbildung, the Bildung becomes Halbbildung. Infact, if we think the Bildung as an armonic education of auto conscience, master of itself, in a society where efficacy and efficiency hold the supremacy even in the cultural field, the passage to the Halbbildung is unavoidable.

The Halb Bildung, as the word itself says, represents the incomplete and partial education in which the transformative strength of the Bildung was reduced or prevented. It is an education which remains on the surface, which doesn’t involve man deeply, as the purity of something ideal, specific characteristic of the Bildung, is not commensurable to the concreteness of the social reality. But, this way, the individual loses its shape: what counts is the capacity to adapt to reality. Implicitly, this means denying the very possibility of education as the planning charge. This is, therefore, a false education which can only originate the pseudo-bred individual. That is, as Adorno specifies, an individual engaged in satisfying the most immediate interests, who feels protected from the presence of others, in whom the critic conscience is mute. So an individual who has no responsibility of the thought and no awareness in the act. For these reasons an individual who is conformed, alienated and self-abstract.

Given these conditions, we believe that the educator’s responsibility consists of the ability to instill the will of life in the student as infinite activity, never repetitive to gain the possession of his own self.

Let’s explore how this idea could help us re-think the responsibility today.

The thought of Micheldstaedter can be explained through the contrast between persuasion and rhetoric, which, at the beginning of the work, is presented in the contrast between authentic life and inauthentic life. The image of the weight that “hangs and hangs as it depends” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.8-9) begins the thesis of the young philosopher, introducing the metaphor of the inauthentic life, which is a perpetual lack of life, continually reaching out to the satisfaction of individual needs (the search of the lowest points). Inauthentic life uses different methods-the social, scientific knowledge, etc.-in virtue of which goes to make up the world of rhetoric: a world in which human existence is confined to a default binary, in which any form of reaction is prevented. A life where “being alive becomes a habit; think that don’t attract are no longer watched; the others are tightly linked” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.27). When man does not choose for himself, and “while the possession of the thing escapes him, so escapes the mastery of his own life, which cannot affirm itself infinitely, but only in relation to the finite circle” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.25).

Unlike in the authentic life where the man “is for himself, has no need of what would be for him in a future time but instead possess all within himself” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.10). A life that does not require the continuous finite correlation with what is other than itself, which is enough in itself. In the world of persuasion, the man does not seek life in alienation of things or in the common areas of the society. This way he loses, inevitably the hic et nunc of his being there. Differently, persuasive man is able to abandon the illusion and comfort that permeates the contemporary society.

To educate the will of life means, first, to expose the order of the discourse which governs our daily existence, in which, for example, the constant interconnection guaranteed by the increasingly sophisticated technological means, while granting our virtual presence in any place, hides the lack of presence in ourselves. Precisely for this reason the task of the responsible teacher is to instill a hunger of life, authentic life, in other words, to generate the persuaded man. This way, we can face the evil of the contemporary consciousness: abstraction from oneself.

What does it mean, therefore, to think the responsible educator as the one who shows the way of persuasion?
In the initial pages, Michelstaedter specifies: “persuasion lives not in him who does not live only of his own self” and “persuaded is who has his life within himself” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.11). Therefore, in order to show the way, the educator must himself be the persuaded man. That means that he must be animated by a will of life as a never-ending search for his authentic form, which never occurs in a complete way. Just looking in himself for his own original way of being in the world, although it will never be definitive, the man owns his own life.

However, in a society crushed on the material reality, in which our actions are governed by a mechanical causality, how can we embark on the path of persuasion? Who wants to start on the path of persuasion, must make desert around him, “because life lies in creating everything by yourself, in not adapting yourself to any path” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.72). The educator must be able to make the desert of conventional ways that limit the birth of the deeper meaning of existence. Facing the conditions of possibility that make up our society, the persuaded man is animated by the courage of the impossible, the courage to transcend the givenness of reality in which he lives. He is the person who dares the impossible starting from the possibilities. Only this way, breaking the chain of contingencies that are apparently protective, the man may yearn to the actual possession of himself.

The responsible educator is the misfit man, who does not live his life as a reproduction of reality, is “the man who must make himself legs to walk, and to create a way where there is no road (...) must make a way to be able to move between life and not between others” (Michelstaedter, 2004, p.15). The responsible educator is not in the multitude of rhetoric. He is a lonely man, who must recognize and accept his being alone, alone and different in the midst of the sea. This is a fundamental prerogative so that the man, not adapting to a society that is supported by the rhetoric of doing, can become able to stand in dialectical tension between what is and what is not yet. This way he, the persuaded, will have appeared to them – the humans – as the dawn of a new day. The creation of their individual worth, as specificity of the persuaded, must be the dawn of a new day which is embodied in the absolute moment from which nothing will ever be what it was before. And is this not the transformative capacity that is expected of an educational act itself? Capacity that is completely lacking in our contemporary world. In fact, education, strongly influenced by technical rationality, is conceptualized as a quantitatively measurable process in which the individual is not recognized for what it is, but for what he does.

Therefore, we believe that the task of the educator is to expose the plot of the illusory plot, which makes us believe that our personal need is given as a contingency that is out and before us and which is useful for our time. That is why the eloquent word that can only be “not enough to adjust to what gave thee”. That, ultimately, is to recognize the need to establish the responsibility and security of one’s life on an infinite work of creation because “each is the first and the last, and he finds nothing done before him (...) he must take on himself the responsibility for his life which cannot rest with another” (Michlestaedter, 2004 pp.42-43).

References
Change – an issue of succession. Commitment and responsibility of the educational process

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Abstract: Man has an extraordinary ability: creating the change. He is able to suspend the order of becoming and give it new direction and new borders. He is able to go out from the causal sequence and become principle of action. This possibility is the power to redesign and transform the existence according to an “artificial” order. The paper will focus the attention on this ambition and will recognize the succession as the necessary condition for creating a world of human sense.

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Man has the extraordinary ability to “create change”. He is able to suspend the order of becoming and offer a further direction and wider boundaries. He is able to go out from the causal sequence and become principle of action. As principle of action, man takes action but his action is not the effect of previous causes; as principle of action, he initiates changes that would not have been able to happen otherwise; as principle of action, he aspires to achieve goals that do not belong to the natural order of things. This means that man is able to plan (and realize) existence according to an “artificial” (i.e. unforeseeable) order.

Human artificial action extends and amplifies the natural conditions and creates a “second” nature. This transformation is not merely a functional operation. The artificial order is doubtlessly the result of an instrumental use of thinking skills but it cannot only be explained as research, discovery and utilizing efficient and useful devices. The use and the efficaciousness are not the only criterion of creative action involved in giving a different form to reality or to parts of reality. The transformation accomplished by human action cannot be limited to a strategy (in order to find different types of solutions) or to a resource (to produce an unlimited number of novelties). Human artificial action does not only pursue functionality just as it does not have its own criterion on the marketability of whatever it creates.

If it is true that human action aims to change and transform reality by suspending the order of becoming and going out from the casual sequence of things, it is also true it does not aspire to (it cannot and must not aspire to) any kind of change and transformation. The opportunity to initiate change that is not included in the natural order of things must engage man to define a new direction that is inevitably an indication of sense; it is not possible to leave aside a direction of sense as only the direction of sense is able to justify man’s action and give a reason to change.

The most important ability of human action is, first and foremost, to think up ultimate aims in order to create a “human” world. Taking this purpose into account, the transformation that is accomplished by human action, must be recognized as an ethical operation: the measurement of change is and cannot be anything but a value, a sense, or rather a having to be.

When a man takes action in order to transform reality, he can/must act in the name and in the place of every other man and all humanity. When a man acts in the name and in the place of every other man and all humanity, he can/must represent them. When a man represents every other man and all humanity, his representation must be worthy and dignified.
Therefore, the possibility of "artificial" change relies on the recognition of human value and obligates man to an act of judgment. In order to create change, human action is obliged to point out the direction and boundaries that express and witness the human sense as faithfully as possible. Evaluation and subsequent judgment are indispensable in order that change is not accomplished extemporaneously but is realized like a change that takes on responsibility for common interests and common well-being.

However the judgment – even though able to recognize and attribute the human value – is not enough to bring true transformation. The possibility of change that designs reality according to an order of human sense depends on the exercise that man makes of the human sense: the possibility that artificial change takes place depends on the ability to maintain the direction. The aforesaid artificial change requires time and attention, tenacity and perseverance. The human order has to remain and be upheld. The continuity of artificial change can only take place by an action that is constantly focused on acting in the name of a sense that has a human value. Consequently, the purpose, that is to create a world according to human sense, goes through a process of succession.

In the natural order, changes happen and cannot not happen. The sequence of changes follows a pre-established order and each change is already included in the preceding one. In the artificial order, the sequence of changes must be decided on each time and the direction must be confirmed each time as well.

The handover which is entrusted with confirming the direction must be prepared beforehand and then carried out purposely. In that way, the process of succession – a process able to pursue and guarantee change from a human point of view – must become the fundamental purpose and the imperative task of education.

If education must become a handover, its continuity must not be carried out merely by a repeat answer. The educational process must engage in educating every individual man to bringing about change. Bearing this ultimate aim in mind, the educational process must, above all, involve each man in an “existential apprenticeship” which is accomplished when taking action as principle of action; at the same time, it has the task of nurturing in each man the interest and the respect for the human sense; last of all, it has the task of exercising man in a participation sincerely interested in extending and amplifying reality according to a human sense.

A direction of human sense imposes on each individual man to take on the responsibility of change. Interest and respect for the recognized direction require a participation that does not allow for abstentions or interruptions. Therefore, it is possible to find the condition for real continuity of change (that is the construction of reality according to a order of human sense) only in the succession that shows the pupil living at the level of the master (if not beyond!).

Beyond the handover, beyond the succession, change which is focused on creating a wider world will be left to chance or will have to start all over again. This is why each educational role is responsible for both the handover and change: the purpose and interest in a world according to the human order must be fostered in every relationship. Indeed, if the possibility of change relies on man’s creative ability, if the accomplishment of such ability is entrusted to an educational action committed in a critical practice of this ability, the perspectives of change depend greatly on the meaningfulness of the educational experience that nurtured and promoted them.

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Crisis in the educational relationship between generations: A matter of experience?

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Today’s socio-educational scenario is critical; teachers are no longer able to “keep the class”, and when facing “special” educational needs they often feel inadequate. Busy parents are unable to understand their children, their needs or desires. Young people, through no fault of their own, seem to be destined to a career of NEET (Not Engaged in Education, Employment or Training): working, but also social, political and civil involvement, turn into a remote objective; the future does not show any prospective. Earlier and earlier children show their unease, particularly in places of education (school in primis); professional educators are increasingly called to deal with forms of economic, cultural, relational and social poverty (Iori & Rampazi, 2008).

From this framework not only individual difficulties emerge but also a widespread unease, which is common to everyone without exception. In particular, this unease lurks in the relationship between adults/elders and young people. From the pedagogical point of view this is an important issue: the relationship between generations is primarily a relationship of communication regarding the transmission and the “gift” of environments, rules and existential perspectives, values and culture (Bertolini, 1988).

If the relationship between old and new generations has always had some difficulties, today there is the sense of a profound fracture. This work in progress research aims to understand the current forms of this anxiety, to identify ways of interpreting it and propose directions for pedagogical work, in order to construct different and more aware ways to face the crisis of the intergenerational pact.

The two areas in which the relationship between generations is obstructed today are the representations of authority and the experiences of trust and solidarity.

The authority of previous generations is in crisis because it no longer has any meaning. Tradition, on which it rests, has betrayed the pact with the new generations: it is unable to accept young people in a liveable world, to open perspectives for them (Benasayag & Smith, 2003). It does not hand over a world to care about where to discover their own existential potentials, as in a Heideggerian view, but a threatening world in which the purpose of learning is to learn how to defend and to protect themselves. The project of modernity is revealing its dark side (Lyotard, 1979; Baudrillard, 1983, 2000; Bauman, 2000; Galimberti, 2007; Natoli, 2010). Elders and adults are accomplices of the world they have inherited and built, pervaded by “sad passions” (Benasayag & Smith, 2003). Given the situation, why should young people trust the educational environments inherited from the adults?

Trust in old generations is today jeopardized by various trends that characterize how we live today. One of them is the centrality of appearing, being seen, “clicked”, searched for, winning at all costs, in which the constant and pervasive risk of exclusion lurks (Bauman, 2004; Giorgetti Fumel & Chicchi, 2012). Another trend is the need to individually develop performing skills that allow people to prevail over everyone else and also to equip themselves with every tool or relationship that can help to bear the stress, without anyone’s help (Galimberti, 2007). The last one is the continuous search for the well-being, understood as immediate satisfaction and individual pleasure to feel alive (Žižek, 1997; Recalcati, 2010).
This life experience produces a feeling of no limits. In theory, everyone can do everything that is technically possible in order not to be excluded, to be fit and capable in every situation, to enjoy every pleasure available: without any thought, any shared model, no “Other” to intervene; the relationship between conceivable and possible has changed (Héritier, 2002). The helplessness that one feels when experiencing a failure like defeat or exclusion is so absolute that it does not represent a limit to which recalibrate one's possibilities: it is indeed the alter ego of the negation of the limit. Adults are crossed by these tensions: their authority is eroded, it becomes a simulacrum.

Therefore, the experience of the relationship between generations tends to take on a contingent nature, linked to the opportunities of the moment, individualistic and libertarian. Being the realization of a common world less possible, there is even less possibility of mediation between adults and young people: there is a lack of experience which allows communication while maintaining different positions, recognizing different instances. The result seems to be an ill-concealed, incurable and widespread solitude.

This concerns the experience of solidarity. “Solidarity” means the ability for a group of people to share an existential, social, occupational or political condition and to improve it by joining forces. Today this experience is extremely rare (Bauman, 2001). When prevail a consumerist view of life or the ideological and utilitarian view of one’s neighbor (Zoya, 2009), there is less ability to share problems and situations.

From a pedagogical point of view, how can we work in this scenario? How can credibility be restored to the relationship between generations?

Far from providing operational solutions, we suggest another possible interpretation. If we agree with Dewey (1938) that formal and informal education is mainly a question of experience, the fracture in the educational relationship between generations concerns a qualitative discontinuity in the everyday experience, in shaping the person through experience.

The modalities of experience that those who are growing up have on a daily basis have radically changed because the modalities of interaction between human beings and their living environment have changed. People no longer live in one spatial dimension, but in at least two dimensions (virtual and real, for example) at the same time. The experience of time currently is fast, immediate, characterized by urgency and by the absence of historical profundity and future (Baudrillard, 2000): pedagogically, by the absence or reduction of a life plan. Furthermore, we have a particular body experience: we are committed to erase the signs of aging, weaknesses, imperfections, divided between materiality that is seen as extremely limiting, and a virtual body, which opens unprecedented opportunities, also as “collector of sensations” (Bauman, 2000). The experience of knowledge and the way of thinking has changed: technologies allow to build knowledge about oneself; the world and others have changed because the conditions that allow to develop understanding about oneself, the world and the others have changed. Transversely to all this, the experience of limit has changed, therefore the chance to discover, test, reinforce skills, competencies and existential trajectories is also different.

Younger generations have been exposed to forms of unmeasurable experience if compared to those of their parents at the same age. In the relationship between generations, the lack of a “common world” implies the impossibility for parents to trace “strings” in the experience of children that connect to their own learning experience. The impression is that the experience of the adults existential formation does not “naturally” set the basis upon which they can identify with the experience of young people, to develop empathy and to exercise “entropathy” (Bertolini, 1988). This situation leads to misunderstandings or a refusal-hences, intensification of the fracture, separation, loneliness, lack of solidarity, trust and authority.
This intergenerational gap is powered by an increase in the influence of informal education (Tramma, 2009), which is a receptacle and a vehicle of the trends of postmodernity, and a growing massive reduction of the influence of formal education on people’s lives. This situation also depends on the assumption of self-referential positions that over time have disconnected the schools or services from the territories, their changes and needs. This interpretation of the fracture of the educational pact opens new ways for reflection, research and experimentation.

First of all, it leads to an ethical issue. It is upon adults (parents, teachers, educators) the educational responsibility to take a strong position in thinking, planning and implementing the educational experiences for and with the children. However life teaches, adult generations have to understand what it is that educates them, what effects it produces. Adults have to understand how to involve young people in experiences that differ from what they are already accustomed to and that broaden their possibility of knowing and experimenting. Riccardo Massa whole research points in this direction (Massa, 1986, 2000, 2003).

From the pedagogical point of view, this means questioning all forms of intentional educational experience, in any occurring context. School proposals or youth center activities to attract young people cannot be taken for granted: it is first necessary to create the conditions for their understanding and accessibility. It has to start from young people’s habits, thinking and feeling in order to develop occasions for an experience that excites their ability to learn, to know, to experiment and to continue to educate themselves.

For the educators this means finding mediations (Canevaro, 2008), and creating contexts of protected existential experimentation (Massa, 1997, 2000). They have to restore at the center of the relationship between young people and adults something that can be shared and that at the same time testify the adult care for education (Recalcati, 2011). On two conditions: first that adults are aware of how the world is lived today and conscious of their educational experience, to problematize, “to make εποχή”; second to use their existential baggage in a critical way; they should ask themselves about the meanings of education in today’s world.

This is a work in progress: we need to develop ways of thinking that can “live up” to the complexity of the educational experience of younger and older generations. In addition to further investigating the issue from a theoretical point of view, it is necessary to initiate projects of empirical research in formal and informal educational contexts with both explorative and tested objectives of the above discussed hypotheses.

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On education and the ‘Land Ethic’

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One of the challenges that human kind is currently facing is the ecological crisis, a product of the modern world and its industrialization. The search or rather, the construction of a common world will depend on how humanity faces this problem. Education certainly plays a significant role within this realm. Firstly, education as formal schooling has promoted a form of rationality and therefore favored a form of relationship with nature. On the other hand, there is a latent possibility of promoting ecological awareness within the educational system as a privileged space for a responsible relationship with nature.

Considering the ecological crisis in the 1970s of the last century, some philosophers have thought about the relationship between humans and nature from an ethical perspective. This kind of philosophical reflection has been called “Environmental Ethics”. Theoretical proposals have been diverse. Some emphasize the relevance of the Western ethical tradition and the role of Environmental Ethics within this tradition. Others argue for a revolutionary formulation on the way to rethink ethics on the basis on a moral critique of Anthropocentrism as a basic notion of Western Ethics.

Given these considerations, along with a personal concern, I propose some reflections on this issue, which have been a first product of a work in process. I will argue as follows: I will start with a clarification of key concepts. Secondly a brief review of the current formal education will be made, and finally, I will suggest a reflection on the possibility of the development of environmental awareness in educational institutions, according to Aldo Leopold’s land ethics.

Let us start by clarifying the meaning of Ethics and ‘Land Ethic’:

1) Ethics is a theoretical and practical discipline. The reflection on ethics necessary for our day should consider the aspect of how to be ethical with the Earth, that is, ask the classical question of Ethics: “What is good life?” in the framework of the present ecological crisis. We assume as well that Ethics is a process of awareness that evolves over time.

2) Aldo Leopold’s Land Ethics holds that humans need to broaden the limits of the classical notion of Ethics in order to consider their relationship with the land. Leopold’s emphasis is on the concept “Biotic Community”:

All ethics so far revolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for).

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively: the land.

An approach to this ethics shows that Leopold sustains a holistic idea of land, i.e. nature. The idea of a Biotic Community is the key concept to understand how we can think our place

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1 This kind of assumption proceeds of the ethics conception from David Hume and Charles Darwin.
as human beings in the natural world. First of all, Leopold uses the term “biotic community” from Ecology to argue that Earth is a complexly organized whole, analogous to social organizations. Each member has specific functions that allow the support of the community. In society there are appropriate social behaviors in order to maintain cooperation between its members. Thus, in the Biotic Community there are ways of regulating the modes of cooperation.

Secondly, on the basis of the biotic community, Leopold stated that humans must leave their role as a conqueror and master of the Earth in order to become a cooperative member, this is, a Biotic Citizen. As a result of this, Land Ethics involves respect for community members and, indeed, respect to the community in itself. The human being, as a citizen, acquires rights and obligations. For all members of this community, the biotic right is to exist. For humans the principal ethical obligation is take care of your community. Thus, according to land ethics our place in the biotic community is as a citizen and as a keeper.

Some Critics of the Current Formal Education
The present educational system can be characterized by the extension of coverage and increased years of schooling. This promotes the economic and instrumental relationship between man and nature. That is, surely, a problem in current formal education, because the system does not teach to think the natural world and others ways to relate to it. In this regard, Leopold noted the following: there is more education but less soil, less healthy forests and more floods.\(^3\)

The problem seems to be the kind of education we are talking about. Education is understood today only as schooling.\(^4\) So, this reduction of the term and the overconfidence in formal education do not seem to contribute to the development of consciousness in general, and therefore, awareness of our relationship with the World and the Planet as a whole, i.e. environmental awareness. Moreover, such education has failed because it has helped to generate and deepen the current ecological crisis.

We can note that the educational system has not changed according to the current ecological crisis. In some cases, some curricula include courses in Ecology but their approach is only theoretical. At school, students have no experiences or knowledge aimed at changing attitudes and developing an ecological consciousness. School is “educating” as if there were no ecological crisis.\(^5\)

A Reflection on the Relationship between Education and Land Ethics
Aldo Leopold said: “a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such”.\(^6\) The changing role of human beings involves a change in consciousness, which can be promoted through the ecological knowledge and the affection for the natural world, meaning the coexistence of an intellectual and an emotional human being. Both are the key to establish an education based on the biotic citizenship. I will

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\(^3\) That means, more people have access to educational system, but the ecological crisis continues to escalate.

\(^4\) Orr, David. “Introduction”. in Ecological Literacy., p. xi. Learning in that case is the idea that we call education. David W. Orr is a Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics at Oberlin College and at the University of Vermont. He is a well known environmentalist and is active in many areas of environmental studies, including environmental education and environmental design.

\(^5\) We suggest that this theme can makes us think about two important aspects, namely, 1) the definition and use of knowledge in schools, and 2) the debate on the role of educational institutions in today’s global society. It is important to rethink these aspects not only within the educational system, but also the kind of education committed to the development of the land ethic.

develop some few key points to indicate the feasibility of developing environmental awareness in formal education.

The first aspect to consider is the need of the relationship with the land. Leopold stated:

Your true modern is separated from the land by many middlemen, and by innumerable physical gadgets. He has no vital relation to it; to hum it is the space between cities on which crops grow. Turn him loose for a day on the land, and if the spot does not happen to be a golf links or a ‘scenic’ area, he is bored stiff. If crops could be raised by hydroponics instead of farming, it would suit him very well. Synthetic substitutes for wood, leather, wool, and other natural land products suit him better than the originals. In short, land is something he has ‘outgrown’.

In fact, city life takes us away from the natural world to the extent that many times we are not aware of the origin or the production chain behind food or other daily goods. There are even some children who believe that things "come from the supermarket". This is a serious problem, as Leopold and Orr warned us. Both authors indicate that the remoteness and lack of nature has led modern man to consider it as a store of renewable and nonrenewable resources.

For example, Thoreau, an author that preceded Aldo Leopold's formulation, moved to the woods to live a simple and independent life. It warned that the alienation from nature makes people unable to appreciate not only its beauty but to develop true feelings towards her. In this regard, let us consider Thoreau's following quote: "While most men are attracted to the company, there are very few who are deeply attracted by Nature. The reaction of most of them to Nature, despite their arts, seems lower than animals. How little we appreciate the beauty of the landscape! We are told that the Greeks called the world kosmos, Beauty, or Order, but do not really know why they did it, and at best, we consider a curious philological fact."

Now, in order to develop or expansion the ethical consideration to the land, we can think about the following quote of Leopold's reflections:

A March morning is only as drab as he who walks in it without a glance skyward, ear cocked for geese. I once knew an educated lady, banded by Phi Beta Kappa, who told me that she had never heard or seen the geese that twice a year proclaim the revolving seasons to her well-insulated roof. Is education possibly a process of trading awareness for things of lesser worth? The goose who trades his is soon a pile of feathers.

In this passage, we observed that education encourages the academic upon the appreciation of animals, nature and survival itself. For him, life on the farm should provide education to its owner. Trees, flowers, plants, and animals offer lessons daily from which modern man is extremely remote. However, we can say that farms are not needed. Instead, we should try to have experiences in the Natural World.

A relationship to land involves close observation of what she grows and what happens. In their narratives of A Sand County Almanac, Leopold describes with great care and detail his observations, which are in fact the lessons he learned on his farm. An illustrative passage which is dedicated to the birthday of the prairie, says that in a rural cemetery a stalk of

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7 Ibíd.
8 Thoreau, Henry David. Pasear, p. 34 (The translation is mine).
Silphium compass plant was observed, the sole survivor of the native prairie, which came to light every July. That stem used to be contemporary of buffalos. Leopold warned its destiny, its death and with it, the death of the prairie.

This passage serves as testimony of Leopold’s knowledge of the inhabitants of the area near his farm biotic farm community as well as his love for them. In that sense, Leopold said that we can mourn only for what we know. The disappearance of Silphium western Dane County causes no suffering, if it is known only as a name in a book of Botany. This is the second aspect, namely, love of the natural world. For that referred knowledge, not only scientific knowledge is needed, but direct knowledge, experience to see and feel the plant. This example shows both the need for contact with the natural world as love, admiration and respect that develops through this relationship.

Finally, the third aspect that should be taken into account as an education within the view of land ethics is to foster the sense of surprise. This possibility of getting surprised by the natural, its splendor and beauty of both animals and plants allows man to get separated from the purely anthropocentric valuation. Man is a member, an essential part of a whole. As a conclusion I would like to say that we believe that it is feasible to develop the land ethic in formal education taking into account the aspects above mentioned: contact with nature, get a feeling for her, and the ability to be surprised. Thus, one can understand Leopold by understanding that the possibility of a land ethic implies an intellectual and emotional process. It should also be considered that this is not a unique solution but a contribution towards it, because it seems that a deeper transformation of consciousness as an effort of modern culture in general is needed.

References
Manual labor in Aldo Agazzi’s pedagogical perspective

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Aldo Agazzi’s pedagogical and educational activity goes through the whole 20th century and constitutes a significant reference point in the Italian cultural framework of the previous century. Even if, as Acone argues, the figure of Agazzi «belongs to […] a different time and to another horizon of sense» (Acone, 2005, pp. 298-299 [my translation]) than ours, it could be worthwhile retracing some of his arguments in order to verify their productivity and modernity in the analysis of current pedagogical issues. Particularly, the aim of this brief contribution is to examine the theme of labor in the theoretical thought of this pedagogist from Bergamo in order to underline some fundamental theoretical issues that could still be topical and innovative.

Agazzi’s peculiar conception of manual labor represents an element of continuity that permits to link two cultural horizons that are commonly considered as distinct, particularly in the Italian tradition of the 20th century: the reality of labor and that of school. Already in 1939 Agazzi, commenting the proposal for a school reform by minister Bottai, argues: «the school period ceases […] to be the period that “precedes” the age for labor, at the end of which a young man/woman went without control, almost by chance, with no superior criterion, in search of a job: on the contrary, it becomes itself a period of culture and productive skill; and labor is no longer a post-school social problem, with no necessary relations with school, but it becomes a content of school itself, even its goal, already realized at school itself» (Agazzi, 1938-1939, pp. 779-780 [my translation]).

Perhaps these arguments of the Italian pedagogist show an excessive trust in Bottai’s reform that, for historical reasons, was achieved only in a small part, but they also underline a peculiar idea of the relationship between school and labor, based on mutual integration. It is a concept that surely has found no rich soil in the Italian culture of the second half of the 20th century, marked by a growing separation between negotium and otium, manual and intellectual labor, work and school contexts, etc.. In a recent text, Bertagna argues that: «it is no longer possible to consider school as “preparation for a job”, maybe for one job only that, what is more, you do not experience while studying, and to think job, or better jobs, as experiences alternative to school that, in reality, makes them possible, if we want them to be “well done”. The two moments should stay together; on the contrary, they would harm each other» (Bertagna, 2012, p. 18 [my translation]).

Agazzi’s theory of labor is deeply critical towards those intellectualist theories (or theories of “separation”) that lead to the idea of school and educational processes as something distant and distinct from manual labor.

The interest for labor characterizes Agazzi’s whole theoretical production. The first reflections come from the analysis of the school and labor reform by minister Bottai and are expressed in his book Il lavoro dalla vita alla scuola (Labor from life to school, 1941); it is in his book Il lavoro nella pedagogia e nella scuola (Labor in pedagogy and school, 1958) that his idea of manual labor as a typically and programmatically human activity is completely revealed. The productivity of Agazzi’s analysis consists in considering manual labor not as a mechanical act that can be separated from rationality, but as an activity that produces useful goods and, for this reason, enables man to show his integrality, will and rationality. Consequently, manual labor owns in itself an educational side for man; it cannot be confined in specific and subordinate training courses, but it must represent a central turning point of everyone’s educational processes.
The idea of considering labor as an educational moment in itself and, consequently, as a necessary experience for everyone’s educational project, drives Agazzi to think over the deep nature of labor trying to identify its specific features. He refuses to extend the concept of labor to every human activity and he restates the importance of manual labor that consists “in the activity that realizes by means of hands, by and in the matter, thanks to specific means and rational executive processes, an object or a fact” (Agazzi, 1958, pp. 150-151 [my translation]). According to Agazzi’s point of view, the working activity of hands that leads to the conscious realization of a product or a service cannot be considered as a simple mechanical repetition of behaviors observed in others or even imposed, but it has also to include the creativity and autonomy of the worker. Manual labor, in fact, even if it is hard and bodily, also includes the worker’s intentionality, rationality and freedom. For this reason, it is a typical human experience able to fully and harmoniously develop a person’s potentialities. Therefore, labor should be considered as an integral part of man’s educational process.

Underlining the creative and educational aspect of manual labor, Agazzi argues that “the education of man, therefore, cannot ignore thought, ethical conscience or practical (moral) reason, esthetical activities, social nature, religious relationship and asceticism in order not to be incomplete, insufficient, limited; similarly, it cannot ignore labor, that is the activity through which man, by means of "executive" acts, makes his thoughts "things", real beings of reality” (Agazzi, 1958, p. 146 [my translation]).

Therefore, the working dimension has to be part of the educational process of every man. Not only as an improvised exercise to develop some specific manual skills, neither as a physical amusement that distracts from intellectual works nor as vocational education aimed at providing the instruments required for a specific job, maybe reserved for those who fail in “intellectual” school. On the contrary, the working dimension permitting a really complete education consists in a concrete experience of physical labor, the participation in the production of an object and the development of a technical rationality able to use the means and materials at disposal to reach a goal. Every young man/woman should experience the working reality in his/her educational path, exactly as Rousseau’s Emile did, together with his gouverneur, as carpenter.

The originality and productivity of Agazzi’s theory on labor consist in avoiding the opposition between vocational and intellectual education (cfr. G. Bocca, 2005, pp. 292-294 e G. Bertagna, 2006, pp. 265-289). Manual labor, in a pedagogical perspective, has a deep educational value, not merely because it provides instruments and knowledge for people’s future profession, but mainly because it values and encourages substantial aspects of a person during his/her educational path. If education is a process aimed at completely and harmoniously developing everyone’s potentialities, manual labor and theory both represent wholly educational activities that, with no hierarchies, should alternate within every educational path. In this view, Agazzi’s considerations seem to provide interesting theoretical perspectives on the theme of the so-called, using a modern expression, “school-work alternation”.

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Report and responsibility for a new educational trail

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Contribution
Modern society shows to be problematic and lacking both in terms of education and formation of new generations.

Worrying phenomena such as aggression, bullying, indifference to humanity and to the life of the feelings, are the result of the model, which now dominates among young people, based on the absence of norms, values and authentic relationships.

Hence the need for pedagogy to reflect on his responsibility in order to respond with educational and training processes adapted to the new needs that arise in today's society, to the needs of men who, living in an hyper – complex society, require be re- educated to respect, dialogue and accountability in order to build a new and better existential journey.

To deal with the sudden changes not only the school should upgrade, but also the family in order to create the conditions for genuine cooperation for the well – being of society.

Strengthening trust between families and school enhances the mutual sharing of resources for daily educational responsibilities.

The role of the educator must be strictly connected with the term responsibility, which has its objectives in the comprehension and sharing with the other, whom with it’s inevitable to get in touch.

To educate is to live, you learn to deal with the world, you grow with others, learn to respect differences, valuing them as a resource. To be flexible to changes ... Live on instinct, not an animal instinct, but divine, is to love themselves and each other ... Is to know how to forgive, is to grasp the wealth that is in every person. To educate is to love, is to create people and things, it is life, it’s family, it is ethical and social responsibility.

"Being responsible for another does not mean at all to act on his behalf – and less than ever replace the other in his freedom - but, on the contrary, to take one’s freedom to the measure of action and of its limit. This feeling mutually accountable opens the way to become available to each other " (Natoli ,2004,50 - 139).

The sense of responsibility (Jonas , 1990) is closely connected with that of care , both of which turn out to be the values that serve as guides in the educational process by binding to the possibility for the learner to access at the dominion of knowledge and the self improvement that is intertwined with the care of others.

Indeed, "we are talking about the ontological primacy of care because it is the caring that creates the possibility of being there, and for this reason it is defined as educational category of experience. We can talk about the ontological primacy of care because the man needs to be the subject of care (passivity plan), but at the same time to take care, that is to be the subject of care practices (activity plan). He needs to be the subject of care practices because, from birth, to receive care is a necessary condition in order to open up the possibility of being, and he needs to take care of oneself, of others and of the world to build directions meaning in his existence. Despite the meaning of the term "cure" varies from one society to another, care is looming in the sense of a universal aspect of human life. It can be said that the cure is the place where begins the sense of being there " (Mortari , 2006).
In the educational process the educator, in addition to care, must also be able to know how to observe himself from the point of view of the other "because only in this way he can educate and be educated; he will transform the daily life together in a dialogue that starts from observation, contemplation to reach the "revelation of the other [...] through a mysterious contact", which occurs when a person tells me something". The dialogue becomes "the beginning and the end of education " (De Beni , 1998).

The education should not be seen only as a unilateral act, a carrier with a single direction, but consists of an exchange in a mutual enrichment, which is why education is also and above all to educate yourself.

What we want to emphasize here is that "education as an event always passes through relationships (more or less educational / miseducating / re-education) and that educate, in this approach, means allow / encourage (relationally), development (educable) of personality to adulthood; personalities, namely , that, in the acquiree and conscious interdependence / socio - relational fairness, are ethically guided by an interpersonal responsibility, and in the inter-relatedness , even from a specific educational responsibility " ( Clarizia , 2013 ) .

The educational relationship is constructed with the other and for the other, has the dimension of being - for - another, translates into listening because the presence of the presence is not biological, is substantially appeal and poses instances of acceptance, esteem, respect, love.

The significant relationship within educational contexts, such as family and school, is described as "the condition and instrument of development and education, and certainly refers to the idea of growing into adulthood mainly understood as relational evolution towards responsible interdependence" (Clarizia , 2013 ) .

The educational relationship is therefore structurally due to the attitude of ethical responsibility, concern, protection, care, and can be defined as " a relationship between two parties mutually understood as adult / non adult in a hierarchical relationship, regulated by the normative tension present in the educational project, and perceived as ethical and behavioural tension of education. " (Clarizia , 2013 ) .

In the cultural context, characterized by constant change, where it seems increasingly difficult to think the "relationship" as a category that creates bonds between people, giving a meaning to life, even if the family confirms the place where the first social experiences can be performed, where one learns the meaning of caring relationships, the school has the responsibility of forming personalities able to constructively integrate into society and to be the place where a system of values should be clearly felt, a place where you can live these values as cultural experience and personal commitment through a growth in the interpersonal relationship.

Therefore the school and the family cannot be considered as structures and entities isolated from one another. They are two closely interlinked and interdependent systems. Family and school must be inseparable in order to design the education of future generations.

"The belief that the work of education can rely on a social category of people (educators), or a particular institution (the school or the family or the church), believing that it can perform independently from the ethos surrounding contemporary society in its various layers, is radically wrong. It is always the society that educates, although his action may not be educative in an ethical sense, as the conceptions, values , moods of society penetrate deep, despite all barriers, into the individual psychology of the learner and determine beliefs and behaviors " ( Bertin , 1984).
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The hikikomori phenomenon is usually translated into English as social withdrawal, but actually it is worldwide known by the Japanese term due to the first cases that were reported in Japan. Hikikomori or social withdrawal can be defined as “a state that has become a problem by the late twenties, that involves cooping oneself up in one’s own home and not participating in society for six months or longer, but that does not seem to have another psychological problem as its principal source” (Saito, 2013: part 1, section 1, para. 2). The estimated incidence of hikikomori in Japan range from 800,000 to 1,400,000 cases (Rhoades & Sar, 2008) but, in spite of being the country with the larger number of cases, it is not an exclusive phenomenon of Japan anymore. Over the past few years this phenomenon has spread worldwide, principally towards other countries of Asia, USA (Kato et. Alt., 2012) and Europe (Suwa & Suzuki, 2013), that is, developed countries.

I can assume that hikikomori phenomenon in Japan “is a consequence of the phenomenal growth of the Japanese economy during the latter half of the 20th century and the tremendous technological progress the country made during that time” (Murakami, 2000). Everyone would recognise that it is easier to be shut up in a room when it is possible to order food by internet and to chat with other people with the benefit of anonymity. Nevertheless, that does not explain why the incidence is larger in Japan than in other developed countries and why that problem has existed in this country during years without any incidence abroad until now.

The origin and larger incidence of hikikomori phenomenon in Japan could be easily explained if it is considered to be typical of this country, given its “psychosocial background, family relationships and socioeconomic status” (Suwa & Hara, 2007: 94). That is the mainstream standpoint among expert psychologists. Japan has been traditionally and culturally ruled over the importance of the group. Indeed, we know by Japanese authors from the early twentieth century, for instance Ogai (1970), Sōseki (2004) or Watsuji (1961), the difficulties that Japanese people had to understand the western concept of self, and psychological studies from the 80s and 90s have in turn demonstrated that despite of having developed a notion of self, Eastern cultures understand the self in a non-individualistic but relational way (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

If we delve into the causes of hikikomori phenomenon in Japan we easily find that almost all of them are prompted by a failure or a bad experience in any group of belonging. For instance, bullying at school, mobbing at work, family breakdown, lack of friends, failure on exams or inability to meet the company’s expectations, are the main causes reported (Zielenzinger, 2006). That evidence has led some authors to state that the hikikomori phenomenon in Japan has been motivated principally by the collision between a group-oriented culture, tradition and education and a capitalist labor market which appreciate especially individualistic features like assertiveness, self-reliance, competitiveness and excellence (Toivonen, Norasakkunt & Uchida, 2011). In a capitalist system the individual is always obliged to face certain problems alone. Japanese students, lost in a group-oriented education do not develop the appropriate skills to face certain situations such as losing a job, failing an exam or being disturbed by others in any way. Thus, when they have to do it they are alone and they do not know how they should react, because until that situation, they had never experienced the state of being alone.
Our individualistic societies demand to all of us the capability of being alone through slogans like «be independent», «be self-reliant», «be self-sufficient», «be self-motivated», etc. To be alone is always a hard experience at the beginning, but it can become an important educational skill when we have learnt how to be comfortable with no more companion than ourselves. We can distinguish therefor two ways of being alone, one positive and one negative, that can be even differentiated by the language. In English we can find two concepts in order to refer the state of being alone, namely, «solitude» and «loneliness».

2. Solitude and Loneliness: two different concepts.
If we look up the concepts «solitude» and «loneliness» in the Oxford Dictionary, we will not find a great difference between them (‘solitude’ & ‘loneliness’, 2006). In spite of that similarity, the German thinker Hannah Arendt showed the importance of distinguishing those two concepts in the mid-twentieth century. For Arendt, the possibility or impossibility for a person to be in solitude with itself made the difference between tyrannies—which had existed since the beginning of time—and totalitarian regimes—typical of the twentieth century. She realized that “political contacts […] are severed in tyrannical government […], but not all contacts between men are broken and not all human capacities destroyed. The whole sphere of private life with the capacities for experience, fabrication and thought are left intact. […] [By contrast], totalitarian logic destroys man’s capacity for experience and thought just as certainly as his capacity for action” (Arendt, 1962: 474). Thus, totalitarianism regimes invaded not only the public life of the individuals but also their private one. According to Arendt, the reason is that these systems were much more horrible than any tyranny. They made the individual become nobody, without any authenticity, personality or capability of freedom.

It is worldwide recognized that “without a politically guaranteed public realm, freedom lacks the worldly space to make its appearance. To be sure, it may still dwell in men's hearts as desire or will or hope or yearning” (Arendt, 2006: 147) but always in a different way. Nevertheless, although the internal freedom will never be a suitable substitute for the political freedom, the existence of the first one becomes almost a necessity considering the lack of the latter. At least in solitude, in my private life, talking to and with myself, I can still be someone. The loss of every space of freedom, even the internal one, would mean the end of humanity in any sense. It matches to what happened during the Second World War and the point of Arendt is to note that the horror took place essentially as a consequence of that loss.

The public realm had been replaced at the beginning of Modern Era by a new sphere, namely, the social sphere, where “the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance” (Arendt, 1998: 46). The public sphere had already nothing to do with the ancient Greek’s idea of a public space, that is, with a place where men freed of labor could live among others in “a community of equals where everybody [had] the same capacity to act” (Ibid.: 244) and where any transcendental question could be discussed. However, humanity as the condition of being unique between equals was still possible in the private life. The world had not been yet reduced completely to the bare life, not everything was indifferent.

Arendt claimed that “if the faculty of speech distinguishes man from other animal species—and this is what the Greeks actually believed and what Aristotle later said in his famous definition of man—then it is this silent dialogue of myself with myself in which my specifically human quality is proved” (Arendt, 2003: 92). She considered the times and spaces of solitude as the only way to develop a moral personality and she really thought that “no man can keep his conscience intact who cannot actualize the dialogue with himself, that is, who lacks the solitude required for all forms of thinking” (Arendt, 2005: 25). According to her, without this dialogue it is impossible neither to think, nor to create subjectivity and
consequently nor to develop a self with a good memory whose reports impede the individual to do and to accept any action.

The learning of being in solitude, which had been defended from the beginning of the Modern Era and especially by the bourgeoisie along the Victorian Era as an important element in human education (Gay, 1999), was rejected by the emergence of the mass society at the early twentieth century. When talking about the mass, I refer to the “average man. In this way what was mere quantity- the multitude- is converted into a qualitative determination: it becomes the common social quality, man as undifferentiated from other men, but as repeating in himself a generic type” (Ortega y Gasset, 2000: 360). I am pointing out a passive individual, easy to isolate, manipulate and control, as totalitarian regimes showed to the world. The situation did not change at all with the end of the Second World War, indeed, the emergence of devices like radio or television increased the image of a passive and uncritical human being constantly surrounded by incentives and merely going with the flow.

Thenceforth, in order to mitigate that problem, the main pedagogical discourse has been trying to promote active and participatory learners against the traditional student who appeared as a passive receptor of knowledge. It is not so much about transmitting and receiving knowledge, but more about creating it. The solution seems to be in the action and provided by the Information Communication Technologies (ICT) the well-known web 2.0 undoubtedly promotes the action. We all have heard about the experiences of e-democracy through internet. Nowadays we are more likely to participate in politics due to the fact that our voice can be heard anywhere, with no limits. Nonetheless, some problems associated with the fast development of New Technologies are emerging and as researchers worried in education we should be aware of them. One of them is the difficulty to be alone in any way.

3. Conclusion.
Nowadays ICT shape our life. They are with us from the early morning to the bed-time. Thanks to them every little occurrence in our lives is susceptible to be registered and discussed by others. They make us feel accompanied, which is appreciated in a highly individualistic society like ours. However, an excess of contact or dependence to others can produce adjustment disorders as we could notice in the analyses of hikikomori phenomenon. When it comes to the incidence of this phenomenon out of Japan there is no academic consensus. My point is that ICT are provoking in western adolescents a status of dependence similar to what Japanese and Eastern people in general receive by culture and because of that western adolescents are developing the same adjustment disorders. This is the research problem I am focusing on in my PhD thesis. Recently I have found some authors whose works may confirm my point. For example, Deresiewicz (2009), who talks about the end of solitude in a society where the most part are never alone for more than 10 minutes or Sherry Turkle (2011), who analyses the fact of being constantly in contact thanks to internet applications like Whatsapp or Line and at the same time, paradoxically, being alone.

As I referred before, the ability of being in solitude is one of the most important elements which enable us to develop our personality. Even the mass-man depicted by Ortega y Gasset eighty years ago was forced by certain circumstances to be sometimes alone. These moments of being alone did not guarantee the enjoyment of solitude, but at least it was a possibility. Nowadays the ICT are putting more and more obstacles to times and spaces where one must be alone. If this is true that this lack of time and space to be by oneself is becoming a problem, educational strategies to prevent this kind of disorders will be necessary. Because “solitude is not about being left on one’s own, but about remaining alone” (García Morente, 2011: 49).
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Who can speak and who cannot in the neo-liberal learning society

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In this working paper I critique the idea that “discipline” and “order” are the most valuable phenomena to discuss when it comes to education proper. I do so since in Sweden these two terms have been the main focus for neo-liberal public and political discourses on education for over a decade, and as a consequence they have severely limited the space for understanding what a teacher does when she teaches. I discuss the discourse of both discipline and order in terms of how it organises and makes possible certain modes of thought. I show how this discourse is disrupted by the passion of teaching.

Order here means staying in your place, and consequently not staying in one’s place means creating disorder. I discuss in the paper how this disorder is constructed within the public discourse on education as chaos. According to the neo-liberal position on education, no one wants chaos so therefore what is needed is discipline and order. It is the role of teachers within the Swedish public discourse on education to bring both into schools and classrooms. Teachers, as I will argue in the paper, are understood as positioned at the border of chaos fighting at the very frontier.

According to this discourse, moreover, who creates chaos in the school are students themselves. Students do so by being unpredictable in their actions, doing things and behaving in ways that are seemingly uncontrollable. By introducing discipline and order, or so the logic goes, their actions will not only become predictable, but that teachers will become responsible for ‘taking control’ over their students. What the teacher cannot control, then, by necessity creates chaos in the school. However, teachers cannot know how students think or what they think about. (i.e., What will they do next? What do they feel? And what they will learn?). Teachers cannot control everything that there is possibly going on between people in schools.

To be “teachers” within the public discourse on education, I argue, is to be the ones who are charged with bringing schools (and society) back to order, preserving order and preventing chaos. However, “teachers” in the public discourse on education are not simply to prevent just any chaos, but the dangerous kind of chaos that is attached to passionate teachers and students who speak for themselves, outside order and discipline, and as if they had the right to! That is, passionate teachers resist the reproduction of discipline and order by bringing an overflow of meaning to the situation of teaching that lies outside the prescriptive public discourse, adding a surplus of meaning, that which overflows the boundaries of the discourse itself. Their actions destabilise order and open for new meanings to appear. In that sense the name “Teacher” needs to be wrenched from the discourse on discipline and order in order for real teachers not only to be able to teach but to take back their proper name as teacher.

That is, passionate speech fills teaching with meaning and gives value back to the name of teacher. In so doing this kind of speech returns meaning back to the very form of teaching, the very act of “triggering passions” for students in the classroom. And since anyone can be included in the passion of life, in the passion of making a life into a form of art, as Foucault (1997a,b, c) repeatedly claimed, the grip of discourses on “discipline and order” will dissolve, and what remains is a certain kind of equality. It is equality, I will argue, that is beyond measure, discipline and order; it is the equality between students and teachers in the poetic transformation of knowledge and control into contingency and change (Rancière 1991).

I explore how contingency and change in actual acts of teaching in the classroom takes the form of a poetry of knowledge, which reframes common sense, or rather introduces different
ways of framing what is ‘common’ beyond discipline and order. It turns the classroom and everyone within it into a community of poets. It is passionate teachers, I claim, who find another balance between pleasure and pain, the pleasure of the act of teaching and the pain of being inscribed within the public discourse on education. It is teachers who, in their choosing to ignore the order and discipline embedded within the public discourse on education, destabilise the very balance on which this order rests: the “balance” point of inequality.

Teachers, I argue, who resist the stultifying ‘madness’ (Rancière 1991) of the public discourse on education bring to the classroom a sense of equality within their passion of teaching. Here, anyone can take his or her own place, anyone can speak. It is an equality in which no one is already known, but always a ‘mystery’, not to be solved or tested but to be experienced and even enjoyed. It is to perceive and to hear the speech of, what I elsewhere have called, “the wrong people” (that is those who speak as if they had the right to, even in circumstances depriving them of that right) which is the marker of passionate teaching (Säfström 2013).

What the passion of teachers says to us, I claim in the paper, is this: in the passion of teaching, in the community of poets, the moment in which you are free to emancipate is never later but always now. Later is always too late. Equality is not the golden end but where it all starts (Rancière 2007). The passion of teaching within a community of poets is, in other words, an expression of the possibility of equality in a context of inequality. It is the very form emancipation takes in education and that which makes change possible.

The war, if it is indeed a war, is not on chaos but on borders, or rather it is a war over fixing boundaries – boundaries over the very separation of not only what, but also who, creates chaos and who gets to name it as such. It is the struggle over what constitutes chaos in the first place. It is a contestation over boundaries defining who is speaking and thinking in ‘good order’ and who is only making noise outside that very same order. Passionate teachers within a community of poets work in agreement with Jacques Rancière’s (2009) critique: “Ultimately no positive boundary separates those who are fit for thinking from those who are not fit for thinking” (p. 282). There is simply no such thing as an incapacity to think and speak. Rather what passionate teachers do is to ask again and again: who and what defines that incapacity in the first place? And this is a particularly important question, I will argue, in the age of measurement, as Gert Biesta (2010) has called it, in the age of mapping brains, when the ‘incapacity’ of teachers is to be given a ‘scientific’ explanation by evidence. But it is exactly this matter of incapacity, I will argue, that needs to be stripped of its “scientific” disguise, to speak with Rancière (2009). That is, teachers within public and political neoliberal discourses on education are not unable to fix education or schooling because of their incapacity; rather that they are unable to fix education is what it means to be a teacher within that discourse in the first place!

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Philosophical clubs as a tool for learning support and diffusion of philosophy in the high school level

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The Educational model of the College of Sciences and Humanities (CCH for its inicial in spanish), that is the high school of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM for its initials in spanish), was characterized by focus on the student and emphasize the knowledge construction and acquisition of skills, attitudes and learning promoting in the classroom. It is important to emphasize that in the last semester of high school, where is located the subjects of philosophy, the students have to choose the degree and which would lead to school failure would materialize.

There are many reasons that may explain the straggle in the school by the students in CCH. However, I believe that one of the reasons that are at the bottom of this question, to be located in the apathy and disinterest on the academic activities by the students. According to Marchesi and Perez "young people who leave school early or not meeting the minimum qualification required have little confidence in their ability and low motivation to join training programs."

In this sense, the philosophical clubs intended to reduce educational straggle in the subjects of Philosophy and promote academic and cultural backgrounds who receive students inside classrooms. This project will provide a range of extra-curricular activities that promote the cultural, humanistic and philosophical context of the student population of CCH in order to provide an alternative for non-formal settings, incident on consolidation a key problem in the education system.

What are the philosophical clubs? There are working groups and accompanying that additional preparation for attending such meetings is provided. These spaces are conducted extracurricular activities such as film discussions, workshops, test preparation, homework, quizzes or academic activities, remedial courses, remedial and preventive counseling, among other activities. These working groups will have different activities throughout the week. It is intended to have a space and a fixed schedule between 13:00 and 15:00 hrs, which is the free time between the morning and evening turn, to make such academic activities.

This clubs have their antecedents in philosophy for more than three decades ago, when different philosophical associations of various countries have formed The International Federation of Philosophical Associations (FISP), and have also designed and promoted the International Olympics Philosophy (IPO). In fact, since 1995, the IPO have the support of UNESCO and from 2001, the FISP has participated in the organization of these Olympics, whose primary objective was to constitute:

[ ... ] A motivation and an example used to launch national competitions in philosophy for students in secondary education. Philosophical competitions are useful to encourage students to develop an interest in the subject tool. The fact of involving teachers in the long process of competition philosophy opens new perspectives for their professional skills expansion.

However, the universities or teaching upper middle and upper level have been aimed at preparing their participants to these activities, thus creating the "philosophical clubs". According to Nimet Küçük, these clubs

[...] give a new dimension to the mandatory approach, to offer young people new opportunities in terms of both content and form. The clubs created institutes conduct studies and extracurricular activities in the field of philosophy. The first club of this type was established in 1994 at the French Institute Saint Benoît, then others were created. The objective of the first club was in its infancy, preparing students for International Philosophical Olympics. However, it exceeded the limits of that role, becoming an integral part of the teaching of philosophy in schools part.\(^3\)

These philosophical clubs constitute a landmark in the liberal education of the nations in which they perform, as not only are trained and prepared for IPO representatives, but also, are centers of reflection on human rights, academic adjustment workshops on philosophical content that does not appear in the curriculum, debates, etc. UNESCO suggested the next activities to do in the philosophical clubs:

a) The construction of a critical mind: cognitive, social and affective aspects.
b) To provide theoretical and historical teaching of philosophy approaches.
c) To promote the teaching of philosophy at the high school level.
d) Establish the interaction between philosophy and other disciplines (such as music, biochemistry, visual arts, etc.)
e) Learning models and resume teaching philosophy in various countries.
f) Create Olympics philosophy, philosophical clubs, specialized courses, interregional philosophical dialogues, etc.

But how can we reconcile these clubs with the educational model of CCH? I believe that the inclusion of the philosophical clubs allow the objectives in the Institutional Advising Program (PIA for its initials in spanish) and the Institutional Program Tutoring (PIT for its initials in spanish) staff. The first one (PIA) seeks to provide adjustment and academic counseling for students that have difficulties in subjects that they are studying. The second program (PIT) pretend to be the meeting point for students, teachers and parents, to provide administrative support, vocational and educational guidance to each student who is attending high school. In this sense, the philosophical clubs with the purposes by the UNESCO and the objectives for the PIT and the PIA will:

- Detect those high students with it is essential to provide timely monitoring and seek to increase submission or enhance their skills, attitudes and learning various academic activities that complement their academic training.
- With respect to the IPO, simply apply and prepare some students assumed that each student will write an essay on one of the topics provided by the organizers, which allow us to strengthen the argument, reading comprehension and discussion.
- To work personally and intensively with the group of students who owe one to six subjects from the protocol, rules and guide of the PIT and PIA.
- Provide information and accompany students regarding administrative matters.
- Design and preparation of philosophical weeks, philosophical coffee and Film discussions.

It is important to say that this philosophical clubs are only a project that in case that realizes the teaching-learning activities will also be strengthened in the subjects of Philosophy, also the relationship between teachers from different areas and disciplines will also be promoted

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 90.
in these meetings. According to Marchesi and Perez is necessary to "encourage the student to have positive experiences that enhance their self-esteem and to reinforce to maintain effort in subsequent tasks. This requires that the teacher set the task to the possibilities of student and hold positive attitudes towards learning in all students", which would be conducted by these clubs.

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The Project or Philosophical Clubs has not been carried out in the CCH because at this time is conducting a review for Curricula of philosophical matters, a situation that has caused a great number of teachers they are participating in Seminars, meetings and Workshops, and is not possible to make this meetings. Therefore, it has delayed the development of this clubs, but other colleagues have conducted the Philosophical Coffee, where once a month have met teachers and students to discuss issues such as education, God, marxism, love, etc.

Although the educational model of CCH did not contemplate the presence of parents, the gradual participation that has been with them has generated mixed reactions from the discomfort of the students to try to establish a link between teachers and parents to for students. To the extent that they have carried out activities PIA and PIT have been a number of problems since it has been difficult with specific situations with students (from academic to personal), as it has had to resort on specialists to certain situations such as strengthening and study habits, situations of domestic violence, drug abuse, health problems or sensitive family matters, where the UNAM has made available all human resources departments are there to make it available to the university community. I trust that you will gradually form a team between teachers, parents and students.

Finally, about the viability of this clubs, I can share that has the support of teachers and the institution, and that changes in the curriculum, has increased the number of hours a unit logic, so it will be possible to prepare students for Academic Olympics (where content is intended to include ethics, history of philosophy and aesthetics) as well as the Mexican Olympics logic (in classical logic and argumentation). And when it comes to students, CCH has been characterized by offering academic and cultural activities, so it will be necessary for teachers we promote in the classrooms, the meaning and significance of philosophy in life students everyday, and start organizing those philosophical clubs.

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Knowledge for a common world? Epistemology and education in the 21st century

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Barbara Thayer-Bacon and Gayle Turner, the editors of a symposium on “What Feminist Inquiry Contributes to Philosophy and Philosophy of Education” in Educational Theory, state that “one of the significant contributions feminist inquiry has made to contemporary philosophy and the philosophy of education is standpoint epistemology” (2007: 300), and they continue to summarize that feminist standpoint epistemologists “have soundly argued for the limits of knowers, as situated knowers embedded within a particular context (including time, location, and culture), and [that] they have made visible the role power plays in theories of knowledge (that the criteria and standards used to judge good scholarship and research are not neutral or unbiased)” (301). It is important to note that the feminist critique of epistemology has not only been concerned with drawing attention to the potential re-thinking of epistemology that is required if one is to take seriously the perspectives of women, but also implies the questioning of other potential distortions of our understanding of knowledge due to, for example, classist, racist or heteronormative preconceptions.

However, if we were to take a subsequent issue of the same journal focusing on “Epistemology and Education” as an indication for how standpoint epistemology has been received within philosophy of education, Thayer-Bacon’s and Turner’s assessment of feminist impact might appear overly optimistic. While Harvey Siegel, in the introduction to the issue, points out that philosophers of education have been discussing the “leading figures in the challenge to the epistemological legacy of Logical Positivism and the development of a post-positivist philosophy of science” (2008: 123), feminist standpoint theorists only receive explicit attention in the “Afterwords”. There, the author charges Maureen Ford’s article in the earlier issue as having “nothing to contribute to either philosophy or philosophy of education” and as trying “to hijack epistemology in the interests of her feminist agenda”. The author – besides expressing his anxiety of feminist terrorist attacks – has two main worries, one, that standpoint epistemology attempts to “reduce epistemology to politics and power”, and two, that it “must embrace an anything-goes relativism”. It is not the aim of the present paper to defend Ford against these fearful derisions. Such a defense has already been undertaken by James C. Lang (2011) who tried to defend feminist epistemologies of situated knowledge with the help of Kant and Lorraine Code, ending up with a roughly constructivist account of knowledge. Rather, the point of my argument will be to demonstrate that feminist standpoint theory neither necessarily leads to a reduction of questions of knowledge to questions of power nor to the endorsement of relativism, but requires a thorough re-thinking of our conceptions of objectivity and rationality, and that it must be carefully considered in the interest of improving our understanding of what knowledge for a common world implies in a pluralistic world of post-traditional modernity in the 21st century.

My argument rests on the idea that what is the real challenge of feminist standpoint epistemology is its re-thinking (rather than merely abandoning) of a narrow conception of objectivity and rationality, a conception which is actually shared by quite a few epistemologists and feminists alike. From the above portrayal it might appear that the battle lines in philosophy of education go between those who claim that knowledge is in a relevant sense perspectival or situated which discredits all claims to objective knowledge or truth as unjustified universalizations of particular standpoints or perspectives (feminists), and on the other hand those who want to hold on to the possibility of defining criteria by which a description of the world can be said to be objectively superior to other descriptions (epistemologists). I hope that the discussion that follows will help to correct this picture by
showing that feminists and epistemologists “in the world of general philosophy” (Siegel 2008: 124) can be equally found to 1) reject narrow objectivism and embrace relativism of some form (T1), 2) defend narrow objectivisms (T2), and 3) repudiate narrow objectivism and defend broader objectivisms as well as broader notions of rationality (T3). It is the third option (T3) which I consider the most fruitful route for thinking about the contemporary challenges regarding the epistemic aims of education as well as epistemic questions of teaching, learning, and curriculum theory.

Feminist standpoint theory has first been developed by Nancy Hartsock (1983/1998: 105-312), who extended Georg Lukács’ argument about the privileged epistemic position of the proletariat in an objective account of the social reality of capitalist society (1971: 149-222) to the idea that women’s lives and experiences offer a similarly privileged perspective in sexist societies. Hartsock’s approach has been widely criticized for its (alleged) essentialism regarding the women’s standpoint as well as for not paying enough attention to the differences between various groups of women and also between the lives of different individual women. As Alice Crary rightly points out, if feminist criticism was indeed only possible from “a perspective that is essentially and exclusively women’s” (2007: 184), then this form of social criticism would not be able to lay claim to objective authority and thus undermine one of Lukács’ main points. Therefore, Crary prefers Sandra Harding’s account for “her description of objective, non-essentialist modes of thought that are dedicated to making sense of anomalous elements in women’s experience” (185), which she says aligns with “a significant number of feminists” who likewise maintain that “if we are to account for what is anomalous in women’s experience, we need to look at women’s lives from a perspective informed by an appreciation of the injustice of structures that keep women as a group in an inferior social position” (Ibid.). The non-essentialist, and objective form of standpoint theory which Crary champions claims thus that “a good understanding of women’s lives is unavailable apart from an appreciation of the insidious ness of sexism” (185). In order to avoid the association with any essentialism Crary speaks of “feminist objectivisms” (186), and it is these positions I think offer a fruitful perspective beyond option 1) and 2) discussed above.

Crary is well aware that feminist objectivisms have been met with criticism also from many feminist theorists. However, she is careful to point out that, while the rejection of objectivity is widely associated with “feminist postmodernism” (e.g. Butler 1990; Flax 1990), there are theorists who would claim the label postmodernist for themselves and who would nevertheless want to endorse a wider conception of objectivity (e.g. Fraser/ Nicholson 1990). Also, she discusses those feminist theorists who defend the traditional, narrow conception of objectivity, often associated with “feminist empiricists” or “liberal feminists”, where again she is careful to make room for the possibility of being an empiricist and liberal while defending T3. In order to allow for as much precision as possible, Crary ultimately distinguishes between “feminists skeptics” who criticize epistemology’s claim to a standpoint of nowhere to the extent that they come to reject objectivity altogether (T1), “feminists objectivists” who endorse a broad notion of objectivity (T3), and “traditional objectivists” who might also endorse a political feminist agenda but do defend a narrow conception of objectivity (T2).

There are two points I want to make here. Firstly, in the debate in philosophy of education outlined above, only the position of feminist skeptics (defending T1), and traditional objectivists (defending T2) appear within the horizon of the discussion, while the position of feminist objectivisms (T3) does not receive adequate attention. Lorraine Code, whose work is discussed in the article by Lang, also lays claim to a wider notion of objectivity; however, she ultimately does not consider her own account as a fully-fledged account of objectivity (at most we can have a “mitigated relativism” (251, 264, 320)), which explains why Lang, too, offers a constructivist account of knowledge. Crary’s proposal cuts deeper. She claims that the traditional, narrow conception of objectivity actually “misrepresents what objectivity is like” (10). Drawing on Wittgenstein, and in a similar vein as the interpretations of his work by
Stanley Cavell and John McDowell, Crary argues that the traditional, narrow conception of objectivity is inadequate when it assumes that we have to abstract from our subjective endowments in order to arrive at an objective view of reality. (She calls this the abstraction requirement.) To be clear, she believes that we need to rid ourselves of the narrow conception of objectivity in order to arrive at an adequate picture of “our concept of (full-blooded) objectivity” (22), not in order to do away with it. In the wider conception which she endorses there is “no longer any question of an ideally abstract standpoint from which to make the a priori, metaphysical determination that every (even problematically) subjective property is as such disqualified from objectivity” (28). This, however, does leave room for the idea that some ascriptions might be “grounded in a mere projection of particular subjective propensities” (Ibid.), but also for cases in which an ascription of subjective properties “figures in the best, objectively most accurate account of how things are and, further, that the person who lacks the subjective endowments that would allow her to recognize them is simply missing something” (Ibid.). Her repudiation of the abstraction requirement not only leads to her endorsement of the wider notion of objectivity, but furthermore to the repudiation of a narrow conception of rationality. If it is not “possible to get our minds around how things are independently of the possession of any sensitivities, we […] make room for an alternative conception on which the exercise of rationality necessarily presupposes the possession of certain sensitivities” (118f.), such as a general appreciation of the insidiousness of sexism in order to arrive at a rational account of social reality in sexist societies.

Secondly, we can point to a number of authors who defend T1 as well as T3 without also pursuing a decidedly “feminist agenda”, attempting to “hijack” epistemology, such as Richard Rorty or Robert Brandom, for example. While the more traditional epistemologists in philosophy of education might strongly criticize their work, they would certainly refrain from dismissing it as “having nothing to contribute” to philosophy or philosophy of education. In a footnote, Crary makes an interesting statement: “Although non-feminist critiques of ‘narrower’ metaphysics are often discussed within mainstream philosophical circles, they are rarely assessed in the same patronizing terms” (189). That this is true for philosophy of education, too, is illustrated by the fact that the issue on “Epistemology and Education” included an article seriously engaging with the work of John McDowell. I think it is time to acknowledge that a perspective that lays claim to non-traditional understandings of objectivity and reason can be similarly extracted from feminist criticism. And I think these broader understandings of objectivity and rationality are highly instructive in discussing questions such as which knowledge, epistemic skills, abilities, or character traits should matter in 21st century education, in globalizing, pluralist societies which continue to be shaped by sexist, classist, racist, ableist, heteronormative, and other biases.

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Headless Chickens: Speaking Seriously About Neuroscience, the Brain and Learning

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This paper represents an attempt to grapple with the question of what it is to speak seriously about education and learning in the light of discoveries in neuroscience and their possible application in the classroom. Taking my lead from comments made by David Bakhurst in his contribution to New Philosophies of Learning (Bakhurst, 2009) I will argue that how we speak about the relationship between neuroscience and its educational application has significance not only for particular theoretical perspectives and the justification for holding beliefs about them but for the very way in which we conceive of what it means to learn, to teach and the relationship between the teacher, the learner and what passes between them. Drawing on the work of Raimond Gaita, Rush Rhees and Stanley Cavell I will begin to explore what it means to think of ourselves as finite physical beings and more generally how our biology enters into our understanding of what it means to be human, but will begin, somewhat unusually, with a discussion of a scene from a play by the British playwright Caryl Churchill.

It may seem utterly irrelevant to introduce a discussion of the brain and learning by looking at an extract from a play. The play is Churchill's 'Love and Information' (Churchill, 2012) and the extract is a scene called ‘Lab’. In it a scientist discusses her research on the brain and whether a mental state such as memory can literally be seen as a corresponding brain state. She does so by injecting a radioactive liquid into the brains of day old chicks and observing their feeding behaviour. As part of this process she takes the chicks and snips off their heads while they are alive, removes their brains and slices them up for future study. It is a grotesque picture, made all the more grotesque by its being staged as a light-hearted, flirtatious conversation over a glass of wine on a hot summer's day.

It would be easy to criticise the piece as doing little more than creating an ill-informed picture of nasty scientific bogeymen and reflecting a perennial unease with the capacity of science to outstrip our moral values and the concrete practices they inform. However, there is more to this than merely highlighting the immorality of the suffering of other creatures for the advancement of human knowledge of questionable value. Much neuroscience does not involve this kind of research, although it was clear from a recent BBC report on the neuroscience research undertaken by a laboratory in Oxford that it is still an acceptable and justified part of what takes place (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-25888372, accessed 28/01/2014). The failure that was being highlighted was a failure of seriousness. By this I mean there was an absence of critical self-awareness and a lack of depth in the understanding of the scientist and her interlocutor. The setting served to bring this out. Of course one could argue that being superficial is at times a social necessity and not every conversation should be deep and meaningful. However, I would argue Churchill is drawing our attention to what happens when we fail to recognise those occasions when such conversation should be appropriately serious and what is implied about its failing to be so. Churchill hints at this in what the characters often seem to be on the verge of saying or do say and then dismiss. It is not my intention to argue that neuroscientists are not serious in their work. Nonetheless, Churchill gives us a short study of someone who is serious about her work but who is unable or unwilling to look too deeply into what she does.

Rush Rhees wrote the following about assumptions of profundity in science,

If the discoveries of science really did show us what the world is like, they would be profoundly important in a way that has nothing to do with the health and happiness of
mankind. They do not do that. And the illusion that they do has helped men to lose their sense of profundity and to confuse it with what is sham. (Rhees, 1969, p8)

Rhees was not claiming that science could not be deep. However, he was trying to suggest that questions about what the world is like are not just questions about physical features in the world but are in part an attempt to understand our own existence in the world and in part an attempt to understand what we are faced with – ‘the world’. I want to suggest that we might think of neuroscience and the puzzles it seeks to address in a similar fashion. My point is that the seriousness and importance of the study of the brain cannot be accounted for simply by indicating the kind of investigation that is carried out in the laboratory and for which funding bodies are willing to pour vast sums of money. Rhees continues,

The deep problems which a scientist may recognise are problems of his science, and they do not stand by themselves. The depth of what he has said about them does not depend so much on whether his answers can be accepted just as they were given. In one sense it does not matter whether they were right or wrong. Of course the scientist’s work could not be deep if he were indifferent to that himself. It would not be serious investigation at all. But the profundity of his work lies rather in his perception of what sort of answers they are. (ibid., p 10)

Churchill’s scientist does not lack seriousness because she is indifferent to the nature of her work but because of her perception of the answers that her work provides. That in itself does not make her work somehow irrelevant, but in giving us, the audience, a different perspective on what the scientist has learned about learning and the brain, we realise that the problems of the work cannot be characterised by scientific investigation itself.

Why is this relevant to questions about the neuroscientific turn in education? In part it is because the topic of the conversation is learning and we get a glimpse of how its seeming seriousness might be rendered trivial. It is also in part a concern with the nature of the claims that are made about education and learning in the light of the interpretation and application of neuroscience research. Some of this is a question of the language employed and what this reveals about scientistic construal of learning but it also reflects a concern with deeper philosophical issues. In his contribution to New Philosophies of Learning (Bakhurst, 2009), David Bakhurst identifies certain features about the language that is used in the discourse on neuroscience and education. One is the rather ‘journalistic’ approach to discussing its potential impact and how these ideas are written in a kind of pop-scientific voice. The implication of this criticism is that the claims regarding the application of neuroscientific discoveries for education lack rigour and suitable justification and there are insufficient grounds for the intervention. The assumption in such literature is that the subject matter is too difficult or dry to be treated in an appropriately academic tone. That points to one notion of seriousness in educational theory, that science, qua science, should demonstrate certain features if it is to be taken seriously. But that might be to ascribe a rather artificial or spurious seriousness to the work simply because it is scientific and to confuse complexity with profundity, something that Rhees identified.

A second feature of the language in this discourse is the idea that through targeted application of neuroscience we can transcend what limits our learning and by escaping our biological, social and cultural limitations we can embrace a brave new world of limitless learning. Bakhurst offers Blakemore and Frith’s comment that ‘perhaps one day it will be possible to pop a pill to learn’ as an example of this idea of overcoming limitations (Blakemore and Frith, 2005 p167). There is an unintended ambiguity in Blakemore and Frith’s comment that ‘the brain is also our natural mechanism that places limits on learning. It determines what can be learned, how much and how fast’ (Blakemore and Frith, 2005, p1). I want to argue that in this language there is a hubristic unwillingness to acknowledge Stanley Cavell’s insight into our humanity, described by Simon Critchley as the ‘need for an
acceptance of human finitude as that which cannot be overcome' (Critchley, in Goodman ed. 2005, p49).

Raimond Gaita (Gaita, 1991) discusses the limits of science in being able to give a full account of our biological being and its relation to the lives we lead. Amongst other things, Gaita discusses the idea of capacities and what it means to lose them. He gives as an example speech and argues that a specialist in neurology can give us an account of what happens when we lose the ability to speak through, for example, a stroke, but cannot give us an account of other capacities we take to be constitutive of speech, such as standing behind our words or responding seriously to something, including the suffering of others, which is the point I took from the Churchill piece. This leads to the second aspect of my discussion on the significance of learning and what it means to have something to say and our learning how to do so. This has resonances with Stanley Cavell’s ideas on seriousness and the problem of being present in our words and how we take ourselves to be speaking seriously, an aspect of the topic to be explored further. It is difficult to know where we look to in the brain to explain this and to what extent such an account could be a serious one. Where we look instead may take us beyond the scope and range of science.

The question of seriousness, or ‘profundity’ as Rhees named it, is a question not only about how we should use the discoveries of neuroscience but how we should use its language in applying it to learning. How are we to say serious things about learning in the language of neuroscience? If I speak of mirror neurons, describe the release of dopamine, or list all the areas of the brain that are engaged when I laugh, as Keeling does (Keeling, 2014), and then from this argue for the importance of laughter in the classroom, I may take myself to be communicating my seriousness about the pedagogy I am advocating but that says little about my seriousness as something that merits others taking it so. There will be more to my presence in speech and writing than my mere use of a scientific vocabulary. Other features of my vocabulary will be required if I am to be taken seriously.

Finally a brief word about the title. It is not only derived from the events described in the Churchill play but also from the way neuroscience is taken to illuminate educational practices. Take, for example, the following introduction to a course entitled ‘Neuroscience and the classroom’ on the educational website www.learner.org/courses/neuroscience/index.html (accessed 26/01/2014),

Insights drawn from neuroscience not only provide educators with a scientific basis for understanding some of the best practices in teaching, but also offer a new lens through which to look at the problems teachers grapple with every day. By gaining insights into how the brain works—and how students actually learn—teachers will be able to create their own solutions to the classroom challenges they face and improve their practice.

In that ‘actually’ is an implication that teachers do not really know how students learn, do not really know how to teach and are little more than headless chickens without the insights of neuroscience.

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Alternative ways of addressing philosophy for children

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1. Why teach Philosophy for Children?
Philosophy for children (P4C) has been questioned not only because it is believed to be beyond the reach of pre-adolescents but also because some assume it will distract students from the core subjects of the curricula, while at the same time encouraging skepticism more than learning. In times of school ratings and standardized tests, a prevailing thought is that there is no time for such a “useless” thing as “drifting speculation”. Although we could argue that philosophical inquiry has the power to both infuse meaningfulness into education as a whole and make a decisive contribution to foster critical thinking and overcome the hived off disciplinary approach; that it can promote children’s ability to think for themselves at the same time that it encourages them to think with others, within a community of inquiry, the latter being, in and of itself, a strong context for developing inclusive socialization, which is one of the higher aims for education nowadays (Banks & Banks, 2010).

The initial points of criticisms in this article are themselves currently being questioned. The Piagetian assumption that children are incapable of the meta-level thinking which characterizes the philosophical approach has been challenged by various researchers (Astington, 1993; Gopnik, et al., 1999; Gopnik, 2009). In fact, it could just be the case that the philosophical thinking manifested by children is simply overlooked (Matthews, 1980). On behalf of the hypothesis supporting children’s ability to start a philosophical inquiry, we can consider the famous song from Adriana Calcanhoto, entitled “Eight years of age”. Many of the questions introduced by the song, as good as they may be, can be said to be not intrinsically philosophical, since they have a factual and objective answer, eventually drawn from different sources, such as our daily experience or science. However, it is absolutely clear that a “drive to ask questions” is present and, above all, it is striking that some of the questions posed are to be taken under special consideration, like “Why does time pass?” and “Why do we die?” These are more than good questions. Such questions are not only philosophical but, indeed, eminently philosophical. Along these lines, why not use popular songs to do philosophy for and/or with children?

Many evidences support the idea that the “drive to ask questions” is very common in children. We can even admit that it is a universal feature of childhood. Nietzsche (2005), analyzing the spirit’s metamorphoses, uses three metaphors. The first refers to the Camel’s will of supporting even the heaviest axiological burden imposed by tradition that is shattered by the Lions’ determination to say “No” to false values in order to find his own place and his own freedom. In doing so, a breakthrough is open to the Child to appear. And who is the Child but the spirit of beginning that requires forgetting the old, the blindly accepted, and the “because it’s so”. But the Child goes beyond the Lion’s “negative” stance; the Child represents the disposition to create a new world and a new world must be created if one wants to have one. In life there are no borrowed worlds. Outside a personal meaningful construction of the world, we only get inauthenticity and emptiness (McHenry, 1997). Getting back to our issue, it is quite reasonable to admit that Nietzsche has captured children’s disposition toward questioning and playfully launch new games of meaning, just to make a parallel with Wittgenstein’s (1986) concept of “language games”.

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Now, returning to the song example, as much as that kind of questioning could be considered philosophical, one should bear in mind that philosophy is also a matter of being capable of having a sustained philosophical discussion. Regarding this issue, Matthews (1984) and Pritchard (1996) also provide some good insights of children's ability to sustain a philosophical reasoning process, not only for inquiry but also for argumentation.

While children's abilities to sustain a philosophical process could be a matter of discussion, one cannot doubt that children ask questions, and good ones, with a strong and authentic need to search for answers. For that alone, educators should be concerned with opening a space where children may deepen and expand this disposition. P4C not only opens this space but it also offers a dynamic methodology to address the process.

2. How to address P4C: fairy tales and popular stories

Let us consider the process of using pre-fabricated and supposedly “philosophical” novels, like Lipman's (1974) *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*. The advantage of using these novels derives from their adaption to the intended process as well as from the broad spanof materials already available. But one should not discard other resources. Especially fairy tales and fables, which are rich means of conveying very profound and dense symbolic contents (Bettelheim, 1976). Gareth Matthews (1992), for instance, has used simple stories, anecdotes and puzzles to start inquiries, carried out by children, on philosophical subjects. Tales, especially fairy tales, in their intimacy with children's world, can be very easily used to induce wonder and to motivate their questioning, thinking and argumentation.

Taking into consideration the difficulty of using proper stories suited to children's sensitivity and understanding, Bobro (2004, pp. 80-81) says, “I have had success introducing philosophy to children through the discussion of folktales, stories handed down from generation to generation.” From his point of view we should not encourage an introduction to philosophy by reading the classics; instead he proposes a “more ethnographic approach”. Bobro discards the unsuit ed esoteric readings of classic texts and chooses the “story approach” develop by P4C since “it is reasonable to make philosophy less exotic and intimidating by using stories” (2004, p. 82). However, a question remains: Why should we prefer folktales to original philosophical stories as the point of departure like P4C does? The author gives us several reasons: educational function; diversity; provenance; ambiguity of meaning and self-interest.

Regarding the “educational function” he points out that fairy tales, popular stories and jokes “aid in the education of both young and old, by sharpening the wits and disseminating the wisdom of past generations” (Bobro, 2004, p. 83).

As to the second issue, he praises folklore for its realistic and fantastic content and cultural diversity, to which children respond eagerly and creatively, while opening a way to their imagination flow through “What if?” contexts. What is more, folklore not only presents cultural assumptions but it also expresses universal truths.

As for “provenance”, it is important to note that folk tales are not the invention of a philosopher or any individual but rather the expression of a community of persons or a culture; being anonymous they are intimately connected with tradition.

Ambiguity of meaning is one of the strongest features of folktales, fairy tales and fables. Their power relies on their openness: they inspire more than they say, thus letting imagination flow so that one's understanding finds out personal means of expression.

Regarding the last reason, Bobro (2004) says folktales are generally much more interesting and meaningful because they are passed down orally from generation to generation.
As good as pre-fabricated stories may be – and some of them indeed are –, we also would prefer folk tales or the classical fairy tales and fables to trigger the work of “communities of inquiry”. A critical defense for the choice of folktales and the like is that we avoid placing ourselves in the role of storyteller supervisors who seem to have nothing to learn with the very children we are trying to tough on open-mindedness.

3. How to address P4C: films

The philosophical content of films (Cox & Levine, 2012) and their use for philosophical purposes (Kowalski, 2012; Teays, 2012; Litch, 2010) has been poignantly discussed. But, as Wartenberg (2009) notes, an intense debate on the philosophical potential of films has arisen. Some say that films do “little more than raising philosophical problems in an accessible form for film audiences, others assert that films can actually philosophize” (p. 549), meaning that films can indeed “do” philosophy.

Films can be an adequate resource to trigger simple questioning on relevant subjects as well as foster philosophical inquiry, debate and reasoning, while they can also be “philosophy in action”. Given their strong appeal to the “M Generation”2, the great variety available and the widening access to them, we would be wise to take films not only as an educational resource, broadly speaking, but also as philosophical instruments.

Just to give an example, we would like to draw on Victor Flemming’s film, “The Wizard of Oz”, which we assume is common ground for most of our readers. The whole movie is a source of subject to fire children’s interest, questioning and wonder, from the music, by Harold Arlen, to the lyrics sung by the character Dorothy, played by Judy Garland.

By listening and, when possible, reading the lyrics, imagine the debates that could be triggered. What empathy can such a song create within children? Considering the curricula of Basic Education, how many interdisciplinary threads could be advanced? Let alone the change in the film from black and white to color after the tornado and, most specially, the three friends: the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Lion, as metaphors for virtues or the human complex condition. And what of the Wicked Witch and the Great Wizard of Oz? Who are they, after all? Figures of evil and goodness? What is there to say about their surprise when they discover that the Great Wizard is nothing more than a mechanical human construction? What is this saying to children about the figure of goodness? What does the “yellow brick road” stands for? The path of the righteous? One can quote Reiter (1998), just to have an insight into the possibilities, in this case from the point of view of a Freudian orientation, the referred book, film, or play, are “rich with imagery, metaphors and obvious symbolism that may serve as an extremely powerful as a catalyst for discussion of one’s own inner desires, needs and “other individual journeys of disillusionment and enchantment.” (Reiter, 1988, p. 150)

Philosophy for Children is, perhaps, a problematic endeavor, but we have many good reasons to promote it and we do not lack resources. We can use a large span of materials collected from traditional or contemporary sources, ranging from fairy tales to popular songs and films that are very well suited to engage children in a community of inquiry.

References


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2 The “M Generation” is an expression to refer to those who are natives in the (hyper)media society that arose after the last decade of the XX century (Reis, 2008).


“...the only education is an education by truths.” Alain Badiou on education

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Abstract: In this paper I perform a critical reading of the French philosopher Alain Badiou's hypertranslation of Plato's Republic in order to outline Badiou's idea of education. Despite claiming that “the only education is an education by truths” Badiou never explicitly discusses his notion of education. However, Badiou's way of turning to Plato seems to reveal an ambition to re-establish the importance of the link between truths and education.

Introduction
During the past years the French philosopher Alain Badiou (1937 - ) devoted a three years seminar to Plato (2007 - 2010), published a “hypertranslation” of Plato’s Republic (2012) and wrote a screenplay on The Life of Plato (2013). However, a re-reading of Plato has been central to Badiou’s works since the 60’s: His first book on logic - Being and Event (2005) - opens with a non-conventional reading of Parmenides as a theory of “inconsistent multiplicity”; in a 1989-90 seminar on Plato’s Republic he examined the relationship between Truth as a philosophical concept and the truth-procedures emerging from art, love, science and politics; and in his second book on logic – Logics of World (2009) – the references to Plato are frequent. Moreover, in the very last chapter of his Second Manifesto for Philosophy (2011) Badiou explores the “Platonic Idea” and concludes that “...the Idea is nothing other than that by which individuals discover within themselves the action of thought as immanence to the True” (Badiou, 2011, p. 109).

But why does Badiou turn to Plato? What does he gain from Plato’s dialogues? And in what ways may his reading Plato be related to education?

Badiou on Plato
Overall, Badiou’s philosophy should be read as a meta-philosophy that deliberates truth-procedures suspended from four conditions; art, love, politics, and science. To Badiou, philosophy is always conditioned. But Badiou holds that philosophy should never be mixed up with any of these conditions. Its task is rather to think the emergence and creation of truths. Badiou thus calls for a return to philosophy in order to strengthen and renew its tasks; “at least if philosophy is to count for something in life, to be something other than an academic discipline” (Badiou 2009b, p. 12).

To Badiou, Plato did not only succeed in creating a conditioned philosophy; he also generated an idea of his times: a Greek contemporaneity (Bartlett, 2011). In a short essay - “The (Re)turn of Philosophy Itself” - Badiou states:

An attentive examination of Plato ... results in the following theses ....: Before philosophy – that is, in a “before” that is non-temporal – there are truths. These truths are heterogeneous and occur in the real independently of philosophy ... Philosophy is a construction of thinking where ... it is proclaimed that there are truths. But this central proclamation presupposes a specifically philosophical category, which is that of the Truth (Badiou, 2008, p. 10-11).

So, Badiou here points to the way Plato distinguishes between “philosophy” and its “conditions”. Correspondingly, Badiou speaks of two types of truth: On the one hand, “truths” (in plural) as the conditions of philosophy; On the other hand, “Truth”(singular). as the premise for the philosophical identification, articulation and affirmation of truths. Truths, or
truth-procedures, are truths-in-worlds that emerge, appear and disappear dependent on the conditions they are part of.

Plato’s problem – which is still ours – is how our experience of a particular world (that which we are given to know, the ‘knowable’) can open up access to eternal, universal and, in this sense, transmundane truths. For this to come about, according to Plato, this experience must be set out ‘in truth’, with this immanence being understood in the strict sense that only inasmuch as it is set out in the element of truth can a particular object of the world of our experience be said to be known, not only in its particularity but in its very being (Badiou, 2011, p. 106).

In this perspective, Badiou reads Plato’s dialogues to illustrate acts of thinking, the productions of new subjective dispositions, which - on the one hand - are based on the possibility of eternal and universal Truth, but - on the other hand - are generated and shaped by tangible truths-in-worlds.

Arguing against those who tend to conflate politics with philosophy and also truth with knowledge, Badiou (2006) contends that there is no such thing as a philosophical truth. The purpose of philosophy is not to develop a credo. Philosophy cannot and will not tell what particular position to take in politics or science. Because truths are produced and continue to emerge in other, non-philosophical spheres of life: In love, art, politics and science. Here, “truths not only are, they appear” (Badiou, 2001). In this way philosophy deals with logical transformations or truths as creation. But philosophy is neither the interpreter nor mediator of truths. The task of philosophy is rather to “examine the constitution, in singular worlds, of the appearing of truths, and therefore on what grounds (sic) the evidence of their existence” (Badiou, 2009, p. 9).

Despite claiming that “the only education is an education by truths” (Badiou 2005, p. 15), Badiou never explicitly discusses his notion of education. However, his claim presupposes the existence of truths, the existence of education, and a link between the two. It is exactly this link that seems to motivate Badiou’s turn towards Plato (Bartlett, 2011).

**Badiou’s hypertranslation of Plato’s Republic**

So, in order to outline Badiou’s idea on “an education by truths”, I here perform a critical reading of Badiou’s hypertranslation of Plato’s Republic. In doing so, I take Badiou’s logic as a starting point. Thus, I do not interpret Badiou’s turn to Plato as an analytic exercise in definition; neither as a hermeneutical search for meaning; or an immanent or transcendental critique of Plato’s assumptions against other ontological or epistemological stances. My ambition is rather to read Badiou’s way of reading Plato against his own philosophy in order to throw some lights on his notion of “an education by truths”.

I start by portraying Badiou’s way of reimagining and renewing Plato’s classical text. In Badiou’s hypertranslation, Socrates and his companions are joined by figures such as Beckett, Pessoa, Freud and Hegel. And these figures do not simply agree with Socrates: they dispute, debate, discuss, contest and argue. Badiou’s hypertranslation of Plato’s Republic thus demonstrates thoughts in motion. Next, I read these “thoughts in motion” against Badiou’s way of re-writing Plato’s allegory of the cave as an allegory of cinema.

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1 To Badiou, truths are generic in the sense of truth-procedures that reveal or unfold something entirely new, something that cannot be grasped or apprehended by the already established categories of the discourse, and thus goes beyond the situation: “Created in one world, it is in fact valid for other worlds and virtually to all”.

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At the first analytic level, I read the ways in which this allegory pictures education as a trajectory, a move away from *illusio*, beyond *doxa* and towards *noesis*. At the next level, I read the way Socrates, Amantha and Glaucon discuss the allegory. The discussion illustrates thoughts in motion; a generic truth procedure that not only trouble Socrates, Amantha and Glaucon’s conventional beliefs of education, but also the very foundation of their beliefs.

At the third analytic level, however, I read how the very ways in which Badiou re-writes, discusses and amplifies generic truth procedures illustrate how the work of philosophy may give new impetus to the potential powers of generic truths.

In the last part of the paper I read these “trajectories”, “thoughts in motion” and “generic truths” against Badiou’s logic in order to throw light on his notion of “an education by truths”. To Badiou, truths are generic in the sense of truth-procedures that reveal or unfold something entirely new, something that cannot be grasped or apprehended by the already established categories of the discourse, and thus goes beyond the situation: “Created in one world, it is in fact valid for other worlds and virtually to all”. Thus, Badiou’s hyper-translation of the *Republic* cannot be unilaterally read as an actualization of Plato’s classic text. It may also be read as a renewal and strengthening of the truths that originated with Plato and still characterizes the western world’s master discourse on education. And also as a comment to this discourse’s blind spots. We—the readers—are thus invited to participate in the movable thinking that originated with Plato and which is here re-presented and re-conceived by Badiou.

**References**


Dr. Maria Montessori: An important Italian philosopher of education

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Introduction
I helped to develop a Montessori school that is still going strong, more than thirty years later. That little school was my entry into a career in education. I was the first licensed Montessori elementary teacher in the school, and many of the curriculum materials I made are still in the elementary classroom. My motivation for getting involved in the school’s development was the desire for my children to have a place to go to school where their love of learning would be kept alive. Once I witnessed my daughter’s joy in going to school, my curiosity about Maria Montessori and her pedagogy was further enhanced. When the opportunity to enroll in the first elementary training program offered in the USA in the Washington, D.C. area presented itself, I jumped at the chance to go. It was a leap into the world of education that I have never regretted. What surprises me is how much the experience of teaching in a Montessori school still informs my thinking today.

Maria Montessori is probably one on the most famous women to contribute to contemporary educational theory, yet when I went to graduate school to earn a doctorate in philosophy of education I was never assigned anything to read by her or about her. As Jane Martin has pointed out, for a time hers was the only female name found in most anthologies about famous educators, and her work was usually described in only a paragraph or two. Things have improved; as feminist scholarship has gained strength and more women’s work has been recovered, Montessori’s work has regained attention and she is given more credit for her significant contributions to the field of education. Most educational texts acknowledge that Dr. Montessori contributed significantly to special education and early childhood educational development. However, I find it troubling that we do not find her cited for her contributions to educational philosophy. We recognize John Dewey’s significant contributions to democratic theory but not Maria Montessori’s, and it is my hope that I can help to right that wrong, for Montessori’s educational plans serve as an illustration of my democratic theory. Her school design, pedagogy, and curriculum strongly support the themes of shared responsibility, authority, and identity that I recommend for a pluralistic, relational democratic theory and educational model. Teaching in a Montessori school gave me a way to experience a pedagogical approach that recognizes the importance of cultural diversity, while helping children learn how to be active, engaged, critically aware, self-assured, directed, and disciplined citizens of democracies-always-in-the-making. I share Montessori’s hope that through education we can help more children grow up in a world that welcomes them and what they have to offer. I turn now to her influence in my own thinking about democratic education.

Montessori’s Contributions to Democratic Theory Through Practice
Dr. Montessori (1912) started out her career as a medical doctor, not a trained teacher. She approached the educational questions she asked as a scientist would, proposing a hypothesis then testing it out with experiments. She did not position herself as an authority or expert in education. She developed a model for education that treated the students as teachers, teachers as observers and facilitators, and positioned all in the classroom on equal footing. Montessori believed that education depends on equality, that we should treat all children, including children with special needs and working class pre-school age children, with dignity and respect. Montessori proved that all students can learn directly from concrete, sensorial materials like the ones she developed for her schools. Her theory for education creates the possibility of a form of education that opens up a more inclusive public space and gives children ways to overcome their bad luck due to circumstances beyond their control. Montessori’s educational ideas support Rancière’s (1991) democratic theory that
just as no knowledge is imparted without teachers and students speaking together as equals, no democracy is established without multitudes of egalitarian relations.

Between 2001 and 2006 I visited twenty-three schools that represent five different collective cultures (Native, Mexican, African, Japanese, and Chinese Americans) and wrote about that in *Beyond Liberal Democracy in Schools and Democracies Always in the Making*. The three key themes that emerged from my earlier research are: shared responsibility, shared authority, and shared identity. Let me illustrate how these themes can be found in Montessori classrooms.

In Montessori schools the children are taught the importance of caring for their environment and the materials they use. Montessori designed child-sized furniture that is easy for children to move, and child-sized brooms, mops, and dusters so that the cleaning tools are easier for pre-school age children to use, as even the 3-5 year olds help clean up after themselves and learn how to care for their environment in Montessori schools. All children enrolled are able to go directly to open shelves and choose the materials they want to work with, and they are responsible for putting that material back in its proper place so that other children will be able to find it as well. It is not unusual for the materials to last years as a result of their careful handling.

In Montessori classrooms students are often in the role of working with other students in small mixed-ability groups and those with more skills help their other group members with whatever they are working on. They are not punished for collaborating with others, but instead are encouraged to do so. It’s believed that in teaching another what one has just learned the tutor has the chance to practice and master the concepts themselves. Students who are closer to the learning process often can make connections for others that are easier for them to grasp.

It is also the case that the curriculum is designed so that the children create their curriculum materials, their own animal stories, geographic maps of various continents, and timelines of historical periods, for example, as ways of learning the material. Montessori students are continually researching topics of interest in the elementary classroom and then sharing with their classmates what they learn, so that they regularly serve as teachers for each other. These are all examples that illustrate the theme of shared responsibility.

Another theme that connects to the idea of shared responsibility is shared authority. Shared authority is a concept we struggle with in democracies at governmental levels as well as in our other social institutions such as churches, families, and in schools and classrooms. However, democracies are dependent on equality, and in order to have equality, citizens must have shared authority, even if only temporarily and for fleeting moments. This means that we take active roles in decision-making. It means we have an important contribution to make and our voice should be heard; our questions should be asked and fairly considered, our concerns should be voiced and taken seriously and our claims should be tested for quality.

Montessori taught me about the importance of shared authority in the classroom by creating an environment where the adults are positioned as observers and facilitators, the classroom space is full of excellent choices for learning a diverse curriculum, and the children are allowed the freedom in that space to choose their work. Montessori taught me that children want to learn, and will work incredibly hard, when they are interested and they have an investment in their learning. When they can choose, and even have the choice of not doing anything, they stop fighting again teachers and they start learning. They stop resistant behavior, and open up to the excitement and joy of learning something new. They can’t wait to get to school, as it is their school, and in their school their voice is heard. They also learn to make practical decisions about why they may need some basic rules of conduct in their
classroom space, as they experience problems and seek to find ways to solve those problems.

There is one last theme I developed in my research, *shared identity*. I learned in my study of five collective cultures how oppression leaves its mark on cultures that are embedded within a society that discriminates against them. Native, Mexican, African, Japanese, and Chinese Americans all have long histories of attending USA public schools where they were segregated from White children, and/or tracked into special education, English as a second language, or lower academic tracks, and suffered from lowered expectations and marginalization within those schools. I learned that we all need to grow up surrounded by others who are like us, know us, and reflect back to us images of ourselves that are loving and good, in order to grow up feeling good about our selves. If we have grown up in a country where we did not fit the norm, chances are we have identities that are fractured, disjointed, maybe even ruptured. For those who fit the norm as children – they are probably not aware of the harm that norm is doing to others and the unearned benefits they receive. Children want to fit in, and have friends, and be attended to, hopefully in positive ways, but children will opt for negative attention before resigning themselves to being invisible. Children who are resistant and rebelling are children who have not given up yet; the ones we really need to worry about are the ones who become passive and stop trying.

Montessori first worked with children with special needs, when no one thought they were educable, and then with pre-school age children from Rome’s “projects” when no one anticipated they were educable either. She shocked the world with her success. Her classroom spaces were mixed ages, usually 3 years together. She taught me to value having multi-ages of students together when I was able to see how much room that opened up for students to find ways to fit in, even shine, and show us their talents and hone their skills. There are so many things I learned about my students and their families because we were part of a classroom community for multiple years, things I would have never known if we had been together just one year. Those things I learned over time were life changing. Students were caught who were falling through the cracks, and families were helped to meet needs no one had addressed before. That time taught me how to find qualities I enjoyed and appreciated in every one of my students; I had to do that in order to be able to look forward to another year together. And, it taught me how important extended families are to the wellbeing of our classroom community. We developed shared identities over the course of three years, and I am still in touch with those children and their parents, thirty plus years later.

**Conclusion**

I did not know when I enrolled in the training program to become an elementary Montessori teacher that I would have the chance to experience a type of democratic classroom community I had never experienced as a child. Even though I knew much about the Montessori model of education, with my children enrolled in a local school, I did not realize until I was in the classroom myself, responsible for managing the physical space, what a unique model of education she had created. I have not seen any place where Montessori herself addresses how her model creates a democratic classroom space, but I am continually surprised by how it serves my imagination in that capacity. I still find it informs my thinking and challenges me in ways I was not challenged before.

Dr. Montessori gave up much in order to give the world the Montessori method of education for children, a gift she truly believed would help children reach their full potential and they in turn would then be able to help create a better world, one filled with the possibility of world peace.\(^6\) It is my sincere hope that this paper will help draw attention to her work, as she continues to contribute to my own thinking.
Notes
1. I attended the elementary training offered at Barrie Day School, Silver Springs, Maryland, in 1981-1982, with Harvey Hallenberg as the director. In 1980 an elementary training program began in the NYC area, before then the elementary training was only offered in Europe and required Americans to spend a year living abroad. There are many Americans who did just that. Nancy M. Rambusch, founder of the American Montessori Society in 1960, is an example of someone who went to London for the training, came back to the U.S. and shared what she learned, helping to revitalize interest in the Montessori method of education in America. Montessori trained Claude Claremont, from England, and later in his life he moved to the Los Angeles area where he trained Harvey Hallenberg, who trained me. 
2. I taught in three different Montessori schools, The Growing Concern in Tannersville, PA where I taught 6-10 year olds for 3 years, Montessori Center School in Santa Barbara, CA, where I taught 9-12 year olds for 1 year, and Old Mission Montessori School in Oceanside, CA, where I taught 8-12 year olds for 2 years. Between my teaching and my children attending Montessori schools, I have twenty-seven years of experience with Montessori education. For those interested in knowing more about Montessori schools, contact the American Montessori Society (281 Park Ave., New York, NY 10010) or the Association of Montessori International (1095 Market St., Suite 405, San Francisco, CA 94103). For more on Montessori’s philosophy of education see Montessori (1972, 1977). http://www.montessoriland.com/site/1270021/page/530591
6. I discuss Dr. Montessori’s gendered story more in Chapter Two of Democracies Always in the Making.

References
A curriculum for the 21st century? The logics of sexual difference

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Overview
This working paper is based on a project currently exploring how sexual difference – specifically, images of the relation between femininity and masculinity – in the upper secondary classes of Religious Studies, Science and Swedish manifests itself. It examines, in particular, the new curriculum at this level, which has been heralded as being more ‘responsive’ than previous curriculum to the needs of youth in the 21st century. Drawing on the work of Luce Irigaray, and particularly her notion of ‘sexual difference’, this presentation offers an analysis of the curriculum based on what I see as 3 operating ‘logics’: universality, difference, relationship. Through these logics, I critically question the extent to which they offer anything ‘new’ with respect to how femininity and masculinity are portrayed and how youth engage with knowledge in the 21st century.

The paper first outlines a position of sexual difference, based on Irigaray’s critique of knowledge systems which attempts to demonstrate how language embodies a certain logic or morphology that tends to privilege certain images of femininity and/or masculinity. I then turn to an exploration of the new curriculum in Swedish, Religious Studies and Science in order to identify the kinds of logic upon which their subject specific knowledge is constructed. Here, I seek to demonstrate how each of these logics invoke certain connections between content knowledge and sexual difference.

Sexual Difference as ‘Method’
This paper draws on the feminist philosophical concept of sexual difference, which highlights the ways in which femininity and masculinity are always constructed in relational and interdependent terms. The concept of sexual difference does not refer to biological or anatomical differences between the sexes, but instead captures the dynamic interplay between imaginary, linguistic and embodied understandings of femininity and masculinity, which shape the kinds of knowledge and social relationships that are produced in any given context. This means that gendered social roles and gendered constructions of knowledge in the classroom are seen to be an effect of the ways in which femininity and masculinity are sustained through the images that appear in linguistic and material practices.

Luce Irigaray is perhaps the most prominent philosopher to have developed the concept of sexual difference. Her account brings together the ways in which sexual difference operates relationally at the level of the imaginary, in conjunction with symbolic and discursive practices and embodied subjectivities. Irigaray (1985a; 1985b) herself begins her theorization of sexual difference through an exploration of what she refers to as the male and female imaginaries – that is through the field of fantasy and body image (or morphology) that serves to support particular conceptions of subjectivity. Although the body is important to her work, she does not claim that there exist some essential or fixed biological differences between the sexes. Rather sexual difference is tied to the ways in which images of femininity and masculinity operate both through an embodied experience of the world that is neither fixed nor unitary, and through the symbolic translation of these experiences into language and discourse. What she points out, through her analyses of traditional western knowledge systems, is that these symbolic practices have traditionally favoured masculine experience. This is not to say that only images of masculinity appear in these knowledge systems, but that femininity is defined largely through the lens of masculinity. Thus within patriarchal forms of knowledge, images of femininity and masculinity operate relationally in order to construct particular meanings for subjectivity.
Although these patriarchal systems would seem to offer a deterministic view of femininity (that women are merely ‘othered’), what Irigaray argues in her work is that because femininity and masculinity are tied to sexed bodies, there is a way in which women escape the patriarchal symbolic constructions of subjectivity ascribed to them (1985b). That is, images are also informed by an embodiment that cannot be contained purely within discourse. With this move, Irigaray sees that individuals are not just ‘constructed’ or ‘produced’ by discourse, but also have agentic possibilities for re-imagining and re-symbolizing these discourses. From the point of view of this proposed paper, her work enables an investigation into how images of femininity and masculinity are not only ‘dominant’, but might also be ‘resistant’ in the knowledge on offer in the curriculum. Thus, to claim that knowledge in the Science curriculum, for example, is wholly ‘masculine’ would be missing the ways in which other logics might be invoking images of masculinity and femininity that subvert our stereotypes about certain subject areas.

Logics of the Curriculum

The first logic to be explored is the logic of universality. Traditionally tied to images of knowledge that are static and fixed, this logic operates, surprisingly perhaps, most obviously in the Swedish curriculum. Here, the study of literature, as well as Swedish culture and language, are strongly linked to universal notions of humanity, and the universalising impulse to be had in the move toward integration. In contrast, there is very little talk about universality in the Religious Studies and Science curriculum.

The second logic is the logic of difference. Here Religious Studies and Science make this a central part of their conceptions of knowledge. However, Religious Studies focuses on issues around pluralism (as both a social and an individual phenomenon), while Science is more concerned with diversity (such as in bio-diversity). I explore these differences in relation to how they directly name sex and gender as issues for study in the content knowledge of the subject area itself.

The third logic is the logic of relation. Interestingly, there is virtually no mention of relationship outside the Science curriculum. ‘Relationship’ is directly named as part of the nature of its study – ecological interaction; cellular interaction; evolutionary interaction between humans and their environment; interaction between science and society. These aspects of relationality are explored with respect to what they signify for sexual difference.

Conclusion

Given these three different logics, with their differential ties to images of femininity and masculinity, I discuss here the degree to which content knowledge in these 3 subject areas offer students (and teachers) ways of exploring relationships between women and men that are future oriented. That is, to what extent does the new curriculum open up possibilities for resignifying sexual difference as that which might lead to a more equitable and just society – which is after all a task that the Swedish curriculum prides itself on.

References

The features of the education policy in Russia

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Abstract
The author makes an attempt to take a fresh look at the unshakable positions concerning the formation of the educational policy of the state, to study its development in Russia in the direction of further democratization. It is shown that the democratization of the state mechanism of the education control is one of the main ways of approaching adequate grounds of the modern educational system and pedagogical thought, taking the society and education out of the systemic crisis. It is also a means of adapting the domestic education system to the European standards, translation of the national educational traditions into the language of international communication in the European educational space.

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Education, being a carrier of a certain type of ideology, cannot develop outside the political system. Since the state is interested in the formation and transference of spiritual values to new generations, in the presence of law-abiding, educated and trained citizens with a certain set of values and qualities specific for each epoch, it forms and carries out a certain policy in the field of education. The educational policy of the state is understood by us as a set of principles, norms and the activity of the government bodies to establish and develop the education system, ensuring the realization of the state order for training the necessary human resources. The initial position of studying the raised issues is the fact that education is the basis of the set of relations in the society, organized in family, civil society, the staff of the educational institutions and other social communities and is not only a priority value, but also an absolute patrimonial value equal to the value of human life. From the perspective of philosophy of education, in shaping the educational policy there is also important understanding and explanation of the first principles that underpin education, understanding its meaning, which, in turn, will allow to shape the educational policy not spontaneously but deliberately, to influence the educational process.

The methodological basis of studying the problem is the philosophy of education, which makes it clear what distinctive features are inherent in various state-national education systems at the present stage of development of education and society itself, what are the basic paradigms of effective education in the onto-gnoseological and axiological dimensions, what are the fundamental differences between the domestic and foreign educational policies. It creates a theoretical platform of educational conception in modern conditions, which organically includes the issues of responsibility of power and education towards each other. Today we have witnessed changes in the educational policy: from the unconditional demands of rigid centralization, the class and party character of education, from the bureaucratic, anti-democratic educational policy to the principles of democracy, liberalism and humanism which are traditional for the world education system. Under the current Law of the Russian Federation "On education", one of the principles of state policy in the field of education is the democratic, state-public nature of education management, whereas the workers of educational institutions, students and their parents are given the right to participate in the management of educational institutions.

As is known, in Russia there are currently taking place hard-to-explain processes of development of the education system and educational policy, which are connected with a number of internal and external, economic, socio-political and spiritual factors. There is taking place a gradual decrease in the efficiency of traditional educational practices; the process of transformation of values is under way; there is being formed a new pragmatic generation of people poisoned by individualism. The school does not provide yet three major
components of the standard of knowledge of the new century: computer science (including the ability to search for and select information), foreign languages and the basic social disciplines (economics, law, etc.). Vocational education is not yet able to adequately solve the problem of the "lack of personnel", conditioned by the development of manufacturing and new requirements to the qualification level of workers. Many graduates of vocational educational institutions cannot find a job, cannot discover their own "niche" in the modern economy. Education's lagging behind in terms of the society requests puts new challenges before the education system.

The existing structure, management principles and practices are behind the demands of the time. The bureaucratic management requirements have come into conflict with the humanistic mission of education. For example, in Russia there is very slowly diminishing the number of officials, managers of education, which, to a significant degree, absorb the finances, multiply the supervisory functions, reduce the dynamics and efficiency of the educational system. All this diminishes the possibilities of democratization of educational collectives, transforms them into powerless objects of manipulation by the bureaucratic vertical of power (during a year, schools and teachers must submit the total of 500 reports into various education management structures). The Russian Federation started to modernize its education back in the beginning of this century. The concept of modernization of Russian education for the period up to 2010 identified a state order for education (based on the tasks of the transition to democracy and the rule of law, while taking into account the trends of the world development, the transition to the postindustrial society, a significant expansion of intercultural communication, the importance of tolerance and dialogue between people). In this concept there was formulated a democratic ideal of the school as a factor of humanization of the social-economic relations, formation of new life orientation of the person. The concept drew attention to the fact that all Russian citizens, family and the community of parents, federal and regional government institutions, local authorities, professional-pedagogical community, scientific, cultural, commercial and social institutions should become active subjects of education policy.

However, these good intentions have not been embodied in full in the practice of educational policy. Today there is an urgent need to adjust education policy towards decentralization and humanization of the management relations, minimization of the supervisory functions of educational officials, expansion of the possibilities of social and state interaction in the sphere of education (transition from the state to the state-public character of education management), encouragement of the grassroots initiatives of educational reforms. The thing is that educational theories and systems have their own internal laws and logic of development that reveal their independence, do not always correspond to the level of economic development, political zigzags or the decisions to reform education which are taken at the very top level. The director of the educational institution and the teacher sometimes know better than the officials or ministers. Such examples in the world practice have already proven to be effective: we can mention the creation of an international network space of information schools, colleges and centers from the USA, UK, Canada, China, Germany and other countries (the i-Schools Project, i-Zone), which successfully implement the idea of “three i-s”: informatization, individualization, "innovatization" of the sphere of education.

Educational policy should be aimed at creating conditions to ensure the process of democratization and humanization of the entire educational space, its geographical, socio-cultural and educational components. Especially important is the creation of the conditions to support the initiatives of the pedagogical, parent and student groups, aimed at self-management and modernization of education, improvement of its content, structure, forms and methods, training of managers at all levels of education, especially in terms of construction and development of the democratic school education environment.
In other words, the most important direction of the state policy in the field of education is the transformation of educational institutions into genuinely democratic, socially active institutions, providing the formation of the younger citizens as the subjects of democracy (see [4]). The difficulty in solving this problem is due to the lack of stable democratic traditions in the Russian society, the desire of the state to take full control over the life of society and the educational system, undivided authority of the school leaders, hard pressure from the educational officials, excessive regulation of the educational process and the lack of freedom of pedagogical creativity.

For the foreign educational policy, it is important that the Russian educational system organically join the unified stream in the process of global integration along the lines of the programs of the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This involves the adoption of the European system of education levels, qualifications and credits, the mobility of students and professionals, participation in the integrated programs of teaching and research, development of effective criteria and methodologies for assessing the quality of teaching and professional qualities of graduates [1, p. 85], studying the best practices of the educational reforms abroad [2, pp. 87-97].

The interest of Russia, connected with the Bologna process, is to broaden the dialogue with the European Union based on the idea of common cultural past and belonging to the same civilization, the presence of some common values, norms and identities. [3] Adaptation of the higher education in Russia to the norms and requirements of the Bologna process can serve as a certain harmonization in preparation for a broader institutional adaptation of Russia into the European Union in the process of development of partnership between both parties. However, the educational policy must ensure the preservation of the best Russian educational traditions and achievements. [5] The discrepancy between the low level of education and the high level of mastering of the specialty is the reality of today's social structure in the context of globalization, when the majority of professionals perform their routine local functions as some cogs of a gigantic socio-technical machine, not even knowing the role of these functions in the existence of the whole. This contradicts the generic nature of education and the Russian educational traditions. In the society, there will always be a need for the individuals capable of full expression of their subjectivity in many forms: in the socio-political life, creativity and cognition.

References
A critical hermeneutical perspective of institutional culture of higher education

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In this paper I explore the contribution of the transformation of institutional culture in higher education to the democratisation of South African society. I argue that the transformation of higher education institutions is vital to the democratisation of the country. From a critical-hermeneutical perspective I offer a conceptual account of the policy imperatives for institutional culture. Thereafter I analyse some discourses in relation to challenges for the transformation of institutional culture, and refer to the difficulty of using culture as a research instrument. An analysis of typologies of institutional culture follows. An analysis of institutional culture of a university of technology indicates that the institution moves to the vision of ‘neighbourliness’, which is a trait that is associated with ‘Ubuntu’ (a concept regarded as the root of African philosophy).

A critical hermeneutical perspective

Critical hermeneutics consists of self-understanding and understanding as related to creating meaning in the world. It is invested in a kind of attentiveness to things as they are in our experience – not as givens, but as possibilities, provoking us to ask certain kinds of questions that require us to examine how things are, as well as where we are in relation to how things are. This perspective orients us towards making meaning in the world as a connected, lived and practical exercise. It is important that we take a critical stance when engaging in interpretation. In this regard, the critical potential of hermeneutics speaks to the point raised by the Ministry of Education (2001), that institutions have largely ignored the need to change institutional cultures.

According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000:289) critical hermeneutics is more comfortable with interpretive approaches that assume that the meaning of human experience can never fully be disclosed – neither to the researcher, nor even to the person who has the experience. Critical researchers draw on the model of interpretation, with its treatment of the personal as political. In its ability to render the personal political, critical hermeneutics provides a methodology for arousing critical consciousness through the analysis of the generative themes of a particular era. Critical hermeneutics has the potential to facilitate an understanding of the university setting as a social reality, and to encourage rigour and reflexive reasoning which has the potential to build a truly democratic society. Further, critical hermeneutics is essentially grounded in historical discourses, and any interpretation of any text should take into account its historical context.

Finally, critical hermeneutics grounds a critical research that attempts to connect the everyday troubles individuals face to public issues of power, justice and democracy. This makes it a very useful philosophical perspective to analyse institutional culture in higher education.

The policy imperatives for institutional culture

In an effort to transform higher education, institutional culture has become a matter of national interest and this is stated through government policies and other platforms. The Education White Paper 3 sets the tone when it states that the transformation of the higher education system seeks to reflect the changes that are taking place in society and to strengthen the values and practices of the new South African democracy (after 1994). The strong emphasis on the democratic values is transferred to institutional culture: it is stated that it is essential to promote the development of institutional cultures which embody the
desired values, especially respect for difference and the promotion of the common good (DoE 1997:3.41).

The Education White Paper 3 further states that South Africa’s transition from apartheid and minority rule to democracy requires that all existing practices, institutions and values should be viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era (DoE 1997:3). As such, the white paper establishes a set of principles and values that should guide the process of transformation in the spirit of an open and democratic society. These are equity and redress; democratisation; development; quality; effectiveness and efficiency; academic freedom; institutional autonomy; and public accountability.

The Ministry of Education (2001) states that one of its key priorities is the need to refocus and reshape the institutional culture and missions of higher education institutions. The Ministry emphasises that an important strategy that institutions have largely ignored is the need to change institutional cultures. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2004) identifies institutional culture as a key driver behind higher education restructuring. The Council posits that public higher education in particular has immense potential to contribute to consolidating democracy and social justice, producing critical intellectuals, developing knowledge, and expanding and improving the economy of South Africa. Policy documents recognize a need to review the disparate cultures that maintained the system of apartheid to forge more embracing ones for the new democratic order.

**Challenges for transformation of institutional cultures**

Välimaa (1998:119) points to the difficulty of using culture as an instrument of research, for the simple reason that it can be defined in too many ways. As a result it may be problematic to use it as a general framework for analysis. Van Wyk (2009) attests that there is no single characteristic of an institution that can be cited to define its culture. Culture in higher education has to include as many elements of higher education institutions as possible (ecological characteristics, historical events, and institutional traditions and missions). Another challenge is the ongoing debate whether universities are institutions or organisations.

**Typologies of institutional culture**

The literature refers to three types of typologies which is useful to provide a critical-hermeneutical analysis of the type of institutional cultures prevalent in higher education. Firstly, there are the clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market culture typologies. Notably, the clan culture sees its members as family.

Secondly: Birnbaum’s collegial, bureaucratic, political, and organised anarchy typologies. Birnbaum (ASHE, 2005) describes his collegial culture as both enhancing and orthogonal: individuals both accept the overriding culture and hold values that are separate from the overall group but do not conflict with it. Birnbaum frames the bureaucratic institution as those regarding legitimised authority and formal structure as paramount values. Finally, Birnbaum suggests that organised anarchy may be the model for the research university, with no single culture and the broadest values (the continued viability of the institution, for example) of real importance. It does not rise to the level of the counterculture, however, as no direct challenges exist to the values of the dominant culture. Birnbaum’s work on institutional typologies solicited a response from Bergquist, who presents his set of typology based on Birnbaum’s work.

Thirdly, there are Bergquist’s developmental, collegiate, managerial or negotiating cultures at universities and colleges. Bergquist’s (1992) developmental culture suggests the furthering of the cognitive, behavioural and affective maturation of its members as the basis of meaning at an institution. The developmental culture, for example, arises from the weaknesses associated with the collegiate culture, with its stress on the work of faculty and faculty
governance and tactic and untested assumptions about the dominance of rationality at the institution (ASHE 2005:49).

Birnbaum and Bergquist refer to their culture typologies as present in the life of institutions or organisations in varying degrees. They both agree that, whilst there may be a dominant culture at one given time at an institution, other forms of culture are nevertheless generally present. They may not be as stable or as established as the dominant ones, but represent voices with a view that, if ignored, might rise to the level of dominant cultures.

An analysis of institutional culture of a university of technology

Having discussed the typologies of institutional culture, I now analyse policy documents of a university of technology to determine which typologies are present. It is generally understood in African communities that Ubuntu is the glue that binds clans to clans, families to families, and communities to communities; the act of ‘being because of others’. In the same context, we usually say when somebody reaches out to you that he or she has a ‘heart’. This is an expression of the one who feels for others; the one who gives. At the centre of ubuntu is what we call a ‘good heart’ (Vukuza-Linda 2014). Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) describes itself as being ‘at the heart’, which can be analysed as being able to feel and give. Of course having a heart may not be limited to being African.

In its 2020 Vision, CPUT categorically states its origin as being rooted in the Western Cape province, and extends its quest to co-exist with other ‘university families’ on the continent. Can the quest to reach out to other Africans in the continent not be equated to the Ubuntu philosophy; umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (I am because we are)? Neighbourliness, which is what CPUT is expressing in its vision, is another trait that is associated with ubuntu. A question can be asked, is it impossible to suggest that both hermeneutics and ubuntu share a common platform of history and tradition? Why would such a question arise? For Vukuza-Linda (2014) this may be a point where hermeneutics meets African - in the history and tradition of being; in co-existence that is enabled by dialogue and conversation. It can be argued that CPUT has an extended family on the continent and wishes to embrace and sustain these relationships. In terms of Cameron and Quinn’s typology of institutional culture one could explain CPUT’s vision along the lines of the clan culture.

The 2006 Mission reflects what is referred to as the Clan culture; which focuses on the development of cohesion where members (staff and students) are seen as members of the family. According to literature, the clan culture seeks to protect, develop and empower its family members. In its 2020 mission, CPUT changed its tune and leaned more towards the Adhocracy culture which can be understood as being bound by a commitment to innovation, leading to cutting-edge outputs. For its 2020 mission CPUT is focusing on issues such as: an efficient and sustainable and environmentally conscious university; relevant curriculum; quality research and knowledge production, among others. From a critical hermeneutical perspective - the reshaping of institutional culture is evident in the respective visions of CPUT, and the merged institution is battling to find a balance between the traditions of a university and a technikon (Vukuza-Linda 2014).

Concluding remarks

Institutional culture has become an increasing focus in discourses on higher education transformation, and the democratisation of South African society. I agree with the Council on Higher Education that institutional culture is an unstable concept with many and complex meanings depending on who is using it and for what purposes; and that its deployment to cover everything limits its value in universities.

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Teacher's narrative and aesthetic perception: Prospects of musical education

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The narrative can be defined as a polysemantic story with numerous deficiencies, which can be narrated differently each time. The multiplicity of the narrative, exhibiting the richness of the perception and understanding of the world, is created by linguistic instruments: stories, definitions, questions, metaphors (Postman, 1996; Duoblienė, 2011). The basis of the narrative’s research is the belief that the stories give meaning to people’s lives and can be processed as data. Following the phenomenological provision which, according to M. Merleau-Ponty, provides a possibility to directly describe our experience as it is, despite the psychological origin and the causal explanations that may be provided by the researchers (Merleau-Ponty, 2006), the narrative in the context of education obtains particular importance - it is seen as a reflection of linguistic experience. Phenomenological states are perceived through direct evidence of the initial experience and indirect evidence of other people’s initial experience, metaphorically describing the essence of the experienced phenomenon. Such qualities of arts as colours, sounds, language metaphors through aesthetic experience help to reveal phenomena and to necessary them with the help of language.

The narrative, consisting of stories and metaphors based on experience, helps to reveal the possibility of self-expression of the teacher and the student's personality in the current reality as the experience is shaped by all experiences that change the traditional ways of perception and allow to give a new sense for what has been experienced.

The peculiarity of aesthetic experiences and perception is especially evident in the presence of music. Music does not depict the reality, but conveys the emotional world of a human being. The representatives of phenomenological analysis of music argue that music allows a person to understand through aesthetic experience the meaning of existence (Clifton, 1983; Ferrara, 1991), and in the process of education, the phenomenological study of music aesthetic experience and perception provides an opportunity to see the deep aspects of the process. The description of the music phenomenon is inseparable from the characterization of a human's experience in music as music is experienced by "conscious body", not only by the conscious mind, and it is kind of a bridge between the listener and the sound. According to T. Clifton (1983), the connection between the melody and the listener is not the physical distance, but the significance of the music created to the listener. Acceptance of the musical meaning, rather than the assigning of it to the musical object, is a sign of consciousness. That is why a specific perception of the music itself is the criteria in itself, establishing the suitability of verbal and sometimes metaphorical description.

The metaphor has not only the value of experiential (or emotional) expression, but each time it tells something new about the reality. According to D. E. Denton (1970), the entire existential discourse on the ordinary experience is metaphorical. A man always can understand the metaphorical nature in his / her speech, also it is possible to extract the nature of the very metaphor and its usage possibilities wishing to explain what is our own ordinary experience. In the ordinary experience, as in the speech on the ordinary experience, we create new meanings which often have no other comparison just speech-gesture-experience (Gestalt) occurring at that time. As Denton states, we have to recognize the action providing a meaning, in which everything what has been expressed does not exist outside the meaning (Denton, 1970).
An especially crucial aspect must be noted, related to the concept of the multimeaning and analysis of metaphor. The existential experience of ordinary language is an essential aspect; however, there are many aspects of the experience that simply cannot be translated into the written language. These elements, which are usually very personal, are the most „realistic” and the most true. They reflect what we experience in any given episode of experience. What is experienced, is primarily experienced through the body’s structures. Merleau-Ponty argues that the word is a special act of expression - a kind of linguistic gesture, which occurs only after the sensory perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2006). Since language is the analogue of the body, it can disclose the basis of personal experience, and metaphors, as the experience of linguistic expression, create a new value.

Metaphor is essential in the description of music experience and the transfer of musical meaning in the process of musical education. The sounds, rhythms, musical phrases, described melody and character of a piece of music, created new combinations, are named by teachers as metaphors in music lessons. The ratio of metaphors of musical education reveals combined theoretical and empirical aspects of researches.

During the observed individual music lessons, the metaphors expressed by the teachers were recorded, one of whose features is a unique say “here and now”. The metaphors that the teachers relied on in order to convey the essence of the educational element - sound, rhythm, the character of a piece of music - are treated as instant creation as the existing speech has not yet validated a semantic innovation, which exist only because they have been assigned a new meaning. In fact, the expressed variety of metaphors showed a commonality in the sphere, where, according to P. Ricoeur, daily supervision could not discern any relation (Ricoeur, 2006). This confirmed that the metaphor occurs in situations where the terminology is incomplete and then it is sought to communicate something new about the reality. During the observed music lessons the most important was the fact that the teachers used metaphors in order the student would understand what the teacher wants to pass and the pupils through his / her personal experience could continue the construction of a new musical meaning.

Sound, rhythm and melody. The high note is ok, you do not want to squeeze it. This is not a heavy note - a saxophone teacher described the sound which, according to the teacher, is technically easily extracted, and this is how the teacher described the sound which the student could not produce: You drill, drill as a cloth or Suppressed sound, tight, unsightly and The cheeks were too small. The latter metaphor would be difficult to understand without the explanation of the context, because in everyday speech there is no link between small cheeks and sound, however, in the music lesson, this metaphor gained the musical significance which the teacher wanted to transfer to the student. The sounds which must be clear and precise were described by a zither teacher described as: Falling shiny drops. Sounding pearls and the difference between the desired quality of sound production and the quality of the student’s performance:

You got there sludge, and pearls have to glow, this is such a beautiful harmony. And you produce mud, swamps. <...> The chords do not sound because they are dirty, littered, grimy and untidy. Let’s search for the sound.

Not only the sound, but also the rhythm may be described metaphorically. For example, the lack of precise of the rhythm can be described as limping or described by a more imaginative explanation: The pace of waltz? With your pace, the dancers would break their feet.

Mostly metaphors characterize the melody. A melody consists of an entirely correctly produced out sounds and phrases, but, nevertheless, every time it can be played differently. It is very important for the melody to be clear and solid so that continual musical thought would remain:
I just have heard some separate sounds. Now, imagine that you go there some kind of a thread of the melody and unwrap each note.

When and how much metaphorical explanations are needed for the pupil to understand a piece of music, the teachers decide by themselves. As the sound always has a certain expression, this may be understood by the student’s performance, i.e. by the sound conveying the idea of the piece of music:

The idea that you bring lies in the hand, in the mood. <…> Your sound will be whatever your thought will be. Clearly, this is difficult.

During the process of music education, there are many approaches to music perception, however, metaphorically described musical meaning is very important, related to the unique experience of each person, as metaphorically named music experience is always a new meaning in the horizon of experiences of both the teachers and the student.

Another integral part of the narrative is the narrative of the teacher, communication, information provisions, transfer of values, promotion of aesthetic perception of and naming of musical meaning. The data of the conducted interviews revealed that the stories related to the musical meaning, i.e. sound description, musical performance, an impression, aesthetic experience, aesthetic perception, intuition in a pedagogical situation, as the phenomenon of experience includes the past, present and future. The teacher as a storyteller shares his/her respective experiences and thus encourages the student’s aesthetic understanding which shall merge as the result of a long process of education. According to Clifton, basically the music experience can be explained through four key elements: time, space, performance or play and feeling. In music, a perception prevails that the peculiarities of the music’s subject are not fixed “in some metaphorical heaven” but are experience by a person present in a defined place and time” (Clifton, 1983, p. 37). In addition, a man, hearing or the performing music, always feels something, thus such an experience in itself is the criteria of the relationship with music.

Below examples with theses are provided explaining why the specific meaning of words is attributed to a particular category of experience.

TIME
Thesis. Musical time includes past, present and future: (The melody) is ringing in the head, in the mind it does not disappear, it really does not, we remember it.
Thesis. Any listening might be new, but also based on the previous hearing: I have attended lessons in composition. It is difficult for me to listen to music. I “butcher” it, analyze it cell by cell—how it was done? And I do not listen... (teacher).

SPACE
Thesis. Musical experience is not strictly limited to hearing: Let’s say, a good concert takes place. Well, sometimes even the hairs on your arms stand up, the whole body opens, all jaws ... (teacher).
Thesis. General music experience includes the entire living body to the perception of the music sound: <…> tuba, there was a tuba, and those bass, and those not disconnected springs of the drums, so then the tuba started to play -vzzzzhhh - everything occurred there (points to the stomach) (teacher).
Thesis. Musical experience takes place in the field of action and motion and is called „being in the musical space”. The person and the music becomes one. When I listen to favourite music, I relax, do not think about anything, just have fun listening to the music (student).
PERFORMANCE or PLAY

Thesis. Performance is the ontological part because it is a part of reality: When I play for myself, I want to play differently from, for example, how the teacher tells me. For me, this is really strange then: some say that a person conveys his/her feelings through the music, but you have to play how the teacher tells you, not how your feelings tell you (student).

FEELING


The research revealed some important aspects of the musical education process:

• The narrative helps to understand such unique experiences of subjects as aesthetic perception of music and aesthetic experience and shows the influence as the mutual interaction between the educator and the learner.
• The variety of the teachers’ texts showed immense possibilities describing the meanings to a student or “directing” him/her; in addition, it showed the students’ capture and openness to metaphorical texts, startling by their richness.
• The teacher’s narrative, presented by a metaphor, is one of the most important parts of music education as it is an access of aesthetic perception.

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Responsibility of the teacher and the student

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In the word “responsibility” one can clearly recognize two words: “response” and “ability”. So, “responsibility” can be understood as “the ability to respond”. Now, the question is: to respond to what, to whom, to respond concerning what, and how to respond? The depth, width and seriousness of responsibility depend on the answers to these questions.

Let us first discuss the initial part of this question: “to respond to what?” If we are discussing the responsibility of the teacher, then we should talk about his/her response (reaction) to various situations in the teaching process, to the behavior of the students and so on. The responses of the students are the reactions to the situations during the class, to the questions of the teacher and so forth. This is an easy part. Also an easy part is the question “to respond concerning what?” Clearly, in the context of education, the teacher and the student have to respond, to provide answers concerning the results of their respective teaching and learning activities.

But if we start talking about the questions “to respond to whom?”, “to be responsible to whom?”, then it gets much more complicated. Let us talk about the teacher first. It seems at first that a list can be easily compiled: the teacher has to be responsible to the students, their parents (guardians), the educational authorities, the law, the society, the government, him/herself, his/her own conscience, God. As far as the student, he/she should be responsible to the teachers, his/her parents (guardians), the school principal, the law, the society, him/herself, his/her own conscience, God.

In the past, in the traditional cultures, this issue was quite clear. There existed an obvious for everyone hierarchy of responsibilities (not necessarily concerning education, but in general). It was based on the most fundamental one: the responsibility of every human being before his/her Creator. The people were quite aware that they would have to answer to God for their every action and deed (the Last Judgment). From this ultimate responsibility there were naturally derived various responsibilities of the people in their relations with themselves, their conscience, each other, the society, the state and so on.

What happened later is that this foundation of responsibilities has been removed, and the entire structure has started to deteriorate. First, during the post-medieval, modernity period, the responsibility system started to be based on the responsibility toward society (Marxism), law (the rule-of-law state), other people, humanity as a whole (humanism). In Soviet Russia, for example, the people were expected to think first about the interests of the country, and only then about their personal interests. In the West, a popular idea has been that law can provide harmonious and sustainable development of the society; and so the responsibility toward law has been considered as a foundation. It seems obvious now that these approaches did not take into account fundamental problems of human nature, for example, its egoistic component. Now, in the era of post-modernity, the situation is getting much worse. As it is expressed by one of the character of Mark Ravenhill’s play “Some explicit polaroids” (as quoted in [1]), “responsibility is now a matter for individuals only”. So, the scope of responsibility has shrunk to the level of the single person. But even for the person the time span of his/her responsibility very often goes no further than the next moment of pleasure. If we turn to the profound philosophical reflection of the contemporary culture ([2]), then we see that the society is viewed as a “non-totalizable universe of diverse language games” ([3]). In his book “Just Gaming”, J. F. Lyotard considers justice and judgment in these terms of language games. He rejects the claims of any discourse to be grounded in truth and the idea of a master-discourse (metanarrative) that can provide the basis for judgment in all situations. But if we think about it, this approach almost completely eliminates
the very notion of responsibility: all actions of the individual are justified; one cannot question them lately (no basis to judge them!). For example, in the educational context, teaching is reduced to yet another “language game”. So, how the teacher can be held accountable for the content of lessons? It was just a game. The parents cannot judge it: it was just another, incompatible discourse and one has to respect it! In the game there is no serious responsibility (by definition of the game: it differs from the “serious” reality by its lack of responsibility or significant consequences). So, the teacher is allowed to “play” with the pupils. The problem though is that the pupils are by no means chess pieces. They are living human beings, whose future depends greatly on their experience in school, on the examples they see in their teachers.

The very idea of reducing life into a game has a childish or adolescent character. Children and adolescent are different from adults by that they play games, thus preparing themselves to the future serious responsible life as adults; whereas the concept of the adult has been always connected with the notion of adult responsibility.

Let us further analyze the idea of responsibility. We adopt a working definition of responsibility as the ability to answer for the results and consequences of one’s action in some future time to some other subjects (people, society etc.). So, we immediately see that the concept of responsibility has both the spatial (to answer to whom, to which circle of subjects?) and the temporal dimensions (to answer when?) From the purely qualitative point of view, the notion of responsibility in the traditional culture was the widest one (because it was the responsibility before God, and God encompasses the entire space and time), whereas the scope of responsibility has been gradually diminishing until it was reduced to the single individual and a very short interval of immediate future. Of course, this process is not going to stay there, and, as we see in modern people, oftentimes the person is not able to sustain responsibility even to him/herself (drug addicts etc.) So, the process has been developing in the diametrically opposite direction in comparison with the process of spiritual growth, which was defined, for example, by Albert Einstein as follows: “A human being ... experiences himself ...as something separated from the rest ...This delusion is a prison, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons close to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from our prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all humanity and the whole of nature in its beauty.” Obviously, the “circle of compassion” can be substituted here by the “circle of responsibility”. A similar idea was formulated by Dalai Lama: “Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.” ([4], p. 15).

Now let us consider all this in the context of education. In the traditional culture the teacher was aware of his/her responsibility for the pupils before God; he/she was trying to prepare them for the eternal life with God. Of course, the teacher was also trying to prepare the pupils for the life on Earth, to teach them some craft etc. In the ideological states like the Soviet Union the teacher was responsible before the state for preparation of the pupil for the life in such state, so that they would abide by the state’s ideology. Nowadays, what is left of the teacher’s responsibility in the post-modernist period? Only its pragmatic dimension, that is, training pupils as future participants in the production-consumption mechanism of the modern society. So, the only thing that matters is performance, productivity. Thus, evaluation of the work of teacher from the society (as realized by the educational authorities) has been reduced to the increasing number of various standard tests, formal parameters and so on.

Let us consider now pupil’s responsibilities. Of course, it has been the case from the times immemorial that the awareness of responsibility for many pupils has been limited to the responsibility before their parents and their teachers. However, in the traditional society all the pupils were repeatedly told that their learning activity and their subsequent adult life would affect their destiny in the Eternity. There was a possibility for the pupil to take this
serious. In Soviet school there was very strong awareness among the majority of pupils that the quality of their learning would directly affect the quality of their future work and, correspondingly, their social and material status in the society. Becoming a scientist was the most prestigious career. Thus, the pupils really felt responsible for the quality of their learning. The results of this are well-known: the first cosmonaut was the Russian Yury Gagarin. So, in terms of spatial dimension, the responsibility of Soviet pupils encompassed the entire society and, in the temporal terms, it was connected with his/her future job activity and, moreover, with the future of the entire society (communism).

What are the responsibilities of the students nowadays? Those among them who think beyond their duties to the parents and teachers want to get a “good” (“well-paid”) job in the future. However, it is not equivalent to obtaining deep fundamental knowledge and high-quality skills. For example, in Japan the task of the ambitious pupil is to get admitted first into a prestigious kindergarten, then, a prestigious secondary school, high school and, most importantly, a first-rank university. Then one needs only to make it through the university, and a brilliant job career is secured. But the success in this marathon depends just on successful passing of a number of standard tests, which, in turn, is conditioned by memorization of a large volume of information. So, sometimes the pupil feels responsible only for the good results on the tests. But many students feel that such attitude toward them degrades them, and they are left without any educational responsibility at all. So, they just imitate learning in order not to be punished by their parents. But if parents’ control is weak, they would just skip classes and look for other experiences in the streets.

Nowadays, the concept of liberalism, which has been developed for several centuries already, needs to be complemented by an equally significant concept of responsibilities. Even the term “responsibilism” has been coined (see [5]). The balance and unity of freedoms and responsibilities should be restored. For example, according to S. Freud, “Freedom involves responsibility” ([6]). The society must reconstruct a system of responsibilities. We should start with reconstruction of its foundation, which is to be universal for all people. Nowadays, many people are not religious. However, what unites us all is the fact that we live on the planet Earth and, unless our ecological behavior changes, this will not continue for long. Thus, we can lay as a foundation the responsibility of the entire humanity and each individual towards our environment. This will immediately expand the responsibilities of the person in terms of space (the entire Earth and the cosmos) and time (survival of humanity in the foreseeable future). Correspondingly, it will change the responsibilities of the teacher and the pupils (students), because, obviously, the future of humanity is determined in the classrooms.

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Democratic education, infancy and becoming

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Abstract
This paper offers an argument in defence of an education in becoming. Firstly, I contend that education is a form of democratic experience that does not have a predetermined end in mind. Secondly, I show that education as democratic experience is attainable in relation to an understanding of infancy. Thirdly I argue that a democratic education in becoming has the potential to undermine finality and predictability.

Introduction
Nowadays, a consumerist understanding of education seems to be ubiquitous within institutions assuming the task of educating students to be associated with them merely passing examinations and to attain predictable outcomes (MacIntyre, 2002: 4). Students might have passed examinations on the basis of having demonstrated the mastery of predetermined outcomes but this does not mean that they have been educated such as having acquired a language of ‘scientific inquiry for their own sake’ (MacIntyre, 2002: 5). Education cannot be education if it does not also have the effect of making outcomes unpredictable and irreversible (Arendt, 1998: 220). When the outcomes of education are unpredictable and irreversible, then the possibility of learning being lasting is very likely – because students will realise that education is always in becoming, rather than in the attainment thereof. Such a situation in turn would enable students to engage in durable learning which makes improbable the end of, and unpredictable the result of, teaching. And, if teachers act in such a way, they would want their students to develop an understanding of education as a process that is inconclusive. Why is the achievement of inconclusiveness so important for students’ learning? In a university, where education has to be adjudicated on intelligible grounds in argumentative discourses of human experience, students operate in a way that meanings are determined through communicative interaction. Put differently, argumentation maintains that meanings are constructed, reconceived and put to question through forms of communicative action (human experience) among students and teachers oriented to reaching understanding on the basis of ‘criticisable [and inconclusive] validity claims’ (Habermas, 1995: xx). However, for such an understanding of education to remain prevalent, we require a different conception of human experience that conditions language in relation to acts of communication in ways that break with the logic of predictability.

Education and infancy
Agamben introduces a conception of human experience in relation to language and communication, namely, that of infancy. In its simplest form, infancy is understood as a ‘pure wordless experience’ (Agamben, 2007: 55) that precedes speech. Etymologically infancy refers to the potentiality to speak – that is, to be mute or speechless and, through experience, humans acquire the capacity to speak through which infancy endures. In other words, as students learn speech the potentiality of their speechlessness (infancy) abates – that is their infancy remains in potentiality. In a way, infancy is the instance the speaking being does not yet speak – that is the speaking being has an impotentiality to not speak. Therefore, infancy refers both to the potentiality to speak and impotentiality to not speak. A potential PhD student, for example, might approach a lecturer with what she believes is a clear and strong proposal for a dissertation – she believes, therefore, that she has potentiality to speak, hence, her decision to submit a proposal. However, on engaging with the lecturer, she might find that her proposal is not as clear and coherent as she initially thought, and that she might not have considered all that needed to be considered – thus realising her infancy, which, of course, immediately abates in their potentiality of her infancy. Now if the experience of infancy relates to education as a human experience, then education
is both human potentiality to speak and impotentiality to not speak – that is, the potentiality to engage in and impotentiality to not engage in communicative action. When students engage in the human experience of communication their speechlessness (infancy) remains internal to the experience of the communicative speech act. In other words, they are always potentiality in speech acts which means that students are always in potentiality to speak and impotentiality to not speak which makes the discourse of education they engage in, one of inconclusiveness to which there is no end and predictability. Thus, through the experience of infancy, education remains open to the unexpected, the uncertain and the unpredictable. In this way, pedagogical encounters appropriate forms of communicative speech without any preconceived end point or finality in mind. Such an understanding of education cultivated through the infancy of communicative speech acts invariably leads to new pathways, new perspectives, and new discoveries about what constitutes pedagogy and our renewed understandings of it.

**Democratic education and a community in becoming**

Now that I have shown how the notion of infancy offers a different perspective on education – that is, looking at education as always in the making (in potentiality) and not yet actually realised, I shall pay attention to Agamben’s notion of a community in becoming that (I argue) can enhance the idea of democratic education in becoming – an education that breaks with predetermining what students should know, and perpetuating conclusiveness (finality) as to what should be learned. My reason for drawing on Agamben’s *The coming community* is premised on the idea that democratic education most explicitly involves people coming together – a matter of engaging in community. Agamben’s (1993: 85) articulation of community is not confined to a community’s ‘determinate’ demands such as democracy, freedom and rehabilitation (of someone) as such demands are too generic and broad. Rather, community in Agamben’s terms constitutes ‘whatever singularity’ which allows for the affirmation of community without identifiable ‘determinate’ conditions of belonging (1993: 85). In his words, ‘[w]hatever singularity cannot form a *societas* because they do not possess any identity to vindicate nor any bond of belonging for which to seek recognition’. Agamben (1993: 85) posits that the community of ‘whatever identity’ is touted in the event of Tiananmen Square when thousands of Chinese students, urban workers and others protested for about six weeks against government corruption and various reforms of the then Deng Xiaoping government. The lack of clearly articulated demands on the part of protesters indicates that the revolt was not undertaken in the name of a common interest derived from a shared identity (Mills, 2008: 130). In his view, the robustness of the protestations is characterised by ‘the singularities [that] form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without representable conditions of belonging (even in the form of a simple presupposition)’ (Agamben, 1993: 86). Such a community to which all belong without claiming to belong is a community of ‘whatever beings’ that share nothing except their own being ‘in pure communicability and ontological immediacy’ (Mills, 2008: 130). Now if a community comprises of ‘whatever beings’ with their own singularities and potentialities then members of such a community are never completely constituted as there will always be different and other beings to come and, they will not share in common with others as they have joined the community at ‘whatever’ time and place. This makes such a community one that is always in becoming and never really constituted with a particular identity and commonality – their ontological and communicable potentialities are in whatever becoming.

What the aforementioned discussion on a community in becoming draws one’s attention to is the practices of such a community in relation to educational discourses. When democratic education becomes the practice of a community in becoming such a practice is at once open to ‘whatever’ encounter it might potentially become. Becoming ‘whatever’ encounter without affirming an identity brings into dispute the very identity of democratic education. Democratic education, if actualised, would have an identity that can be pinned down and therefore would not be in potentiality with all its impotentialities. Therefore, democratic education’s becoming would no longer be possible as it would already have passed into actuality with a particular
identity. This would imply that those engaging in democratic education would belong to a practice with a common identity which all participants share. On the contrary, democratic education in becoming would be of a community in the making where nothing is actualised and where the potentiality for people to be ‘whatever beings’ in their singularity to co-belong within their impotentialities is likely. Through such an understanding of democratic education – one in becoming, the possibility is always there for both teachers and students to become others.

References
Klaus Mollenhauer's "Forgotten Connections": A sketch to a general theory of education and childrearing

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Klaus Mollenhauer's book Vergessene Zusammenhänge: Über Kultur und Erziehung (1983) has been translated into Dutch (1986), Japanese, 1987, Norwegian (1996) and now into English with the title Forgotten connections: On culture and upbringing (Mollenhauer, 2014). Previously there have been a few references in English to the German original (Friesen & Sævi, 2010; Tenorth, 2001; Uljens, 2002; Vriens, 1996; Wivestad, 2008). Thanks to Norm Friesen, this interesting and challenging text, which is especially difficult to translate to English, is now available to a wider audience.

Mollenhauer presents his book as a rough sketch of what Allgemeine Pädagogik could be today – which in English can be translated as "a general study of Bildung and upbringing" (Mollenhauer, 2014, p. 9). Pädagogik is not exactly the same as "pedagogy". I would rather call it "pedagogic". Here I give a short review and interpretation of Mollenhauer’s pedagogic, recommend it for "the common world", but raise some critical questions.

Who was Klaus Mollenhauer?
Klaus Mollenhauer was born in 1928. He became professor “für Pädagogik” in 1966 and worked at the University of Göttingen from 1972 until he died in 1998. He started, however, as a primary school teacher; studied history, literary science, sociology and pedagogic, became acquainted with hermeneutical pedagogic as an assistant of Erich Weniger, and combined this tradition with an insistence on critical reasoning (Winkler, 2002, p. 45 and 51) influenced by the Frankfurt school (Mollenhauer, 1968). His book Forgotten connections is a sketch of a practically committed, historically founded and future oriented theory of emancipatory education. It is built on reliable elements in the cultural and pedagogical tradition, which we as responsible adults should not forget when we, together with the new generation, face present and future challenges.

The idea of a general pedagogic
The book does not start with a discussion of general pedagogic as an academic discipline (Wigger, 1996) or with a systematic presentation of pedagogic applied to different age groups (Benner, 1991). It starts with Franz Kafka's experience of fearing his father, and his serious problems remembering events relevant to this fear and giving reasons for it. Mollenhauer transfers this humble attitude to his own project: He wants to search for a pedagogic that may be justified through painstaking examinations of our collective cultural recollections, "interpreting a range of documents and texts from various periods of European history that are significant for education and child rearing" (Mollenhauer, 2014, p. 4). He challenges all who are responsible to the next generation, to try to "coordinate" all sides of

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1 Not all concepts can be translated with one standard English word. Pädagogik, which here is called pedagogic, is formed in analogy with rhetoric. The ending of the word rhetoric, ik or ic, is a shortening of the original expression rhetorike techne, the skill, art and theory of persuasive communication. Pedagogic, the short form of paidagogike techne, combines in the same way both the practical ability in, normative principles for and theoretical study of Erziehung, upbringing in a wide sense, including upbringing from something negative as well as upbringing to something positive (Wivestad, 2013). "P[ädagogik] ist und bleibt ... bis heute Kollektivsingulär für das ganze Spektrum der praktischen und theoretischen Beschäftigung mit Erziehung" (Hügli, 1989, p. 4). Pedagogic in this tradition is understood as "an academic discipline in its own right" (Biesta, 2011, p. 176) concerned with paideia (upbringing and culture, with teaching as a part of this), while “pedagogy” is focused on the method and practice of teaching in formal settings.
the culture as a connected whole (p. 113), and he contends that “it makes good sense to take seriously the principles of pedagogical orientation that have evolved over the course of the European history of Bildung, ... and to have faith in their capacity to productively address the issues faced by today’s educators” (p. 114, note 8). We should not concentrate one-sidedly on having a warm relationship with the children, and forget that they have to be prepared for life in society; and we should not concentrate one-sidedly on useful knowledge and cold profit, and forget existential questions – forget to see the life of the child and youth as a whole – across different institutions, subjects and trades. We need a general pedagogic that does not dissolve into specialized pedagogics related to age groups, disciplines, professions and doctrinal camps (p. 6).

A model of Forgotten connections: On culture and upbringing

Mollenhauers basic question to all parents and educators is this: “Why do we want children”? (p. 8). The answer we give to that question reveals what is important to us in a long-term view: What do we most of all wish for our children? And are our wishes really good for the children?

I interpret Forgotten connections as six essays, where each new essay is built on the previous one and also transcends it. The Introduction gives a starting point in practical experience, discusses presuppositions and outlines four main principles of upbringing: Upbringing as Presentation and Representation means “passing on a valued heritage” and “conveying to children what is important to us” (p. 9). Asking also what is good for the child, we should make intuitive guesses about the child’s own readiness for Bildung, the child’s Bildsamkeit, and we should encourage the child to Self-activity. The essay on Presentation shows how adults in all cultures at all times necessarily share a way of life with the children, and informally present a language and a form of life in which children have to let themselves be moulded. The essays that follow have different aspects of intentional upbringing in focus, and are moreover connected to epochs in European cultural history. Representation demands a selection of “what to convey” (p. 34), a task connected to the shift in pedagogical orientation after the Renaissance and the Reformation (Comenius). Bildsamkeit implies a trust in the child’s readiness to contribute to its own formation, and the adult’s openness to the child’s unexpected and unique rational potentialities, a task connected to the pedagogical orientation after the Enlightenment (Rousseau, Herbart and Schleiermacher). Self-activity expresses that the child realizes its unique potentialities by “taking on projects and solving problems” (p. 84). The adult should encourage such activity, a task which has been in focus in the 20th century (Sartre and Piaget). The Conclusion gathers all the previous aspects in a question that both youth and adults have to answer today: Who am I, and who do I want to be?

I have formed a model which describes the main concepts in this general pedagogic:
The whole book revolves around understandings of the "I" and the "self" of the person; around ideals that persons have for the future and realities they are confronted with in the present society. In the beginning of the 20th century there was a hope of steady progress. There was confidence that everything would be better for everybody. In this century, however, there is much more doubt and despair. Edvard Munch's *The scream* has become an icon for our time. Mollenhauer rejects the usual understanding of identity as something one can attain and possess, such as being a member of a group or conforming to role expectations. "The fact that the person has problems in relation with himself or herself ... is what sets his or her Bildung in motion and makes self-activity necessary" (p. 129, note 1). I, the central unit of the person, have to sketch a picture (in German a Bild) of my self as I want to be, if my self-activity is to be meaningful and to have an impact on my real self. The task is personal growth, character formation, or Bildung. But this sketch is constantly open to be challenged, it is open to doubt and despair. The young person will not just fulfil the projected expectations of others. He or she wants to come to "den Grund der Gründe" (Mollenhauer, 1985, p. 173), to come to the ground, or basis, of the reasons that make the projections of his or her life and future meaningful (Mollenhauer, 2014, p. 128). As adults we have to "represent the problem of identity by setting an example" (p. 129), not giving in to outward pressures and living by illusions. We have to organize our routines to make and take the time necessary to confront ourselves with existential questions, reflect on our personal and collective recollections, and give the new generation possibilities to do the same as well.

**Some comments**
Mollenhauer had a broad interest in art and literature, and persons who were important to him include Lessing, Pestalozzi and Schleiermacher (Friesen, 2014, p. xxi; Winkler, 2002, p. 83), Helmut Plessner, Wittgenstein, and Sartre. Mollenhauer mentions especially Edvard Munch (Mollenhauer, 1996, p. 9), and his selection of and interpretation of art is inspired by Erwin Panofsky. Mollenhauer presents interesting documents from the cultural tradition in a
very convincing way. The book is coherent and persuasive, and its rich content challenges the reader to self-active thinking and practice. It is primarily connected to European culture and could therefore be criticized for being Eurocentric. Mollenhauer was aware of this criticism (Friesen, 2014; Mollenhauer, 1996, p. 8): Since differentiation and diversity is a main tenet in European development, the European tradition may have relevance to the discussion of upbringing and education in global multicultural society as well.

Mollenhauer encounters the tradition in a thorough and serious way, letting it speak to himself and to us. He is aware of losses in the development. But he seems to understand some important historical changes as a story of progress. An example is "the self" of Augustine, actively imitating the order of cosmos, which is presented as being inferior to the self-active "I" who follows no authority except the reason accepted by him- or herself (p. 108-109). Modern and post-modern thinking is quite different from Augustine. But is it fundamentally better? Are we really owners of our body and our soul and our time (p. 109-110), or is life a gift (Wivestad, 2011)? Do we have the future in our own hands, are we free to create ourselves, and should we always seek to transcend the present situation, led by our own reason? Are there limits that should never be transcended? We ought to trust our own reasoning, but can we put absolute trust in human rationality? Are we to doubt everything — except the legitimacy of our own doubt? I agree that we should attempt the realization of our own self-projections, but is the belief that we own "our" time and "our" world, in reality an idolization of ourselves?

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References


Round tables/symposia
Philosophy of education in Italy in the early of the 20th century

Marco Antonio D’Arcangeli, Giuseppe Spadafora, Giovambattista Trebisacce & Claudia Spina

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Overall abstract (Marco Antonio D’Arcangeli)
The symposium starts with the re-working of J. F. Herbart’s pedagogy and its two-layered ethics/psychology structure, as theorised by the Neo-Kantians and Positivists, who aimed at reaffirming a) the epistemological superiority of empirical and experimental sciences in the study of Man and Society and b) the freedom of man and absoluteness of values. The main voice of this theory was the “Rivista Pedagogica” (1908-1939) directed by Luigi Credaro. This model was integral to Giovanni Giolitti’s political and social project and was hegemonic up until World War I. The philosophy/science relationship in pedagogical knowledge devised by this model is a forerunner of present-day “critical pedagogy”. The symposium then moves to Giovanni Gentile’s neo-idealism which condenses all of reality in the act of thinking (actualism) thus merging pedagogy with his philosophy of the Spirit, founding its identity while negating its independence. Although Gentile’s support of Fascism brought his “School” a huge influence first and a heavy criticism later, his approach to the identity of pedagogy is still important today. The next step is Antonio Banfi and his critical rationalism. Banfi’s thought developed in Germany with the Marburg School Neo-Kantians and Simmel and Husserl. It consists of a strong phenomenology of education that deeply analyses the category structure of pedagogy with a transcendental approach. His thought was then reprised after World War II by Giovanni Maria Bertin’s problematicism. The symposium then introduces Raffaele Resta, a “heterodox” collaborator of “Rivista Pedagogica”, supporter of a “teleological” realism whose keystone is the axiological dimension.Resta was one of the key voices of the new cultural climate stemmed from the 1929 Concordate between the Italian State and the Catholic Church which revived Neo-Thomism and Christian thought.

Abstract Marco Antonio D’Arcangeli
Philosophy of education in the “Rivista Pedagogica” (1908-1939)
This speech outlines the philosophy of education model of the “Rivista Pedagogica” (1908-1939), the most important early 20th century Italian pedagogy journal, founded and directed by Luigi Credaro (1860-1939). Herbart’s model which conceives pedagogy as (from the epistemological point of view both "psychology" and "ethics"), part of a simultaneously realistic and dualist, yet critical and anti-dogmatic, gnoseology, backed by the positivist approach to empirical and experimental sciences and by the Kantian idea of the transcendental foundations of experience evolved, in the Rivista, in an interpretation of the educational facts whose main building elements are relationality and antinomicity and in an idea of educational aims strongly bound to their historical and social context, yet without attempting to replicate the status quo, while the new human sciences broke free from determinism and from their role of “performers” and “instruments”. The reaffirming of pedagogy’s epistemological condition of a unitary yet encyclopedic knowledge, independent yet not "separated" from philosophy was instrumental in the Rivista’s function of renewing Italy’s educational system and to build a new national and civil conscience at the service of the liberal-democrat bourgeois and capitalist modernization of Italy.
Abstract Giuseppe Spadafora
The philosophy of education for Giovanni Gentile
My paper analyzes what “philosophy of education” meant for Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944). Gentile’s limited popularity in “global” philosophy and pedagogy is due to his support to the Fascist regime that ultimately led to his death at the hands of the Italian Resistance Movement. Gentile was one of the most important Italian philosophers and, as Minister of Education he implemented (from 1923 onwards) a revolutionary reform of the Italian school system and he was also the founder of the “Treccani” Italian National Encyclopedia. Gentile’s neo-idealistic philosophy, “Actualism”, deals intensively with philosophy of education: in particular, in Il concetto scientifico della pedagogia (1901), and in the two volumes of Sommario di pedagogia come scienza filosofica (1913-14) Gentile thoroughly discusses pedagogy’s scientific identity, arguing that pedagogy shall necessarily “become” philosophy to acquire the status of a science. Some scholars regard this analysis as the negation of Actualist philosophy, others instead see it as the only opportunity to give scientific status to pedagogy. I will demonstrate that Gentile’s view is one of the most interesting concepts of philosophy of education in Europe, one deserving the utmost attention in the “global” debate on philosophy of education.

Abstract Giovambattista Trebisacce
Problematicism old and new
Discussing problematicism in pedagogy is difficult and risky. Pitfalls must be avoided, caution and enough space are necessary. My speech however has a narrower scope and a more focused purpose, that is to trace, via a historical-critical approach, the path that leads from Antonio Banfi’s critical rationalism to Giovanni Maria Bertin’s pedagogical problematicism. The speech’s starting point is the idea that the origins of pedagogical problematicism lie in Banfi’s critical rationalism (but, in order to understand this, it is necessary to consider the historical and cultural situation of the early twentieth century); and that the most important voice of pedagogical problematicism is Bertin. From the analysis of the books Educazione alla ragione and L’idea pedagogica e il principio di ragione in Antonio Banfi it is evident that there is a clear methodological distinction between philosophy of education and pedagogy, from which it follows that philosophy of education is responsible for theoretical understanding while pedagogy is responsible for pragmatic and educational choices. This also fixes the procedural model of pedagogy, based on methodological unity between the theoretical and pragmatic momenta. The final remarks are dedicated to contemporary developments of pedagogical problematicism.

Abstract Claudia Spina
Raffaele Resta: the pedagogy of teleological realism
Raffaele Resta (1876-1961), well known scholar of spiritual realism, pedagogue and Apulian philosopher has been so far overlooked by the educational critique circles although his legacy deserves investigation for its original themes and its relevance for contemporary education.Resta’s pedagogy embodies a clear, definite axiological association between education as an individualised personal truth or law, and the Teacher as the ultimate reference for the individual. The heuristic-hermeneutical pattern drawn by Resta highlights the principle of self-education and the process of human perfectibility which corresponds with the transition from becoming a teacher to teaching. In other words, the Self becomes the creator of its own authority, thus becoming its own master (self-subjective mastery) and the tutor of the Other (externalised and objective mastery). The core of Resta’s pedagogical consideration is the concept of perfectionist effort, which everyone needs for the self-building and self-development process and to bring vitality to this existential process through a constant dialogue between needs and obligations, rights and duties (deontology), reality and idealism to which we are inclined (teleology) to transcend the finite and arise to an ultimate intent.
Technologies of reading and writing today

Naomi Hodgson, Amanda Fulford, Joris Vlieghe & Anna Kouppanou

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Outline
This symposium addresses the practices of reading and writing and the ways in which new technologies and the demands of neoliberal performativity are changing these, both within formal education and as educational practices in themselves. To give substance to these ideas, two of the papers refer specifically to current practices within higher education and academic research. Amanda Fulford considers writing in the university in terms of the emphasis on outcome-driven practice. The analysis is concerned with the physical work of writing, and physical labour as a metaphor for this. The question of writing in, and for, different media is raised by Naomi Hodgson in terms of the changing modes of academic publishing. Her analysis looks at the notions of impact and open access in terms of the demands for visibility to explore the notions of publication and ‘making public’. The remaining contributions are not specifically concerned with higher education, but with changes to how we read and write brought about by technology. Anna Kouppanou asks whether hypertext changes the way we read, already bringing with it links and connections that we might make for ourselves, imaginatively, in the paper-based text. Technology is also central to the materialist analysis provided by Joris Vlieghe, who explores literacy not in terms of content but rather in terms of learning to reading and write on screen. The contributors draw principally from Continental and American philosophy but the analyses are also informed by the fields of psychology and anthropology, as well as policy and practice.

Learning to write: study, labour and essaying
Amanda Fulford

In this paper I address the issue of student writing in the university, and explore how the increasing dominance of outcome-driven modes of learning and assessment is changing the understanding of what it is to write, what is expected of students in their writing, and how academic writing should best be supported. I go beyond discussions of what should be taught, or even how student writing can be developed, to focus instead on what it means to write in the university, and on what it is to be a student who writes. In exploring etymologically the concepts of ‘writing’ - and in particular the essay as an instance of this practice - I suggest that it might be seen metaphorically as physical labour. I find this same relationship in the roots of ‘study’ and therefore what it is to be a student. I further explore writing as physical labour through Henry David Thoreau’s Walden (1854/1999) and through Stanley Cavell’s reading of this text (1981), and argue that whilst the mechanical dimensions of writing, and how it is taught and learned, are undoubtedly affected by technological developments, the ‘physicality’ of writing remains.

References:
Writing for the public
Naomi Hodgson
This contribution focuses on academic writing and the way in which the understanding of this is changed by the demands for impact and for open access publication. Technology enables far wider dissemination of research than was previously possible and discoverability is a key measure of the possibility of the use and re-use of research outputs. In this context, the researcher must attend to her research profile as an individual, ensure the visibility of herself and her research, and take personal responsibility for her ‘academic footprint’ (Hall, 2013). This is measured in terms of outputs and how widely they are shared, accessed, cited, etc., the various networks by which such outputs are made available, and the technologies used to facilitate this. A concern with impact, discoverability, and useability widens the audience(s) to which a researcher should address her work. To explore these changes, a distinction between ‘publication as making public’ and ‘publication as making visible’ is developed as a way of considering the changing relationship between the academic and the practice of writing.

References:

Reading the world in digital times: Imagination, metaphor, hypertext
Anna Kouppanou
A common metaphor for the description of reading is ‘transfer’ (itself the Greek translation of metaphor). While reading, we can be transported into different realms even if we do not encounter metaphors, i.e. figurative language. This suggests different interpretations of metaphor and its connection to reading. In Greek it means carrying something in space or transportation. Transference in psychoanalysis points to the establishment of connections that seem arbitrary at first. Both processes describe a nearness and connectedness during which different realms approach each other. In many areas of research, particularly cognitive linguistics, metaphor is a cognitive mode able to work both at the conscious and unconscious levels and produce new connections and meaning (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Modell, 2003).
If this is true, metaphor should be understood not as a literary ornament that supplements reading and writing, but as a process that schematizes these activities. While reading, imagination through metaphor draws on memories in response to the text and recontextualizes them, bringing about new perceptions of the world. But what happens in the case of hypertext and digital reading? Is it that memories are over-contextualized, sources and target domains pre-connected, and the process of metaphor itself predestined? Or has hypertext actually preceded the text?

References:

An exploration of the educational meaning of reading and writing in a digital age.
Joris Vlieghe
In this contribution I want to open a new perspective on the role of literacy for education which departs from the way in which philosophers usually deal with this issue. Instead of focusing on the content of the things we learn to read and write at school and university, I argue that it is also important to study the practice of learning to read and learning to write from a materialist angle (Cf. Stiegler, 2010; Flusser, 2011). This is to say that the concrete and technological dimensions of this practice have important consequences for what it means to be or to become literate. From this perspective, the advent and proliferation of digital media, and especially the ever growing importance of the screen as a mediator between student and subject matter/the world, brings about a substantial change in the very meaning of the activities we call reading and writing. In order to come to an adequate
understanding of what a screen-based literacy might entail, I will explore the educational meaning of traditional forms of western (page-based and alphabetic) literacy in relation to more ancient and to non-western forms of reading and writing (Cf. Christin, 2010).

**References:**
Education, autonomy and the search for a common world

Katariina Holma, Hanna-Maija Huhtala, Anniina Leiviskä & Katariina Tiainen

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Despite its many contemporary critiques, the role of autonomy as a crucial educational ideal of a democratic society is difficult to bypass. At the individual level, autonomy involves the capacity to assess different choices and alternatives, and decide one’s ends in life on the basis of reasons. Autonomy is also taken to be a precondition for the integrity and flourishing of individuals. At the societal level, autonomy is connected with the very possibility of the democratic way of life: democracy is dependent on the capability of its members to make judgments on their own, without relying on external authorities. From the perspective of the concept of autonomy, one of the ultimate tasks of education is thus to provide individuals with the sufficient abilities of critical reasoning. These abilities are thought to enable them to pursue worthwhile ends in life and to contribute to the construction of a common world shared by autonomous individuals.

The purpose of this symposium is to revisit the notion of autonomy by bringing the different philosophical critiques of the concept into dialogue. Our aim is not to dispute the importance of autonomy as an educational ideal, but rather to rethink the definition of autonomy in the light of its critiques. One of the important issues addressed in the symposium is the understanding of rationality that underlies the concept of autonomy, and its relationship with the psychological, historical and political dimensions of human existence. The notion of autonomy is analyzed from the following perspectives: a) autonomy and historicity, b) autonomy and instrumental rationality, c) autonomy and emotions, and d) the challenges of autonomy in the global era.

Proposal 1: Autonomy and the historicity of education
Anniina Leiviskä, University of Helsinki

In his critique of the Enlightenment, Hans-Georg Gadamer demonstrates that the tradition of the Enlightenment is characterized by a problematical dichotomization between rationality and tradition, which conceals the historical prejudices upon which understanding is based. In this contribution, I will argue that the contemporary “rhetoric of autonomy” in the philosophy of education involves a parallel distinction between rationality and historicity: it presents human beings as capable of choosing their commitments and ends solely on the basis of reasons and freely from the context of tradition in which they live. However, as Gadamer’s critique of the Enlightenment indicates, reasoning takes place in the medium of traditions, and traditions also determine the range of possibilities that are available for a person in a given historical moment. Leaving the historical preconditions of autonomy unheeded thus jeopardizes the possibilities to influence and transform these preconditions. I will therefore argue that fostering autonomy in education should involve cultivating children’s awareness concerning the historical preconditions of their actions. In my view, through such awareness, children become capable of acquiring active and responsible roles in regard to their historical circumstances, and thus their possibilities to contribute to the productive re-interpretation and transformation of their tradition are improved.
Proposal 2: Autonomy and the critique of instrumental rationality
Hanna-Maija Huhtala, University of Helsinki

When it comes to autonomy and the search for a common world, we are in great debt to Kantian philosophy. Kant and many of his followers saw rationality as the defining feature of humanity, and as the primary source of autonomy. From the perspective of critical theory, however, the main obstacle hindering the realization of autonomy is embedded in the mode of rationality that is typical of our time: the calculative logic of the late capitalist society has become the predominant form of rationality that penetrates different areas of public and private life. Contemporary culture industry exemplifies this alienating mode of rationality: culture is perceived as a means to increase consumerism through its reifying tendency on the human mind. In this contribution, I will argue that the mode of rationality that characterizes contemporary Western cultures and societies poses a threat to autonomy. However, it can be fruitfully criticized from the viewpoint of critical theory. Hence, I argue that in order to secure autonomy, education should prepare children with the abilities to recognize the invisible and subtle ways through which the calculating mode of rationality operates in the late capitalist societies.

Proposal 3: Autonomy and emotions
Katariina Holma, University of Helsinki

In addition to the rational ability to question the prevailing structures of a society, an autonomous person needs motivation for challenging these structures. In the light of today’s neuropsychological findings, it seems evident that emotions play a crucial role in this motivational process. Nevertheless, the Western philosophical tradition has a tendency to define autonomy as opposed to emotions. Following the Aristotelian and Kantian lines, emotions have been seen as belonging to the realm of nature, and thus being governed by deterministic causal laws, whereas reason has been perceived as providing possibilities for thinking and acting freely from these laws. The problem of this argument is that it entails a fallacious dichotomy between reason and emotions, and bypasses the fact that both reason and emotion have important functions in human knowledge and morality. The role of emotions in autonomy is, however, double-edged: appealing to emotions may involve, for example, a danger of emotional manipulation, or enable sentimental commitments to arbitrary views and beliefs. These observations should not lead us to second the fallacious dichotomy between reason and emotion. In my paper, I will discuss how the interplay between reason and emotion could be taken into consideration in the interpretation of autonomy.

Proposal 4: The challenges of autonomy in the global era
Katariina Tiainen, University of Helsinki

This paper discusses the notion of autonomy in the context of neoliberal globalization, drawing upon the work of Carlos Torres. In his criticism towards neoliberal globalization, Torres focuses on global injustices, and the challenges globalization places upon civil society and citizenship. Along the lines of many other critical theorists, Torres argues that individual freedom is restricted and conditioned by the structures of power. In his work, Torres analyzes how the structures of power and political processes take new forms in the course of globalization, thus creating global injustice. In my paper, I will analyze how autonomy as participation in democratic processes should be understood in the global era. I suggest that within this framework the concept of autonomy can be best understood by analyzing the dialectical relations of individual subjects and political-societal structures. I will derive particularly from Torres’s conception of civic virtues, which is especially important from an educational viewpoint: virtues have crucial importance in the constitution of democratic citizenship, and in creating possibilities for the kind of solidarity, which could unite people around shared goals. Thereby, the fostering of these virtues should be perceived as one of the central goals in the education towards autonomy.
The subject-person and education in the dialogical personalism (R. Guardini), in the phenomenological anthropology (A. Ales Bello et alii), in the historical personalism (A. Agazzi) and in praxic historicism (A. Gramsci): Education as a rejection of any approval and self-expression, which is internalized and / or in the historical context

Riccardo Pagano, Adriana Schiedi, Andrea Potestio & Rosa Indellicato

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Overall abstract
Either in pedagogy of secular inspiration or in the Christian inspired one, the reference to the person is widespread. We can say that sometimes, it has even been abused. In light of this "abuse", it is necessary to clarify some theoretical aspects, in order to explain the concept of the person in relation to education.

We will do it through some theories: the Dialogical personalism (R. Guardini) the phenomenological anthropology (A. Ales Bello et alii), the historical personalism (A. Agazzi) and the praxis historicism (A. Gramsci).

Guardini’s educational personalism identifies the individual as an inviolable reality no one can abuse of, as he is both the means and the end which, as such, cannot be replaced in any way whatsoever. According to Ales Bello and to E. Stein's philosophy of education, the person is esse essentia and existentiae of the educational phenomenon, from which pedagogy must re-start in order to understand the nature, the meanings, the means and the aims of education. A. Agazzi’s historical personalism starts from the belief that the person is made with and through history. In addition, if education is a process aimed at developing everyone's potentialities completely and harmoniously, both manual labour and theory wholly represent educational activities, which, with no hierarchies, should alternate in every educational path.

Finally, according to A. Gramsci, the person is a unity expressed in his subjectivity and grows in his historicity. The process of evolution and history of man is “molecular "in the sense that it is not given once and for all, but depending on the situation. The pedagogy and education emancipate the subject seen as a not-made metaphysical immanence, who takes upon himself the responsibility for his acts, aimed to express their potential, which must be realized in freedom, considered as means and aim of human action.

Riccardo Pagano: Professor of General Pedagogy - University of Bari “Aldo Moro”
The Gramscian Person and Education as a “Molecular Process”
Gramscian pedagogy is deeply democratic; it constantly rediscovers its mission in relation to democracy and tends to be hegemonic. It is a guide for the intellectuals, i.e., that social class is the transmission belt for the shared educational and political consensus.

It is always on human nature, however, that Gramsci insists, and it also includes the social nature of man. Indeed, "human nature", for Gramsci, is the "story", which includes "evolution". The process of evolution and history of man is “molecular "in the sense that it is not given once and for all, but depending on the situation.
The “molecular” educational movement, therefore, is important for the Gramscian “person” because invoking moral personality, then the moral of and in human action, it moves the speech from the transcendent to the immanent level, from the metaphysical to the historical level. The moral acts of the individual will affect his subjectivity and determine him as a person. The person is a unity expressed in his subjectivity and he grows in his historicity. That means that his formation is not given once and for all, but it will change with the change of situations and contexts.

Adriana Schiedi, Ph.D. in Education - University of Bari “Aldo Moro”

The Person and his Ontological Foundation as Logos of Pedagogy

The phenomenological anthropology and the question about the human being as a person and his ontological and axiological foundation represent the core of Stein’s philosophy of education and her followers’ one in Italian pedagogy (A. Ales Bello), which has its roots in an idea of Bildung as the promoter of the human being in his entirety. Starting from this anthropocentric setting, E. Stein is convinced that any theory or educational practice, to be considered a scientific one, should be based on a metaphysics of the object “education” and on an ontological analysis of its earliest structural elements. Among these, there is the person, esse essentia and existentiae of the educational phenomenon, from which pedagogy must restart in order to understand the nature, the meanings, the means and the aims of education. This paper aims to throw light on the primacy acquired in Stein’s philosophy of education: either by the metaphysical investigation on the human being, or the nature and the meaning of its operari, by the ontological analysis, concerning his deep structures for answering to a question about education; but also to determine what the conditions are, which can help to make the human being a polite person, then a person.

Andrea Potestio, Ph.D. in Education - University of Bergamo

Manual labour for a substantial development of the person in A. Agazzi

Aldo Agazzi’s pedagogical activity goes through the whole 20th century and constitutes a significant reference point in the Italian cultural framework of the previous century. The aim of this brief contribution is to examine the theme of labour in the pedagogical thought of Agazzi. Agazzi’s peculiar conception of manual labour represents an element of continuity that permits to link two cultural horizons commonly considered as distinct, particularly in the Italian tradition of the 20th century: the reality of labour and that of school.

The originality of Agazzi’s theory on labour consist in avoiding the opposition between vocational and intellectual education. Manual labour, in a pedagogical perspective, has a deep educational value, not merely because it provides instruments and knowledge for people’s future profession, but mainly because it values and encourages substantial aspects of a person during his educational path. If education is a process aimed at completely and harmoniously developing everyone’s potentialities, both manual labour and theory wholly represent educational activities which, with no hierarchies, should alternate within every educational path. In this view, Agazzi’s considerations seem to provide interesting theoretical perspectives on the theme of the so-called, using a modern expression, “school-work alternation”.

Rosa Indellicato Ph.D. in Education - University of Bari “Aldo Moro”

Person and Education in Romano Guardini’s Thinking

The educational challenge faced by Guardini is meaningful either towards the culture or towards the particular historical situation in which we live, especially in terms of the ever-increasing ‘educational emergency’ and of the respect for the individuals and for their undeniable values, such as their dignity. Set against the exploitation of the individual in today’s complex society, Guardini’s educational personalism identifies the individual as an inviolable reality no one can abuse of, as he is both the means and the end that, as such, cannot be replaced in any way whatsoever.
Therefore, Guardini has stated that the person is ‘not born out of the meeting; the person is born through the meeting’, suggesting that in such a meeting there should not be a simple dynamism, but, rather, a way to be. Thus, his educational proposal is characterized by the care for the person as a ‘concrete’ being who lives in his own time, in his ‘terrestrial city’, in a culture where technologies have brought about an anthropological revolution and new powers. In our society, which is increasingly witnessing the phenomenon of the cultural ‘metissage’, the person is struggling to build and to make sense of the value of his identity through the dialogue and the process of mutual recognition.
Lost in Translation and education for understanding other cultures

Paul Standish, Naoko Saito, Mayuko Uehara & Yusuke Arai

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In the dialogue between “old and new generations in the 21st century,” it is imperative that cross-cultural dimensions are given due consideration. Not only do these matters overlap and interconnect: their comparison can reveal the nature of barriers to understanding. Such barriers are manifested in diverse aspects of education – not only in language education itself but in cosmopolitan, environmental, moral, and citizenship education. Moreover, education cannot be contained in a tidy division between adulthood and childhood: it is an endless process of human perfection, through which adults and children alike learn continually what it is to be a grownup (Cavell 1979, p. 125). This involves crossing borders, in and out of school.

In considering such perfectionist aspirations, this round table highlights the theme of translation as foregrounded in the film, Lost in Translation (2003). The film considers an intergenerational relationship between two adults against a background of cultural difference. The discussion, by Japanese and British participants, will interweave perspectives from poststructuralism, American philosophy, and the Kyoto School of philosophy: it will offer an alternative way of thinking about understanding other cultures, and the educational implications of this, in the light of the idea of philosophy as translation. Translation here signifies more than the merely linguistic: it involves the translation of the human subject, understood now as integrally related to cultural and generational difference. In this sense translation is a condition of human being: it is inseparable from the transformational experience of recovery from loss – from the loss of the self, of meaning, and of place, and from the loss of innocence that is a continuing part of growing up. Translation in this broader sense has in fact already begun in one’s own language and culture: the other is already there in what is perceived to be one’s own.

Paul Standish (Institute of Education, London) will discuss Lost in Translation in relation to problems of orientalism and, more especially, occidentalism. First, he will make reference to Heidegger’s “Dialogue on Language” (1959/1971) in relation to the film’s reflection on its own medium as a form of representation. Second, more extensively, he will raise questions concerning Eastern appropriations of Western forms – not only film and photography but philosophy and education themselves. This raises questions of borrowing and reappropriation in which identity is tested and newly configured. In contrast to Heidegger’s mystification of other cultures as unknowable and nostalgia for home, Standish draws out significant threads from Cavell’s essay “Walden in Tokyo” (2014) for the reading of Lost in Translation. These relate to possibilities of language education through which both adults and children can experience of the rift in translation. The importance of avoiding one-way conceptions of cross-cultural education or comparative research are emphasized, while possibilities of a more intercultural practice are demonstrated. Visual examples from the film will reveal the interrelation of these themes with questions of generational difference. Attention will be drawn to the collusion of forms of identity construction with an insulation against difference, which works also against oneself.

Naoko Saito (Kyoto University) will discuss the idea of philosophy as translation following Stanley Cavell’s reading of Thoreau. This ponders the thought that there is no unmediated fusion with the other, but only a gradual approach, with endless gaps and mishaps on the
way. This is why understanding another culture is always already mediated by language, and why it is accompanied by the experience of translating, where, in Thoreau’s phrase, the mother tongue gives way to the “father tongue” (Thoreau 1992, p. 69). Conceptions of cosmopolitan education in which the crossing of borders is imagined to lead to an eventual erasure of boundaries are challenged in favor of an alternative vision in which transcendence is achieved only with the acknowledgement of the untranslatable and of gaps in experience. Pursuing the theme of the untranslatable from the film, Mayuko Uehara (Kyoto University) will highlight the idea of the untranslatable in connection with the philosophical nature of French symbolist poetry. The philosophical contemplations of Mallarmé and Valéry are sublimated in an art of language that reaches the deepest aspects of human experience. Hajime Tanabe, a leading philosopher of the Kyoto School (1885-1962), translated the work of these poets. He understood their work as a realization of the dialectical mobility of life and death in human existence, a movement towards a higher plane: “The consummatory point of the symbolist poem,” he writes, “is the awareness of religious love.” This transcendence from philosophy towards religion can be understood as a transition from the sayable to what cannot be said. Tanabe claims that symbolist poem is untranslatable. If this is so, is prose untranslatable too? Does awareness of this constitute an experience of what cannot be said? From the perspective of linguistic transcendence and translation, and in the light of this Eastern reception of Western thought, Uehara will explore the philosophical significance of symbolist poetry with regard to questions of translation and cross-cultural understanding, and will indicate its educational implications for human perfection.

Yusuke Arai (Kyoto University) will chair the session.

References
Is it possible to build a new democratic school model in our global society?

Giuseppe Spadafora, Teodora Pezzano, Rossana Adele Rossi & Antonio Argentino

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Contemporary global society is quite different from traditional society. The new political world order, after the Cold War, is still not clear. It seems like, in a society very influenced by global financial power and Web Communication, that the political order is based on different political and economic powers. In this global order is it possible to build a new democratic school model that could promote the dialogue between wealthy countries and poor countries, and foster a cultural cooperation amongst different political systems, cultures and religions? The individual, in this society called “postmodern” and “liquid”, but also very poor in the majority part of the world, is confused and belongs to the public opinion, very often manipulated by politics and communication system. The school as idea of education, due to the fact that is easier in many poor countries to find a teacher than to have a school as a building, is fundamental for the development of the humankind in the XXI century. But what kind of school’s model is possible to promote economic and civil development in rich and in poor countries? The idea is a project of a “global school”, linked to the social local needs of the territory and to universal values as peace, justice, cooperation, solidarity. An interesting point of reference could be the John Dewey’s books Democracy and Education of 1916 and The Public and Its Problems of 1927 and the Amartya Sen’s book The Idea of Justice of 2009. Concerning the curriculum of this school, it must be based on an interdisciplinary model of humanities, science and technology. Regarding the system of evaluation, it must be based on a good balance between democracy and meritocracy. The education of the individual must be considered as an “initiation” in its specific historical and social situation and in the possibility to pursue, in the flexible way, the development of its “embedded powers”. A new democracy in the global word can begin only from a new idea of school and education.

The School for Democracy in the 21st Century between Tradition and Contemporaneity

Teodora Pezzano

My paper aims to analyze the meaning of democracy in the school within contemporary global society. It's well known that the John Dewey laboratory-school-(1896 -1903), has greatly influenced the meaning of democratic school in the 20th century. Laboratory School, as John Dewey describes in The School and Society of 1899, was based on three main principles: a. the school must have a relationship with society; b. the student is at the center of the educational relationship, that means the teacher must organize a learning environment, in which to develop the "embedded powers" of the students; c. the school is an organization.

On the basis of this original idea, it is possible to build, in a contemporary global society, a democratic school that can achieve a good balance, between meritocracy and democracy, in order to give everyone the same opportunity to achieve success in life. It is very difficult to theorize a universal school model, adaptable to various contemporary social and political contexts.
A contemporary school must be based on social equity, to permit the students to pursue their career aspirations, and social ethics and also to respect the religion and culture of other countries. Also the school filters out the negative aspects that the world of social media and new media has determined.

**Education for Democracy: Martha Nussbaum**

Rossana Adele Rossi

In our multicultural and multiethnic society it is fundamental to educate to cosmopolitanism and social inclusion, with the respect of other cultures and religious beliefs. In this perspective it is important to teach a scientific and technological culture in the school, only linking it to the Humanities.

Martha Nussbaum in her book *Not for profit. Why Democracies Need the Humanistic Culture* of 2011, develops the themes dealt with in her previous writings. She analyzes the relationship between education and democracy within the school and university education, entrusting to the humanistic culture to return to its main function: to create progress around the issues of citizenship and of peaceful coexistence among people.

Her book is considered a manifesto, a declaration of intent, in which the American philosopher presents not only a defense for a certain vision of education and Humanities, but also seeks to demonstrate how the teaching of literature and the arts is functional even to economic growth of a nation. In this work, Martha Nussbaum offers her conception of education and culture that derives from the humanities, in an important collection dedicated to the role of emotions, imagination, but also of the "fiction" that lasts into moral and political life.

Her book is fundamental to promote the development of the humanistic culture, against the backdrop of an economic crisis that is predominantly to privilege a system of scientific-technological training, which often neglects the roots of a broader culture.

**Student’s Choice in the Democratic School of the 21st Century**

Antonio Argentino

It is fundamental to build a democratic school in the XXI century. One of the most important aspect is the student’s choice for the future. In our global society, considered a “postmodern society”, it is very important that the school should aim the student to find his life’s project to pursue a full achievement in his life and career. The traditional society was based on a false concept of “harmony” of the individual’s education. In Western tradition we had the concepts of Paideia, Humanitas and Bildung through which the individual tried to develop a critical and positive relationship between the pursuit of full achievement (telos) of the individual in relation with society. Contemporary society, characterized by global financial economy and Web technology, needs a new model of education for the individual in order to allow itself to possess a new capability of real choice in a democratic school of the XXI century. Therefore it is important to define a new education model based on new freedom of choices. This new model must consider the flexibility of choice and the adaptability of the individual to the unforeseen events of contemporary society.
Tradition and future in the Italian philosophy of education

Flavia Stara, Cristiano Casalini, Marco Giosi & Mino Conte

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Overall abstract
The symposium will provide an overview of current Italian educational theories and models of educational research, reconstructing the genesis and historical process of the main trends. The aim is to present a representative picture of the specific position occupied by the philosophy of education in the pedagogical Italian tradition as well as in the actual epistemological context demonstrating the existence of a plural model of educational philosophy with its conceptual distinctions and roots within general theories of society and subjectivity: Idealism, Personalism, Marxism, Pragmatism. The Italian case of the theoretical systematization of the pedagogical discourse has led to the evolution of several cultural paradigms and to the constant presence of the principles of critical complexity and plurality as the distinctive features of its rich processing both in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge. The presence of different philosophies of education produced consequences on the analysis of the basic educational concepts, on the meaning of the key words of educational discourse and on the different emphasis ascribed to “education”, “training”, “learning”.

The idea of the symposium is to argue the relevance of theory to educational research and practice within an international debate. Philosophy of Education can therefore play a significant role in re-opening a critical discussion about the necessity to rethink the place of theory in research and practice. What is an educational theory? What is the connection between educational theories and educational practices? Educational research is endowed of a strong theorizing space coming from a radical dialectic that is played between acquired forms and open problems, providing between these elements a non-linear comparison, radically oriented but never pre-judged in the outcomes.

Abstract F.Stara
Features and Identity of Philosophy of Education
Starting with the mid 60s, Italy expresses a development of philosophy of education to ensure the independence, and thus the specificity of pedagogy as well as its mediation of different types of traditional knowledge. The models in philosophy of education suitable to give structure and meaning to the educational contemporaneity relate to analytic philosophy and critical rationalism, to phenomenology and hermeneutics in a dynamic and productive network of analyzes and proposals.

The succession of paradigms such as: positivism, analytic philosophy, pragmatism, critical hermeneutics, is exemplary of the “decantation” of the identity of philosophy of education as well as of its heuristic rigor. Philosophy of education carries out its research around values, such as emancipation, freedom, dialogue, care, self-education. During the Eighties and Nineties the main trends of the debate concentrate on the theoretical-systematic reflection of every educational act, and on the analysis of the historical process of formation of educational professions.
At present philosophy of education is considered a kind of formal seal of the pedagogical discourse as well as the critical model for a radical problematization of the postmodern culture. It investigates some of the most relevant themes and issues such as today’s disenchantment versus traditional certainties, the disturbing crisis of the subject, the tendency to ignore the reasons of pathos, the intrusiveness of the artificiality of technique over the authenticity of nature.

Abstract C. Casalini
Crossing the Act: Idealism, Marxism and Personalism in Italian Pedagogy.

Three main philosophical streams run under the thick bush of educational reflection in 20th century Italy: Idealism, Personalism and Marxism. Idealism is undoubtedly the backbone of all pedagogical-theoretical reflection in Italy, founding with Gentile and his immediate followers the first conceptual frame inserting education in a complete philosophical system. Even if Idealism has paid its debts with Fascist ideology and unavoidably followed its destiny, both Personalism and Marxism grew on their confrontation and continuous dialogue with Idealism. Several Marxists were strongly indebted with Idealism, of which they inherited most of the lexicon and the strive for a deep rooting of pedagogy in national politics. Marxist pedagogy developed, especially with Broccoli, in the aftermath of Gramsci’s work, and after its blooming in the post-Second World War, faded away and it is scarcely cultivated today. Personalism, in the sense of a recurrence of the term “person” in a context of Catholic philosophy, was partly composed of converted Gentile’s disciples (Mario Casotti, Vincenzo La Via, Augusto Guzzo, Felice Battaglia, Gustavo Bontadini), reverting seminal concepts as Pure Act in theological ideas or purely in God’s presence as Absolute Person), often merging with the neo-Thomistic culture. A more clear-cut and pure Personalism (Luigi Stefanini, Aldo Agazzi, Giuseppe Catalfamo, Giuseppe Flores d’Arcais) tried to found a full-fledged Personalist pedagogy on the steps of Emmanuel Mounier, whose long life makes it still present in today’s educational debate.

Abstract M. Giosi
The reception of American Pragmatism and New Pragmatism in Italy

The present contribution aims to analyze the reception of the Pragmatism by Italian philosophy of education, highlighting some significant moments, issues and authors related to this survey. The meeting with the Pragmatism takes place in a historically crucial period (the early twentieth century) when Italy is engaged in a difficult process of “education of the nation”, both politically and culturally. We will examine the impact of the pragmatist philosophy towards the philosophical and pedagogical Italian culture, dominated by Positivism, by the Historicism of Croce and Gentile’s Actualism, pointing out the different readings of it (by Papini, in the light of James, by Vailati in the light of Peirce). Then the analysis will focus on the pedagogical implications concerning the interpretations of Dewey’s thought by the so-called “new enlightenment” movement, considering philosophers like Banfi, Abbagnano, Geymonat, Preti. So we will discuss the experience concerning the “School of Florence” that will derive from Dewey’s thought important suggestions regarding the foundations of the pedagogy as a science, as well as the conception of a democratic school. A further analysis will be devoted to the relationship between philosophy of education and Neo-pragmatism, with particular reference to Rorty and Cavell.

Abstract M. Conte
Some Questions concerning Education and The Epistemological Quest.

The question concerning the epistemic status of education (“pedagogy” in the Italian and continental tradition) is not new. Some historical references and roots can be naturally seen in two seminal works, “General Pedagogy” by Herbart and the “Sources of an Educational
Science” by Dewey. The first work invited education to reflect about “its own ideas” in order to establish “an independent thought” in strict dialogue with “practical philosophy” and psychology. The second tried to identify the sources of problems and contents for a science of education, recommending specific roles for philosophy of education, psychology and sociology. In Italy the debate through the 20th Century focused on the specific epistemic structure of pedagogy in itself (what kind of science is it?), and the debate advanced by proposing several solutions as e.g. “practical science”, “phenomenological science”, “empirical science of education”. In England more recently the debate focused on the “educational research” field and about its epistemological underpinnings, developing arguments about, e.g., quantitative and qualitative approaches, the generalisability of research findings, and about truth and validity. Taking into account this background, the discussion will propose further hypothesis about Pedagogy in the term of a mere practical concern, involved in thinking about how to govern and help the progress of educational practices, but having its main theoretical equipment in a corpus of theories of education that comes from a Science of Education able to build its methodological structure.
Can we really educate for democracy?

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The proposed symposium intends to problematise the relationship between education and democracy which otherwise risks being taken for granted in a simplistic way. To this end it is necessary:

- To deconstruct the concept of democracy as a political system and a decision-making device and to highlight its cognitive, moral and even anthropological implications;
- To explore the relationships between democracy and public opinion with a special focus on the cultural and political scenarios opened up by the web 2.0;
- To identify the forms of knowledge and thinking underlying democracy as an experience of life-in-common and therefore as a political regime (the statute of this therefore would need to be inquired in its turn).

According to this framework, the symposium (confronting philosophical and educational perspectives) will explore the possibility to educate for democracy within current cultural, educational, political and social contemporary scenarios focusing both on theoretical and practical implications.

R.M. Calcaterra  
Re-description of democracy: a philosophical and educational task.

The dialectics between the need of stability and that of changes, or the need to continuously improve our cultural inhabitation of the world, is suggested as the fabric of an educational practice aimed at enlightening the meaning of democracy, the possibility of its realization and even of its survival in contemporary world. Disapproval of violence as the only resource for providing important ruptures with unsatisfactory socio-political existing models and, at the same time, the acknowledgment of the positive value of conflicts should be a specific educational task. This, in fact, would have as a basic criterion the safeguard of individual's and social groups' possibility of communicating their experiences, distresses, feelings and perspectives. Accordingly, also the necessity to pay attention to the economic structure of a society would be stressed as an issue mostly dependent on a cultural re-description of the traditional conceptual couples of ideal and real, individual and social, facts and values.

L.Hickman  
Teaching Democracy with Scientific Methods

Responding to the question posed by the title of the panel, “Can We Really Educate for Democracy?,” I suggest that although there are multiple avenues by means of which it is possible to do so, one of the most important involves introducing our students to some of the central features of scientific methods. The pendulum swing from scientism to post-structuralism, from positivism to post-modernism, has tended to obscure the importance a number of these features. They include moderated positions with respect to the role of doubt vis a vis claims of objectivity; the place of independent judgment within communities of inquiry; promotion of an experimentalism that balances the claims of both egalitarianism and
institutional standards; establishment a productive relationship between universal and culture-specific valuation, and the importance of channeling the flow of information in ways that reduce unproductive noise. Each of these lessons from the methods of sciences is also a lesson for promoting democratic forms of life both inside and outside the classroom.

David Kennedy
*Educating for democracy through dialogue*

We might distinguish, as Dewey did, between social and political democracy. Before it is a political form democracy is a communicative discourse, a set of philosophically tinged social habits. So we can speak of a “democratic subject.” I would argue further, with Marcuse, that “real” democracy is not a possibility until these habits sink down to the level of “instinct”; that is, until they become elements of sense experience, or sensibility, assuming that “human nature” and even the world of the senses is an emergent historical construct. For the democratic sensibility then, freedom and non-violence become biological necessities. It is the embodied subject that instinctively refuses oppression, who experiences the empathy and the intersubjective objectivity necessary for authentic democratic practice. Can one educate for the reconstruction of human sensibility? I would argue yes, certainly. Educating for democracy means transforming the school in the image of dialogue, which is the psycholinguistic discourse of democracy. We have models in the various iterations of progressive schooling starting from the early 19th century, and especially in the schools of the contemporary Democratic Education movement, which provide a cultural space for the exercise and internalization of habits that lead to the embodied democratic subject.

Stefano Oliverio
*Democracy or education: Is that the question? Culture, learnification and the new individualism*

The proposed paper takes its cue from reflections emerging from some trends of the current French political philosophy of education which have diagnosed a passage from the idea of democracy through school to that of democracy in school. This passage has gone hand in hand with the “radicalization of the demand of individualization” and with a related questioning of the status of knowledge and culture in their relationship to the individual’s learning. Such a transition would eventually endanger the role of the school as an agency which supports the democratic project. The paper will recognize the value of these analyses and of some of their concerns and argue that they are helpful in that they prevent us from understanding education for democracy in the sense of what Biesta calls learnification by insisting, instead, on the role of culture. At the same time, though, they risk missing the challenge of promoting a more radical understanding of what a democratic culture could look like and of updating the Deweyan idea of the school as a social centre. What is ultimately at stake, in such a dialogue with the French political philosophy of education, is a transactional understanding of the expression “democratic culture.”

Masamichi UENO
*Designing democratic education and collaborative learning in Japan in the global era: A Deweyan perspective*

In the post-industrial society of the 21st century, educational reforms in Japan tend to highlight innovative style of learning. Societal transformations accompanying the advancement of globalization, knowledge-based society, information technology society, multicultural society, and environmental sustainable society lead to demand new visions of education based on democratic practices and processes. Instead of the conventional approach to education that overemphasizes the transfer and acquisition of deterministic knowledge, the current concept of education must be reconstructed into a democratic learning that encourages students to acquire creative, critical, collaborative and dialogical thinking habits. The aim of this presentation is to address the issue whether democracy can really be taught in schools and to explain how students can be educated with it in accordance with the perspective of Deweyan Theory. His theory of democratic education
plays a significant role in current school reforms since he has criticized the conventional way of learning wherein the subject-matter is taught as static and fixed, rather, he upholds the search for inquisitive and collaborative learning process by exceeding the two clause confrontations between new education and old education. We will explicate how we could incorporate the collaborative and dialogical learning process to democratic education in this global era.
Exploring the tragic in teacher education

Bianca Thoilliez, Vincent Colapietr & Paul Standish

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Overall abstract:
The current increasing demand for teacher professional development has three main features: (a) teachers must learn to justify their pedagogic practices; (b) teachers must have a good enough knowledge of the curriculum contents they are expected to teach; and (c) teachers’ performance (resulting from the interaction of features (a) and (b)) must be translated into students’ performance in standardized tests. Helped by the rise of naive and optimistic discourses on “efficient teaching”, education is turning into a more technical practice focused on getting “positive results” and “better outcomes”. In such a context, subjective well-being studies and the positive psychology movement find fertile ground in education studies to colonize teacher education programs. Under their influence is an incipient assumption that the answer to the classic question “How should one live?”, which is at the very core of education practices, has to do with life satisfaction as a combination of contentment, happiness and positive arousal. But, do tragedy and crisis have nothing to do with the task of learning “how should one live”? The purpose of the symposium is to explore these unattended dimensions regarding the education of teachers. It is proposed that, reading from the American philosophical tradition, the symposium will include three interrelated contributions. The first will look into the complex connection between the pragmatist perspective and a tragic sensibility. The second will analyze the Jamesian vindication of instability and risk-assuming decisiveness as a way of live, which may shed a different light on teachers’ decision-making. Finally the third contribution will raise the question of skepticism in relation to the contemporary dominance of the audit culture in education, and Cavell’s distinctive response to this.

[1] “Coming to Terms with the Tragic: Pragmatism as a Site of This Process”
In light of Sidney Hook’s “Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life,” Cornel West’s “Pragmatism and the Sense of the Tragic,” and other writings on this topic, there has been in recent years increasing attention paid to the complex connection between the pragmatists perspective and a tragic sensibility. The purpose of this presentation is twofold: first, to show how the writings of William James and, to a lesser degree, those of John Dewey can be read as documents exhibiting the process of working toward an achievement of ambivalence toward the tragic; and, second, how the process of coming to terms with the tragic dimensions of human existence ought to be an integral part of any education honestly concerned with the nurturance and development of human beings.

[2] “Education in Denial”
Skepticism is familiar enough in philosophy. It is a mainstay of epistemology, and Cartesian methodological doubt provides a common entry-point into philosophy. Stanley Cavell's sustained preoccupation with the theme has taken it in a different direction, specifically by seeing the epistemologist’s skepticism as a manifestation within philosophy of something deep and prevalent in human nature: our obsessive tendency doubt what we ordinarily know. Cavell finds connections between these philosophical symptoms and explorations of obsessive doubt in literature and film. The audit culture’s contemporary dominance in education illustrates this: its anxious desire for evidence that learning has taken place or that teachers’ performance is fully monitored has changed the vocabulary and culture. The
distortions these practices typically effect amount to a denial of what teachers commonly know: they dismantle those virtues and abilities that rightfully constitute teaching as a profession. This has a double effect: first, curricula are designed reductively; second, a message is surreptitiously imparted to the effect that this, and nothing more, is what education is. This, it might be said loosely, is a tragedy for education. More specifically, it is a denial of the tragic aspect of the human condition, to which education, properly conceived, should bear witness.

As in any other moral practice, education makes teachers try to find a degree of orientation, of guiding their own actions and behaviors in the schoolroom, of explaining what is happening with a particular student. These are sources of anxiety that imply that rightness is never guaranteed, and they have always been part of the teaching profession. However, the current proliferation of student performance assessment systems, as well as the generalization of national curriculum standards, is making teachers face hitherto unknown pressures. As education objectives and methods are already being set, the teachers’ critical skills and creative expertise become progressively suspended. The purpose of this contribution is to present a Jamesian vindication of instability and risk-assuming decisiveness as way of inhabiting the teaching profession. This proposal will reconsider education as a chancy practice where teachers are compelled to bet, even if it is a bet they can lose. William James believed that “taking risks” by following an alternative before all the evidence was in was one of the supreme marks of character a human being could develop. Certainty was a moral death to him, and our present “standardization” of education processes is “killing” teachers’ ability to deal with failure, anxiety and disappointments as an eventual outcome of their education practices.