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Measuring Up in Education

Co-Edited by R. Scott Webster and Steven A. Stolz

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The papers published in this document have been blind reviewed by independent and qualified experts. The Co-Editors wish to make it clear that whilst the strict peer review process has been applied to all published papers, due to the multi-disciplinary and International nature of the conference, the Co-Editors have accepted a variety of International styles such as reference structure and spellings. Author acknowledgements are based on the information provided at the time of submission.

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CONFERENCE THEME

The 43rd Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) was held in Melbourne, Australia from the 6th to 9th of December 2013. The PESA conference provides a supportive environment for the presentation and discussion of scholarly work in education. Presenters come from many different parts of the world and draw on a wide range of philosophical traditions and perspectives. Postgraduate students and others new to educational philosophy and theory are warmly encouraged to participate. The theme of the conference was:

MEASURING UP IN EDUCATION

We live and work in a time when the issues facing education, many of which have been with us for a considerable period, are being approached primarily through measurement – classroom assessment, research methods, standardised testing, international comparisons. Yet we do not often stop to consider what counts – and alternatively, what doesn't count – in a climate where measuring up to a standard is the name of the game. At a deeper level, we rarely raise questions about measurement itself. What is measurement? What is a standard? How does measurement of education articulate with the purposes and potential of education? Questions such as these are sometimes expressed, but seemingly never heard in the discourses which dominate. The aim of this conference is to create a space for such questioning by inviting an exchange of views around the issues pertaining to measurement as this influences the various discourse of education.

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Editorial

It is with pleasure that we present the reviewed papers of the 43rd Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) annual conference.

The theme for this year's conference is *Measuring Up* and the papers included here provide an important contribution to understanding the roles that measurement, assessment and evaluation have for the practices of education and schooling. This theme of *Measuring Up* is especially important at this time when there is increasing emphasis being given to benchmark standards such as is promoted through The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

There is correspondingly a great deal of political attention being given to education practices as a result of the performance results on PISA tests. In order to bring balance to much of the political debates promoting greater measures of accountability and scientific management of education work, there needs to be thoughtful, well-informed and critical contributions such as found in the papers presented here. It is through such contributions that wise judgements can be made in policy development and school practices.

Indeed one of the dominant themes to emerge from these papers is that the aspects which educators value such as the virtues of wisdom, prudence, critical thinking and happiness, do not lend themselves to measurement. And so one of the tensions that is recognised throughout the majority of papers is a conflict between *educational* values and the pressures and expectations to perform well in standardised tests such as administered by PISA.

The authors of these papers, being familiar with educational philosophy, argue their concerns about education in this age of performativity. As Heidegger's notion of Enframing indicates, the whole 'shape' of curricula and what becomes valued through them, is revealed through how they structure and organise knowledge, subjects and capabilities – which currently tend to conform ultimately to measurable practices. Hence there is a raising of critical concerns in some papers regarding standards, technology, evidence and indeed the whole discourse of metrics itself as these have the power to shape the work that occurs in schools and potentially can work against *education*.

Dewey has identified that one of the concerning characteristics of the discourse of metrics is that it tends to segregate and separate behaviours which can then be measured. This tendency to segregate from relations of wholeness and complexity is challenged by several papers which identify the value of some silent, thoughtful, complex and slow behaviours which are not readily promoted in high-stakes performance environments. Such insights and arguments offer different and valuable ways that education work can be Enframed.

Consequently we consider these papers to offer a valuable variety of stimulating and thought-provoking material which challenge many of the ideas and practices relating to the discourse of measurement. They make an important contribution to both education and the philosophy of education and we highly recommend this collection to bring much needed balance to the discussions involving educational practice.

SCOTT WEBSTER & STEVE STOLZ

On behalf of the PESA Annual Conference Organising Committee

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A Critical Exploration of the Relation between Silence, Education and Assessment

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Abstract

Western societies have become increasingly knowledge and information based economies, and educational reforms have put measurable knowledge and assessment at the top of the agenda in order to create effective schools. In this paper, we critically explore the relation between silence, education and assessment, drawing mainly on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and to some extent the work of Otto Friedrich Bollnow. Our overall aim is to open up for discussion the significance of silence in education, with a focus on the interplay between silence and assessment.

Some students are experienced by others or by themselves as silent. Perhaps, they are neither given, nor do they take, the space that is required for participation in a conversation. They remain silent even though the ongoing discussion wakens their reflections and thoughts, or even if they know the answer to questions asked. Merleau-Ponty emphasises, that there is something that exists beyond what is said, something which cannot be communicated verbally, which he calls a silent and implicit language. Since exams are mainly based on words, the silent dimensions of students' knowledge and achievement may be neglected. Exams, written or verbally, thus run the risk of being limitations for fair assessment. To stop and think about silence can draw attention to the importance of listening to the silent and implicit language of students in different teaching situations, especially when it comes to assessment.

Keywords: silence, education, assessment, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Otto Friedrich Bollnow

Introduction

Western societies have become increasingly knowledge and information based economies, and education is emphasised as a way to enable countries to compete on the global market (Ball, 2003, 2008; Gray, 2012; OECD & Benett, 2006; Tatto, 2006). Accordingly, more people with higher levels of education are required, and the starting point for this agenda is effective schools.

A knowledge effective school prioritises measurable accomplishment and international competitiveness (Castell, 2000; Aspelin & Persson, 2011), and the needs of the economy have, in turn, become the argument for educational measures (Biesta, 2006). Consequently, international and national educational policies and large-scale reforms have put measurable content knowledge, standardisation, documentation, and assessment at the top of the agenda (Hargreaves, 2009; Moss 2007). Research, policy changes, pedagogical debates, as well as, pedagogical practices, therefore tend to focus on simple descriptions based on standardised tests and how to achieve better results, instead of appreciating and trying to understand the complexity of teaching and learning (Rodgers & Raider Roth, 2006). In addition, humans' ability to orally, and in writing express themselves explicitly has become of great importance. However, according to Merleau-Ponty (1995) there is something that exists beyond what is said, something that cannot be communicated verbally, which he calls a silent and implicit language. This reveals a tension between, on the one hand, uttered and explicit expressions, and on the other hand, silent and implicit expressions, of importance to discuss in connection with contemporary educational agenda.

Within the framework of this paper, we critically explore the relation between silence, education, and assessment, drawing mainly on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and to some extent the work of Otto Friedrich Bollnow. Our overall aim is therefore to open up for discussion the significance of silence in education, with a focus on the interplay between silence and assessment.

Silence and education

According to Merleau-Ponty (1995), silence is an inevitable dimension of human beings' existence, an essential aspect of communication, and therefore: '... we must uncover the threads of silence that speech is mixed together with' (p. 46). In schools, some students may be experienced by others, or by themselves, as silent. Perhaps they neither are given nor do they take the silent space that is required for participation in a conversation or in an exam. A student might remain silent even though the ongoing discussion wakens thoughts, reflections and opinions, and might also continue to be silent even though he or she knows the answer to the question which the teacher has just asked. According to Bateson (1987), a quiet person, for example a student remaining silent, conveys a 'non-message', and this non-message is also a message. The question is though how these non-messages could be understood.

Every human being has, according to Polanyi (1969), silent and unexpressed dimensions within themselves. These silent dimensions acknowledge situations where we recognise that we know more than we can explain or express, which Polanyi terms as *tacit knowledge*. He claims that knowledge never could be totally expressed and explicit. Beyond our ordinary spoken or written words there is, according to Polanyi, a rich domain of the unspeakable that constantly beckons us. Expressed in other words, knowledge is not always accessible for our linguistic competence, which van Manen (1990) calls *epistemological silence*. A person is confronted with this kind of epistemological silence when he or she faces the unspeakable, which cannot be expressed in words. However, what seems to be unspeakable within the framework of one discourse might within another discourse, easily be expressed. One example is (social) sciences which may have difficulty in giving a satisfactory explanation of the experiences of love, while this can be illustrated very well through poetry, music, paintings or other art forms (van Manen, 1990).

Also Merleau-Ponty (1995) emphasises that our silent and implicit language can appear through visual presentations, such as different kinds of art forms. Furthermore, he stresses how thought, language, and relations are intertwined, and that human beings speak with both body and language: 'Each drawing each other with invisible threads... making the other speak, think, and become what he is but never would have been by himself' (p. 19). People affect and change each other through communication in intertwined relationships, and language cannot therefore be viewed as a representation, a second layer that translates an original layer. Rather, language can be described as a metamorphosis of the mute world, expressing more than it says (Carbone, 2000). According to Merleau-Ponty (1995, 1996), thought and language, but also the body, are intertwined, and according to the citation above, strongly connected to inter-subjectivity, in terms of relations and context as an expressive and relational field. In this relational field, different kinds of dialogue are of significance, and according to Buber (1993) genuine dialogue can be both spoken and mute, the latter referred to as *speaking silence*. Heidegger (1971) emphasises that a person may speak endlessly but say nothing, and that another person can say a great deal without speaking at all, remaining silent. In this way, silence tells us something – silence becomes a language when the spoken word is insufficient, when silence is preferred or enforced (Alerby, 2012a).

Silence and assessment

In society of today, it has become quite common, especially in English and French speaking countries that curricula are narrowed and test-focused, which in turn has had a negative effect on the development of student's knowledge (Harlen, 2007). In addition, even countries like Sweden, which has until recently had a strong orientation towards education as a social and democratic movement, have been affected by this rationalistic agenda. When the global educational discourse, which emphasises economic investment and profit, confronts the Swedish educational discourse, ambivalences and tensions are emerging (Tallberg Broman & Persson, 2010). In Sweden, the views on assessment have changed from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for*

learning, a shift from exclusively using summative assessment, to emphasising formative assessment as a way to enhance students' learning (Giota, 2006; Lindström & Lindberg, 2005). As well, there has been a shift of what to assess, where the student's understandings and competences such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and communication are emphasised more than before (Giota, 2006). Still, it seems like summative assessment is strongly emphasised in the global agenda of standardisation.

Knowledge that provides success in international tests is prioritised at the expense of values education and student-centred learning (Aspelin & Persson, 2011; Kroksmark, 2013). In addition, research shows that standardisation and high-stake testing affects students in terms of disengagement with schooling and escalating dropout rates (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Therefore, it is relevant to illuminate the relation between silence and assessment, i.e. the language of assessment in terms of what can possibly be expressed through the format of the assessment.

During, for example, an oral exam the teacher has prepared a number of questions, and the students are supposed to respond verbally with the 'right' answers. Probably most of the students in the class are committed to the task and discuss and respond to the exam questions. But what happens if a student sits quietly behind his or hers desk without saying a word? It is likely that many of these, so called silent students, have knowledge, opinions and experiences to add to the discussion and answers to give to the questions, but choose for some reason not to express these, and therefore remain silent in the eyes (or ears) of the other students and the teacher (Alerby, 2012a, b).

A similar situation can occur during a written exam. Some students might answer only a few of the questions in the test, and left other questions unanswered, while some students might hand in the whole test unanswered. A student doing a written exam can choose not to explicitly answer the questions, to be silent, but in some situations silence is imposed, as the student cannot find words to respond in writing – a kind of *written silence*.

Accordingly, we can consider whether unanswered questions in a written exam, or an absence of explicit response to oral questions, is an active and conscious choice, lack of knowledge, or a lack of the means to express the knowledge in written or oral form. However, these students convey, according to Bateson (1987), a non-message, or rather a *silent message*. The question is thus whether a silent message can be judged and rated.

If a student is quiet during an exam, be it a written or an oral exam, the student, including the exam itself, can be viewed as silent, and it is likely that the so called silent student will be viewed as being without knowledge, and will fail the exam. However, it might be that the student actually has the knowledge and skills that are in demand, but has not the ability or desire to express this in writing or orally.

Bollnow (1982) claims that a person can remain silent for many reasons; questions in a written exam can be left blank, or in an oral exam left unanswered, through lack of knowledge, but also through carelessness, haste, boredom, annoyance, fatigue or lack of ability to explicitly express the knowledge. As well, a person can be silent for fear of exposing him- or herself by speaking openly, by the other students' talkativeness, or by fear of giving an answer to an exam question at which the other students might laugh.

Not answering an exam question can also be due to social expectations, depending on the nature of the situation. A number of transient influences can also affect the answer, for example the students' feelings or mood at the time, news events (e.g. the outcome of soccer games), seasonal variations (e.g. the weather) or the specific succession of questions (Alerby & Kostenius, 2011). Nevertheless, the exact reason why a student remains silent is often hard to reveal, and instead of seeking for a cause of the potential silence of students, we want to shed light on the significance of silence in connection to assessment.

According to the above presented, it is likely that student's silence during an exam may also be due to the language of assessment, which often do not invite to diverse expressions. Why a student does not answer a written or oral exam is probable a combination of different reasons, but these non-messages, to use Bateson's terminology, can, as we argued above, be seen as silent messages. In addition, a rationalistic and standardised

education valuing mainly summative assessments runs the risk of producing a culture where only predetermined outcomes, and correct answers without further reflection or exploration of the question, counts, which in turn may as well result in silenced students.

Silence and listening

An alternative culture as the above described, is a culture where it is allowed and accepted to reflect and experiment with answers. To be able to answer something which perhaps was not really asked for in the question, may lead the thoughts to new dimensions not originally planned. It is thus a question of striving for openness and sensitivity towards others and towards that which is said, in words or in silence, which in turn demands true listening (Alerby, 2012a, b). Such an education that appreciates otherness may, therefore, be built upon openness towards what is not yet known and what is about to come into being. Accordingly, as Westman and Alerby (2012, p. 370) stress: 'Complexity, discontinuity and irregularity are, therefore, of great value in education, and are at least as important as simplicity, continuity and regularity'.

Merleau-Ponty points at the risk of imposing our own experiences and thoughts on other humans. Consequently, in Merleau-Ponty's account, recognising the otherness in the sameness of the other, the divergence (*écart*), opens the possibility for an encounter that: '... gives me access to thoughts that I did not know myself capable of, that I *was* not capable of' (Merleau-Ponty & Lefort, 1968, p.13, italics in original). In other words, the intertwining of one's self and the other in all our differences makes us discover not only new dimensions of the knowledge we negotiate, but also new aspects of ourselves and each other.

Given this, education built upon an ethos valuing different perspectives and otherness, demands listening. To really listen to another person, the listening person him- or herself has to be quiet and in that way, silence is essential when listening. When the conversation then moves forward, it is a giving and receiving of silence versus speech. In conversations with others there must be silent pauses allowed and pursued, in order for the other person to be able to enter into the conversation, or to respond to an oral exam question. If this time is not offered, or if the person concerned are not willing or not able to take the space of silence and fill it with own words, no conversation will occur. Silence also gives the listener the opportunity to consider and respond to what has just been said. If a person is actively listening to the speaker, it becomes easier for the other person to express their own thoughts, opinions and experiences, and a genuine dialogue can follow (Alerby, 2012a, b).

When it comes to the dialogue existing in educational settings the pace of the communication is of significance. One important dimension of the dialogue pace is how much time the teacher allows students to respond to issues and/or questions before the teacher responds him/herself. The time between the question and the students' response is called *wait-time* by Rowe (1974, 1986). The teacher who asks questions might only give a short time for silence before filling the silence with instructions, commands and more questions. In the wait-times there is always a presence of silence, and wait-time can be seen as a conscious strategy to use silence in teaching situations. The use of silence can also be seen in terms of a teaching style which may encourage students to be in silence and reflect before they continue in the action. A dimension to take into consideration is how teachers use wait-time in connection to how questions of an oral exam are asked, but also how quickly the students answer the questions asked.

A further aspect of this is that stillness and silence in many cases are more tactful ways to get others to tell their story and whatever the person in question wants to pass on, beyond the replies to explicit questions (van Manen, 1990). It is in these silent interspaces that deep thought and reflection can arise. Let us here consider the situation in schools today, with a special focus on the exam situations. Are students given the opportunity for reflection by being allowed to be in the silent interspaces that can occur while two or more people are conversing? Or are these interspaces quickly filled with more words during an oral exam? It is where a conversation gradually fades away, when more and more interspaces occur, and it finally falls back into silence that the conversation, according to Bollnow, has been completed. A sign of a good conversation is that it finally returns to silence: '... and when the conversation finally does sink into silence, it is no empty silence, but fulfilled silence' (Bollnow, 1982, p. 46).

Accordingly, to open up for knowledge beyond predetermined outcomes, as well as dialogue and critical thinking, silence and diverse forms of expressions need to be allowed.

Some concluding remarks

van Manen (1990) argues that nothing is as silent as the totally self-evident, that which we take for granted. To elaborate on this reasoning is thus a matter of questioning that which is taken for granted. This approach coincides with how Merleau-Ponty demands us to interrogate our presumptions in a critical self-reflection that he terms hyper-reflection (Merleau-Ponty & Lefort, 1968). In this case, to examine, test and assess students is a common and often unquestioned activity in education. Within this paper we are not questioning that students are assessed and graded in school. Rather we want to shed light on that which appears to happen when it comes to the relation between silence, education and assessment.

As we stressed in the beginning of this paper, humans' ability to orally and in writing express themselves explicitly has become of great importance in society of today. These skills are of significance in school as well, and students at all ages are expected to handle this. The ability to orally and in writing express oneself is also essential in most exams, and as a fundamental of all forms of assessment and rating. In connection to this, it is of importance that we reflect on the prevailing language and modes of expression that are allowed and used in schools. As mentioned above, Merleau-Ponty (1995) claims that not everything can be communicated verbally. A silent and implicit language can be made visible through different bodily or visual expressions, for example through gestures, pauses, art, paintings, music, dance, and drama.

Since curricula govern activities in educational settings, and the trend is towards increasing assessment, there is a risk that students' own thoughts, reflections and opinions are underestimated or ignored in favour of lecturing and assessing predetermined outcomes. We therefore claim that since exams are mainly based on words, and often performed outside a relational field, the silent dimensions of students' knowledge and achievement may be neglected. Exams, written or orally, thus run the risk of limiting fair assessment. To stop and think about silence can draw attention to the importance of listening to the silent and implicit language of students in different teaching situations, especially when it comes to assessment. In addition, a reconsideration of the relation between silence, education and assessment may enhance the design of exams, opening the way for diverse perspectives and reflections.

To give time and space to reflect on silent processes in education is important, not only to give the student time and space to reflect, but also for the teacher to observe and learn from what happens in the silence (Alerby & Elidottir, 2003). This is especially true when it comes to tests and examinations. A question to explore is therefore how students are rated and judged in exams – written as well as oral exams. If students are graded in accordance with their oral performance or explicit written words, the silent students will, as we emphasised earlier, probably fail. But if this is the case, what has actually been assessed?

Within the framework of this paper, our intention has been to illuminate and discuss the relation between silence, education and assessment, rather than to ascertain the cause of students' potential silence. The issue of assessment in relation to silence is in fact about what is actually counted as knowledge, and if students' expressions – silent or loud – count within education in general, and in assessment in specific. This in turn affects *how* we assess, and *what* is measured on tests and exams. In an era of global trends of standardised assessment we find it especially important to reflect upon the nuances of student knowledge that is not visible in exams. We therefore argue for an attempt to bring out students' silent and implicit language by appreciating otherness, what is not yet known, and letting students use different kinds of expressions – all to promote learning, and as a consequence create as fair assessment as possible for all students, talkative as well as silent.

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School Evaluation or Disciplinary Subjection? A consideration of the ‘complementary’ evaluation of New Zealand’s Education Review Office

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Abstract

Educational evaluation in New Zealand schools harmonises with the reformist agenda of public choice theory. Variously accused of engaging in politics of blame or teacher bashing, ERO has attempted to present itself as supporting schools in a cycle of ‘complementary’ review, which synthesises external accountability with internal learning from review. This paper will examine the underpinning epistemology of the Education Review Office approach to review and reflect on its particular research method, arguing that it is motivated by a commitment to ‘evidence-led’ teaching, a problematic concept. Questions are raised regarding the ‘complementary’ nature of the review process to establish whether there is commitment to democratic participation by schools in the review process, as implied in the concept of complementarity. With reference to Foucauldian concepts, it will be argued that the so-called ‘complementary’ dimension of the Education Review Office process is characterised by the administration of technologies of self-discipline and self-punishment, and that ‘learning’ in this context is deeply punitive in nature.

Keywords: evaluation; evidence-led teaching; complementary review; accountability

Introduction

The Education Review Office (ERO) was established by the Education Act of 1989, one development amongst many in the post-1984 establishment of the neoliberal state in New Zealand. This reform period in New Zealand witnessed the marketisation of schools, emphasising individual choice over the community (Codd, 2005; Gordon, 1997; McKenzie, 1997; Olssen & Morris Matthews, 1997; Snook, 2003). An important rationale for the existence of ERO is neoliberal consumer choice, which demands the transparent provision of information about schools to enable parents to make well-informed choices. It pays to understand too that the reformist climate in which ERO was born has its source in global developments, which includes the role of global governance (such as UNESCO, World Bank and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) in proposing particular directions for education reform (Dale, 1999; Dale & Robertson, 2002). One such suggestion is the role of data in driving practice, latterly toward the notion of ‘value-added’ (personal excellence for the individual student, rather than competitive ranking across students) (Martinic, 2012).

ERO is a government department empowered to visit schools and early childhood centres to conduct reviews (for the purposes of this article, the focus will be on state schools only). It reports back to the board of trustees and community of the school as well as to the Minister with responsibility for ERO (Education Review Office, n.d. c). ERO has sweeping ‘powers of entry and inspection’ under Section 28, Part 327 of the Education Act (1989) (New Zealand Government, 2009). ERO reports are public record and available to the public, either in hard copy from ERO itself (or the relevant school) or on the ERO website (www.ero.govt.nz). These factors have contributed to the sense that ERO ‘hunts down’ failing or struggling schools (Thrupp, 1997), participates in the ‘politics of blame’ (1998) and engages in ‘teacher bashing’ (Benade, 2009). Thrupp has argued that ERO has latched onto the school improvement and teacher effectiveness literature (2008) to justify its particular accountability regime over schools and teachers.

In recent times, ERO has shifted its position by engaging in more streamlined and flexible evaluation reviews. Simultaneously, schools are now invited to play a greater role in their own internal evaluation, to complement the external evaluation conducted by ERO. In this article, I will set out to highlight the relationship between evaluation and research, showing that despite similarities, evaluation serves a quite different purpose. However, given the similarity, it is instructive to consider whether ERO demonstrates an evident theoretical approach in its documentation, and what its dominant methodological practice consists in (setting aside for now the problem of the link between methodology and method). I will suggest, by way of critique, the concept of evaluation underpinning the work of ERO continues to be based on low trust accountability consistent with notions related to neoliberalism. Specifically, ERO seeks to coordinate its evaluation process with an epistemology based on the discourse of school effectiveness. The notion of complementary review, despite its attempt to engage schools in democratic dialogue and participation, in reality disguises structures that act as technologies by which boards exercise both self-discipline and self-punishment in advance of, during, and after, ERO review visits.

Evaluation

‘The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services’ (Education Review Office, n.d. a, ‘About Us’). The work that ERO therefore conducts is, in essence, evaluation, which by definition, entails some form of measurement or judgement against a set of prescribed descriptors or performance criteria (more of which shortly). The field of evaluation is one that bears resemblance to many aspects of the work conducted by researchers in social fields or disciplines, such as education or sociology (Scriven, 1996), yet it seems those engaged professionally in evaluation have on-going debates in regard to the relationship between theory and method (Kushner, 2002; 2005; Scriven, 1996), such as finding the balance (Scriven, 1996) or confusing methods (tools of analysis) with methodology (‘the logic of enquiry rather than its technology’ (Kushner, 2002, p. 252). Scriven, in contributing to this debate almost two decades ago (by which time ERO was well established) tellingly argued across these debates: ‘The time has come to realize that we now have a well-established discipline of evaluation, just as we do of measurement or of statistics or experimental design’ (1996, p. 401). Scriven went on to suggest that what a discipline required included ‘a basic conceptual framework—a low-level theory...’, which he believed evaluation did in fact have, along with ‘four basic predicates: grading, ranking, scoring and apportioning’ (p. 401).

Despite Scriven’s exhortations, Kushner’s subsequent work indicates that the ‘paradigm wars’ are a reality for evaluation, and indeed argues against a postmodern desire to annihilate paradigmatic distinctions (2002). Such efforts fail to recognise paradigm wars as focussing on methods rather than values—for Kushner, what is critical for evaluators is that their work be based on well-understood values (ie methodology, in his terms), not that they prioritise the question of methods of evaluation (2002). It is possible, for some, however, to discern movements in both methodology and methods consistent with waves of education reform, shifting from a positivist paradigm to an interpretive perspective; from a behaviorist theory of learning to a constructivist one; from emphasising external incomes and factors to the concern for school procedures and pedagogical practices inside the classroom (Martinic, 2012). These developments may signal changes in values too, from a punitive and authoritarian value base to values that resonate with concepts of social justice and democratic participation, values that Kushner argues as a sound basis for evaluation (2002; 2005). The preceding discussion thus suggests a valid question to be whether ERO has a values base, and what its particular methodological (if not theoretical) approach may be.

Values and Theory in ERO

The most direct statement of values in the practices of ERO is contained in its *whakataukī* (proverb, or motto), namely: *Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa: The child - the heart of the matter* (n.d. a). Its stated aim is to improve the achievement of all students, by evaluating the quality of schooling (and early childhood services) in New Zealand (ERO, 2011b). It is committed to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi (the founding document of the New Zealand nation, which outlines the agreement between the Crown and Māori) in its work. Its handbook,

'Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews', specifically refers to the prioritisation of the interests of Māori and Pacific Island students in its reviews. This position is reinforced by the intention of ERO to ensure that schools are responding to student diversity, and raising the achievement of all students (2011b, pp. 4–5). Thus, ERO is not an agency that is established to deliver dispassionate or objective advice or comment on the delivery of programmes, but clearly to operate within a strictly limited remit as set out in legislation, and demanded by the government of the day. Nevertheless, ERO officers would see themselves as performing a task of significant democratic import (providing clear and current information to families seeking knowledge of their local or like schools of choice) in a manner that supports a social justice imperative (the prioritisation of Māori and Pacific Island student attainment).

Scriven (1996) laid claim to a conceptual framework as adequate evidence that an evaluation service had a theory of practice. In the case of ERO, this framework is referred to as the 'six dimensions of good practice' (2011b, p. 6), and is underpinned by its own accumulated experience of 'effective schooling', meta-analyses of effective pedagogical and leadership practice, and 'current evaluation theory' (p. 6). Evidently, therefore, its epistemological frame of reference is firmly situated in the discourse of school effectiveness, as further evidenced by the details of the dimensions of good practice: Student learning: engagement, progress and achievement; effective teaching; leading and managing the school; governing the school; safe and inclusive school culture; engaging parents, whānau and communities (p. 6). In its graphic depicting this conceptual framework, student learning is the large central core, around which the other five conceptual elements are gathered (p. 7).

The evaluation theory that has guided the work of ERO in the preceding two or three years is 'complementary review'. It is the practical application of this theoretical approach that ERO appears to have softened its previously strict approach to accountability. From the perspective of ERO, the school has a legitimate and valued role to play in the school review process, using the tool of self-review, which has been part of school practice for many years prior to the uptake by ERO of complementary review. Thus the results of a school's own internal review processes are intended to complement (or be complemented by) the outcomes of the external accountability review process conducted by ERO (p. 7). What is the value or purpose of complementarity? For Feinstein (2012), it is the most desirable state in which evaluation can find itself, as it is in this moment that lessons can be learned. This learning is only made possible when accountability evaluation provides an incentive by treating errors in practice as lessons to be learned (rather than as pretexts for punishment, presumably). In the context of complementary review, sound evaluation strategies seek to assign attribution, that is, they are strategies motivated to locate the causes of the successful achievement of outcomes. Feinstein argues that these strategies work best when guided by the criteria of relevance (ensuring a coherent link between action and intended outcomes), effectiveness (assessing the extent to which outcomes are achieved), and efficiency (assessing the cost of attaining the outcomes) (2012, pp. 106-108).

This shift towards complementarity may be seen as a counter to the heavy-handedness of the accountability regime associated with Public Choice Theory (PCT), itself a manifestation or earlier neoliberal policymaking. In this development, the state created quasi-market conditions to influence public-sector transactions. This was achieved in part by uncoupling services from their parent organisations, and in some cases (such as ERO), agents separated from the parent organisation (in this case the Ministry of Education) were contracted to apply rigorous accountability from policy-making to implementation within the parent organisation or amongst its other agencies (in this case, schools) (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill 2004; Olssen & Peters 2005; Peters 1999). Lehtonen (2005) has suggested that the certainties imposed by accountability regimes have been corrected, to some extent, by the uncertainties, open-endedness and plurality that he links to sustainability discourses (incidentally a feature too of ERO thinking, especially in relation to the longevity of good practice in schools). This correction has led to a call for revised ways of evaluating policies, for instance, in ways that provide a credible opportunity for those being evaluated to have a voice and to learn by the process. Nevertheless, this position is contested, as learning may be seen to trump accountability, the very purpose of evaluation (2005). Leaving aside for now questions of critique, which will be considered later, I wish to turn now to consider matters concerning the methods by which ERO conducts its complementary reviews.

The Education Review Office Method

What follows attempts to describe, without critical comment, highlighted aspects of the way in which ERO reviews schools, with some reference to the way it structures its reports, the role of qualitative and quantitative methods in ERO reviews, ending with the seemingly admirable principles and guidelines by which its reviews are designed.

The approach taken by Education Review Office generally follows a set of routines (ERO, 2011a, p. 8) that vary little—a school is alerted well in advance by letter that it is to be reviewed at some point over the next two school terms; the principal and key board of trustees members are invited to a general information session; the school is required to gather its samples of the data and information as evidence it is meeting its legislative requirements, including the crucial *Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*; the school is alerted nearer the time of the actual date of review; some two to three days may be set aside for the review (school size dependent); usually two or three officers will be assigned; a pre–review meeting between the lead reviewer and the board and key staff occurs, when the expectations of the reviewers is outlined and the review is scoped and designed around the following major question: ‘How effectively does this school’s curriculum promote student learning – engagement, progress and achievement?’ (ERO, 2011a, p. 4). In addition, data will be gathered in relation to specified topics of national importance, which rotate during each year. These ‘National Evaluation Topics’ (n.d. b) become the source of meta–analysis national reports published by Education Review Office, based on a sample of schools visited in a given year. During the school visit, officers interview the board and key staff, meet the whole staff (usually without the school leaders being present), interview community members, including a selected group of students, attend meetings as observers, observe lessons, and review large amounts of collected documentary evidence. Over these days, the officers will monitor findings and issues as they emerge, and discuss with one another this emergent meaning, sometimes seeking further clarification from school staff. By the end of the review period, this emergent understanding becomes a shared understanding with the school, and a draft report is compiled in answer to the major evaluation question. ‘Shared understanding’ in this context means that the key members of the school will ‘work constructively with the review teams to identify the implications for action, areas for development and review and to develop any recommendations or actions for compliance based on Education Review Office’s findings’ (p. 10).

The findings are reported to the school in a short (about 8 page) qualitative report that is structured under the headings of context, learning, curriculum, and sustainable performance (see <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports> for a sample of current reports). The report is presented to the school board in ‘unconfirmed’ form, and, after a period of time in which the board can make further comment (sometimes leading to textual changes to the report), it is confirmed, and made available on the ERO website. These reports are expressed in generally value–neutral terms and use factual language. Terms of approbation are controlled, and may be expressed using the adjectival forms ‘very well’, ‘well’, ‘good’ and ‘committed’, while adverbial forms commonly used include ‘positively’, ‘actively’, ‘effectively’ and ‘productively’. In regard to recommendations for improvement, common terms include, ‘could now’, ‘evaluate’, ‘should continue to’, ‘more’, ‘further’, ‘develop more’, ‘access (advice)’ and ‘include’.

Despite its data gathering including quantitative school reports, (usually analyses of student achievement data), the ERO reports to schools do not contain any quantitative analysis. In part, this may be understood in relation to the intended audience of these reports, which is not only the school staff, but also its board, made up usually of parents, and the wider community of families, as well as prospective families searching for a suitable school. In contrast, its national reports are substantial documents (see, as an example, 2012), and may include reference to sampling size and method, methodology and research evidence. As these reports are meta–analyses of a significant sample of schools reviewed in a given period, ERO makes statistical comparisons of general findings across the sample. The body of a typical report will include qualitative findings sourced from meetings and interviews in exemplar schools, and will engage in interpretive discussion, leading to recommendations for action to the education sector (including government). These national reports serve the significant function of delimiting ‘best practice’ in the specific areas of national interest.

The design and conduct of school reviews, apart from being underpinned by the 'six dimensions of good practice' conceptual framework, is governed by a set of principles and guidelines (2011 a, p. 7). These appear to support admirable principles of social justice (a focus on Māori and Pacific Island achievement), critically reflective practice embodied in forms of practitioner action research, and democratic qualities such as transparency, collaboration and participation. Finally, they reflect a commitment by ERO to have realistic expectations of school's, and to support them to use the evaluation process as a transformative opportunity. Despite this hopeful note, I wish to suggest, however, that there remain areas in ERO's approach requiring critical comment.

Critique

The following critique begins from the premise that the work of ERO remains fundamentally based on a low-trust accountability model that seriously undermines its newly-found democratic intent. Its epistemology is one founded on the discourse of school effectiveness and improvement, which has implications for the assumptions and methods guiding its work. Together, these flaws reflect complementarity for what it is—an exercise in subjectification to a regime of self-discipline and self-punishment.

Evaluation is not neutral (Kushner, 2002). This is the case, in part, because it implies an evident power differential (the evaluator has power over the one being evaluated). For some, evaluation is threatening (Feinstein, 2012; Thrupp, 1998). Thrupp's (1997) position was that ERO 'hunts down' failing or struggling schools, and suggested that it participates in the 'politics of blame' (1998). It may be suggested that Thrupp's critiques of Education Review Office are dated, and given what has been described above, ERO has come some way towards creating an experience for schools that is better balanced and more rewarding. Nonetheless, Thrupp concluded more recently (2008) that ERO engages in the 'politics of blame', which supports neoliberal marketisation discourse that regards 'failing' schools as the authors of their own misery rather than considering the negative effects of ideologically driven policy on schools and teachers.

While ERO's place and role in society owes much to the neoliberal, market-oriented reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s, there is a shift, much as suggested by Martinic (2012), in evaluation strategies and purposes aligned to increasing sophistication in the policies of neoliberal governments. Whereas a key role for ERO may have been (and still continues to be) providing transparent information to support parental choice in the education quasi-market, the current strategic focus on the enhancement of scholastic achievement by underperforming groups in society is echoed by ERO, which sees the purpose of its reviews being 'to contribute to improved student achievement... and [to] give schools external evaluative information to support improvement' (2011a, p. 1).

As the task of evaluators contracted to government is to evaluate the implementation of its policies, such evaluation must thus be on the government's terms, which not only precludes dissent (Kushner, 2002) but also reinforces the power differential already referred to, regardless of the discourses evaluators, such as ERO, engage in. The accountability demands of stakeholders such as government, means that evaluators find themselves as protectors of the status quo (Stake, 2001). It is in attempting to meet the remit of its employer (the state) that ERO engages in methods that overshadow any desirable democratic intent. These methods include the stipulated accounting to ERO by school boards providing assurance of their compliance with various acts of legislation and policy imperatives, requiring the completion of a 20 page checklist that is supported by a 50 page guide (2013). The relevant *Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist* reminds schools that '[t]he more assurance a board can provide to ERO that it is meeting its legal requirements and taking appropriate action to remedy areas of non-compliance, the greater the emphasis can be on other areas of review' (2013, Instruction Page). Further, the board is encouraged 'to note areas where you are aware that you are not meeting legal requirements and to advise any action you are taking' (p. 2). The board chairperson and principal sign a certificate of compliance, attesting to the board's legal compliance with the relevant legislation, and necessary remedial action. There is little (apart from tragedies) in the life of New Zealand schools that focuses the mind like the knowledge of an impending ERO visit.

Wrigley suggested that the terms *effectiveness* and *improvement* are so ideologically loaded that disagreement is a 'sheer impossibility... you could no more wish to be 'ineffective' or reject the call to 'improve' a school, than you could disagree with personal hygiene or kindness to animals' (2004, p. 36). While school effectiveness (SE) is a quantitative attempt to measure a school's performance against certain criteria, school improvement (SI) is a qualitative study of the development of leadership, management, school culture and *teaching* to establish how these contribute to student attainment (2004). ERO is committed to this discourse by its support of continuous improvement and the priority it gives to validating the effectiveness of school curriculum programmes (see, for example, 2011a, p. 17). Schooling is rendered as a technical-rationalist 'enterprise' by this approach, thus removing any moral aspects from debates about schooling. However, as education is a moral enterprise, educators ought to raise questions about educational desirability rather than effectiveness (Biesta, 2007).

Elliott (2009, p. 175) drew attention to the decontextualised character of the SE/SI by pointing out that teacher effectiveness research abstracts co-relational variables from particular contexts, which provides teachers no certainty within their unique contexts, a point also made by Biesta (2007). Allied to SE/SI discourse is the mantra of 'evidence-led teaching' or 'data-led practice', to which ERO is also committed. Examples include the questions asked in relation to its evaluation indicators of 'effective teaching' (2011b, p. 20) and 'leading and managing the school' (p. 27). Biesta (2007) notes this focus on evidence has come into fields like education from the medical sciences, but contests the validity of that move. One of his reasons (apart from the lack of likeness between patients and students), is that research (read evaluation, in this context) and the inquiries of others can only tell us what worked in other situations, but those findings cannot be a rule to prescribe all future transactions. Biesta would therefore challenge the value of the ERO national reports, and would suggest that school review reports are of historical value only. Furthermore, however, he argued that the notion of 'evidence-led' education and effectiveness has a narrowing effect, with a concentration on the determination of causality. The question of effectiveness is an instrumental question, based on the idea that a professional act in every situation can bring about an effect (2007). Indeed, to see teachers' actions as the cause of learning is deeply behaviouristic, and implies faith in a mechanistic input-output model. For Martinic, the underlying theory of action of such discourses is that information can produce changes in practices. (2012).

To ensure this mechanistic narrowness of purpose, and presumably to assure replication of review processes, ERO functions with a set of clearly articulated evaluation indicators (based on its 'six dimensions of good practice') that are further sub-divided into themes, each one providing review officers with a number of question prompts, exemplar indicators, and suggestions for relevant evidence (2011 b, pp. 15–50). The danger inherent in evaluation indicators is that they obscure what is significant and interesting in a case (Stake, 2001), while Kushner, who sees evaluation ideally serving to highlight the best in the public service, has suggested: 'By asking evaluation to focus so relentlessly on outcomes we have too few complex accounts of the quality of public works' (2011, p. 312). Indicators predetermine ends in deterministic language, something Biesta abhors—ends and problems should only be expressed as hypotheticals (2007).

Finally, it must be asked if the concept of complementarity is capable of generating democratic dialogue and process between a school community and ERO? Kushner, who endeavours to promote a positive view of evaluation as a discipline and profession, indicated that evaluation has an obligation to neutralise power differences in the case being studied (2002). Furthermore, in relation to review design, he has argued against strong designs, favouring instead emergent designs, which are flexible and allow meaning to emerge (2005). While this appears to be partly consistent with ERO practice, much of its design looks rather like Kushner's strong (anti-democratic) design, which prepares judgment criteria in advance, decides on samples beforehand, and seeks to ensure coherence beforehand. 'The difference [between the two design types] is profound, as [emergent design] requires the evaluator to share (if not entirely cede) intellectual control over an evaluation with his or her respondents' (p. 580).

Insights offered by Foucault provide additional lines of critique and understanding of complementarity. The sharing of control hinted at by Kushner is not motivated by ERO's largesse; the act of complementarity is made possible because the unique role ERO has to play in New Zealand society empowers it within the range of services it reviews. Correspondingly, however, as power is only possible over a subject who has freedom, or at

least a range of choices (Foucault, 1994b), complementarity is a game that requires two to play, and by participating, boards and schools have the option to engage in some transformative acts. While Foucault's reasoning that there exists an implicit agreement on what constitutes right behaviour in these contexts (Barker, 1998) may seem to imply acquiescence by those without power, in fact, argued Heller (1996), resistance is equally possible. Complementarity at least opens up some creative possibilities for more balanced engagement between ERO and the school and its board.

More problematically is the subjectification of the board and school to a regime of self-discipline and self-punishment provoked by the 'internal' aspect of complementarity. Feinstein (2012) has suggested that outcome indicators permit the notion of complementary learning as it is possible to see what one has achieved—or failed to achieve—by evaluating one's progress against the indicators. Foucault's historical analysis suggested to him that care of the self was a primary objective in Antiquity, with emphasis being placed on spending time with oneself to better understand oneself (1994 a). This, it may be implied, indicates a form of self-management (so that one does not have to be managed by others) and is what a school and its board is required to exercise, to successfully learn by its errors (and achievements). In monastic Christianity, Foucault understood obedience and contemplation to be important principles of self-management. The obedience of the monk to his master was complete and lifelong, demanding complete self-sacrifice of the individual to the master. This obedience and self-sacrifice is a technology of the self—indeed, a technology of self-examination. (1994a). Self-review in New Zealand schools, I argue, are precisely such a technology. Furthermore, the regime of self-review ensures, at no cost to the state (or ERO), on-going self-surveillance and self-discipline by the school.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the New Zealand Education Review Office, established under the auspices of a neoliberal regime, despite shedding some of the conceptual and procedural baggage that implies, remains committed to working with a low trust model. This article has attempted to locate the work of ERO in the framework of evaluation theory, and considered the theoretical assumptions of ERO itself. While ERO is motivated by a social justice imperative, and has begun to engage with schools on the basis of complementarity, its methodology reflects a commitment to the discourses of school effectiveness and improvement, an approach, it was argued, that ignores the possibility of education as a moral endeavour. In an extended critique, these points were considered in greater detail, and with reference to some Foucauldian ideas, the concept of complementarity was shown to have both the potential for the creative and transformative use of power by boards, yet to disguise a technology of incessant self-examination. That tension appears to now be a reality that boards and schools cannot escape.

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Permanently Performing Learning Subjects: The assessment of 'learning dispositions' in early education

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Abstract

Questions of measurement permeate all sectors of education. The limiting effects of assessment regimes on curriculum content, student engagement and forms of success have been widely noted, including in relation to early childhood education. 'Developmental' observations and assessments of young children have been extensively criticised as limiting, normalising and pathologising. A turn toward context, participation and voice in early education has been posed as 'a way out' of this problematic. Aotearoa New Zealand's socioculturally framed narrative assessment approach exemplifies such a turn. 'Learning story' assessments work to foreground, and extend, children's 'learning dispositions'. Overwhelmingly, this assessment approach is characterised as empowering, and enabling the development of diverse, 'competent, confident' child learners. In this paper, I draw from a recently conducted Foucauldian analysis of early childhood education assessment discourse-practice in New Zealand. Approaching ethics as self-constitutive practices, I consider possible ethical and governmental effects of this assessment and pedagogical approach. I argue that the 'telos' of this approach appears to be the production of permanently-performing learning subjects. Working with an understanding of ontology as technical, this 'troubling' analysis does not, however, involve a call for the removal of regulation, or futures-thinking as a source of direction for conduct in early education per se. By considering the normative conceptions, and technical inscriptions, that are at work in the learning stories approach, my argument troubles its status as empowering practice, and provokes instead, an analysis of issues of measurement and standardisation as they relate to practices of self-government and constitution.

Keywords: Foucault, early childhood, assessment, measurement

Introduction

Questions of assessment, measurement, and testing permeate all sectors of education, and they are interconnected with questions of curriculum and pedagogy. In the case of early childhood education (ECE), considerations about the knowledge, outcomes and effects of curriculum and assessment approaches often reflect wider debates within sociology and philosophy of education. A critical sociology of the curriculum, and critical theory more generally, has been particularly influential in framing the now extensive criticisms of child development knowledge as the dominant, foundational and naturalised basis for thinking and practice in ECE.

Kessler and Swadener, for instance, concluding the influential 1992 collection *Reconceptualising the early childhood curriculum: Beginning the dialogue*, argued that developmentally appropriate practice and its research base was founded in 'eurocentric, often middle-class, notions of optimal early childhood experiences' (1992, p. 291). They questioned the contribution that a developmentally appropriate curriculum was making to social justice, and urged early childhood scholars, researchers, and teachers to consider 'whose voices are being represented by what is taught and experienced, and whose interests are being served?' (p. 290). Towards the end of the 1990s, and also addressing themes of power and privilege, eminent early childhood reconceptualist Gaile Sloan Cannella (1999), elaborated these criticisms, contending that the child centred, free play, developmental curriculum and the practices of measuring developmental stages via child observation, objectified and subjugated children. Drawing on aspects of a poststructural engagement with 'the norm' and its exclusionary

effects, Cannella argued that continued adherence to the developmental curriculum resulted in the pathologisation of some children and their families. She suggested that it sanctioned interventions into the lives of both children who did not meet developmental milestones and families whose childrearing practices deviated from universal norms. Cannella called for a rethink of ECE as a practice for social justice and, as a central component of this aspiration, a more active vision and recognition of children and their capabilities.

In the wake of what is now a sustained and widespread problematisation of the developmental curriculum, and its attendant practices of observation and measurement (e.g., Burman, 1994; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Walkerdine, 1984), there has been a notable turn, in a range of jurisdictions, toward social and cultural contexts, participation and voice as guiding concepts in ECE thinking and practice (e.g., Anning, Cullen, & Fler, 2009; Moss, Clark, & Kjørholt, 2005). *Te Whāriki*, the New Zealand early childhood education curriculum framework published in 1996 (Ministry of Education), and augmented by a narrative, learning disposition focused assessment framework in the early 2000s (Ministry of Education, 2004), instances such a turn. In its shift away from universalistic, developmental knowledge as the touchstone of curriculum and pedagogy, and in the emphasis on working with children as diverse, active, capable and competent learners, the curriculum and assessment approach has been widely characterised as an empowering pedagogy for diversity and social justice (Lee, Carr, Soutar, & Mitchell, 2013).

In this paper, I draw on a broader Foucauldian analysis of contemporary early childhood education assessment in New Zealand (Buchanan, 2011). Key findings of the study suggest the need to interrogate the status of the approach, and the forms of diversity and social justice that it may support. The following discussion highlights some of the normative regulatory effects, at the level of child subjectivities and self constitution, that contemporary assessment may bring into play. Before discussing the study, I introduce salient features of *Te Whāriki* and its attendant dispositional assessment approach, noting also the tenor of the surrounding scholarly commentary.

Contemporary Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand

Te Whāriki is underpinned by four key principles: *empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships*. These are widely considered to capture the bicultural curriculum's fundamental educational values, pedagogical principles, and, as well, the sociocultural view that the contexts for, and outcomes of, learning and development are variable. Five indicative, rather than prescriptive, strands of learning and development outcomes are articulated: *wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration*. *Te Whāriki*, which translates from te reo Māori (the Māori language) as 'a woven mat', reflects the understanding that the curriculum principles and strands will be locally interpreted in each ECE centre (Lee et al., 2013).

Curriculum is broadly defined in *Te Whāriki* as 'the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster learning and development' (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 10). Assessment is also defined broadly, and considered at its fullest to encapsulate all of the spontaneous, moment to moment ways that adults *notice, recognise and respond* to children's learning. Assessment is therefore core to day to day curriculum enactment and documented assessments are considered to be the 'tip of the iceberg' of this wider, ongoing assessment (Ministry of Education, 2004).

The narrative approach to documented assessment, often termed *learning stories* (Carr, 2001), was developed to support the interpretive enactment of individualised curriculum, and the achievement of individualised learning outcomes and progress. Children's learning dispositions are the key learning outcomes of interest (Carr, 1998). They have been defined in a range of ways in relation to learning stories, including as: 'situated learning strategies plus motivation—participation repertoires from which a learner recognises, selects, edits, responds to, resists, searches for and constructs learning opportunities' and, as 'being ready, willing and able to participate in various ways' (Carr, 2001, p. 21). Knowledge and skills continue to be important outcomes in this assessment scheme, but they are conceptualised as being bundled together in children's *working theories* and, importantly, understood to be ignited and strengthened in the context of children's developing learning dispositions, curiosities, and passions. Five core learning dispositions are identified in relation to the strands of

Te Whāriki: courage, trust, perseverance, confidence, and responsibility. As a basis for assessment, observable behaviours for each disposition have been broadly described as follows: *taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty, expressing ideas, and taking responsibility* (Carr, 1998).

Much of the influential New Zealand produced commentary about narrative assessment, and the *Te Whāriki* approach more broadly, draws implicitly on critical progressive sociological perspectives (Popkewitz, 1999) in the evaluation of these ‘post developmental’ approaches (e.g., Te One, 2003, Lee et al., 2013; see Blaiklock, 2008; Duhn, 2006, for notable exceptions). For example, commentary has highlighted how a widened, sociocultural conception of learning and development can value and foster diverse cultural capitals and funds of knowledge. This in turn, is seen to be supportive of wider aspirations of education for social justice and equity (Lee et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008). Drawing particularly on what has been termed the ‘new sociology of childhood’ (James & Prout, 1990), and the centrality of conceptual binaries such as structure/agency, control/freedom (Prout, 2005), commentators also cite the empowerment of the child in the *Te Whāriki* curriculum and assessment approach (Smith, 2007). In such commentary, the child’s *enabled* state is often contrasted with what is characterised as the passive and objectified state of the child on the development grid (Buchanan, 2011).

A Foucauldian Analysis of Early Childhood Assessment: Rationale, Approach and Key Concepts

In the context of the largely celebratory tone of the evaluations of the new, socioculturally informed, narrative assessment approaches, I took up a Foucauldian lens in order to gain an alternative critical perspective and understandings about ECE assessment in New Zealand. An initial provocation for the study was the discomfort and uneasiness with enacting curriculum through an *assessment conscious* lens, which I began to experience as an early childhood teacher in New Zealand in the late 2000s. As I will elaborate below, some of the difficulties seemed to derive from the reductive effects of understanding children and all of their actions in terms of *learning*. A Foucauldian analysis offered an alternative viewpoint, and prompted questions about power and knowledge, and their constitutive effects that were muted by the concern, informed by critical sociology, with representing diverse knowledge and with *releasing* the child.

The study adopted what is described by some, with trepidation, as a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis approach (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Graham, 2006; Willig, 2008). There were two types of documentary materials for the study. First was New Zealand produced scholarly (Carr, Jones & Lee, 2005; Hatherly & Sands, 2002; Hatherly & Richardson, 2007) and practitioner (Carr, Hatherly Lee & Ramsey, 2003; Turnock, 2009) commentary and research about narrative ECE assessment. Secondly, the research drew on a series of assessment examples drawn from scholarly and practitioner texts, and also the booklet *Children contributing to their own assessment*, which the Ministry of Education (2004, Book 4, p. 2) describes as particularly illustrating ‘how a number of centres in Aotearoa New Zealand are now finding ways to include children’s voices in assessment’. The booklet was part of a wider assessment exemplar series designed to assist early childhood centres to enact *Te Whāriki* informed assessments (Ministry of Education, 2004, 2007, 2009). The publications were distributed nationally to all ECE services, and were part of a nation wide government funded professional development programme.

There were two phases of analysis. First, I analysed the construction of ECE assessment in New Zealand. I worked to identify the main knowledges and discourses that *made up* assessment, focusing particularly on noting various ‘truth objects’ (Graham, 2006, p. 7), such as the child and learning, which were being brought *into the true* by the discourse. Second, I worked to identify some of the key effects of assessment, paying particular attention to the establishment of the child as a subject of empowerment/liberation within the dispositional assessment regime. The concept of discourse was approached broadly, as systems that are made up of various forms of knowledge, practices, and truths. These systems are understood to have regulatory effects in terms of structuring (but not determining) the possibilities about what can be perceived, experienced, said and done (Fendler, 2010; Foucault, 1980; Mills, 2003).

A number of other Foucauldian concepts were important in the analysis. An understanding of power, as ‘an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future’(Foucault,

1982, p. 220), as productive, manifest in practice, and effective within domains of ‘free action’ was central to the study (Foucault, 1997c). An understanding of techniques of power—practices that ‘determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends’ (Foucault, 1997b, p. 225)—and techniques of the self—‘the procedures...[that are] ...suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self-mastery or self-knowledge’ (Foucault, 1997a, p. 87)—were also important. In particular, the understanding that techniques of power and the self are in ‘constant interaction’ (Foucault, 1997b, p. 225) helped to minimise binartistic evaluations of assessment—does it objectify the child? Who has the power? Should this assessment form be endorsed? Instead, I approached assessment as a *technology of government*, made up of productive sets of practices and ideas, which at once presume and promote particular natures, forms of freedom, and ontologies of the child.

The idea of government as practical activities that direct, guide and shape the conduct of selves and others (Rose, 1999), and as activities that are often informed by circulating mentalities about what constitutes the good—the freedom, the happiness, the realisation, etc.—of the subjects of government supported an attention to the productive truth effects of assessment (Foucault, 1997a, 1997b). An understanding of ethics as self constitutive practices, and which are shaped in relation to compelling truths, ideas and practices for freedom (Fendler, 2010), also supported an attention to the productivity of assessment, particularly at the level of children’s self-government and subjectivities—their experiences and knowledge of the self (Foucault, 1997a). Assessment then, was studied as a technology of government, encompassing material, spatial, embodied, and conceptual practices, the effects of which were broadly understood in terms of a structuring or ‘governing’ (but not determining) of ‘the possible field of actions’ (Foucault, 1982, p. 221).

Assessment Discourse: Key Truth Objects

An indication of the key truth objects that were constructed by assessment discourse is required before discussing some of the possible ‘assessment effects’ at the level of child subjectivities and self government. Overall, I found that assessment was constructed as a morally valorised practice, supportive of values and principles such as social justice, children’s rights, diversity and plurality. The construction of learning and the child as ‘new’ truths within assessment discourse was central to the morally valorised status of the dispositional assessment form. Learning was constructed as a situated, socially and culturally mediated process of participation and developing competence in valued social practices. Accordingly, any given individually or culturally valued activity—or interaction and relationships with ‘people, places and things’ (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9)—was understood as presenting a *learning opportunity*. This understanding of learning was related to the construction of the child as a unique, contextually located, competent and agentic subject. A developmental identity for the child was largely muted in favour of the notion of the child as a competent, confident learner. Progress for the child’s learning was constructed as an increase in the presentation, breadth and intensity of learning dispositions. Learning and development progress was therefore not measured or assessed against external indicators such as predefined knowledge, skills or developmental milestones, but was relative to each child’s current dispositional profile.

‘The learning opportunity’ and ‘The child’s voice’: Normalising Techniques of Government

The assessment examples that were studied documented children’s varied engagements: dressing, moving around, watching clouds, talking about friends, making things, and so on. However, despite the extensive gestures toward the concepts of diversity and open-endedness in the assessment commentary, and despite the representation of varied and lively activities in the assessment examples, there was a terminal quality about the meanings that were made of these activities. The child as a learner, and learning progress as the strengthening of learning dispositions, saturated the meanings made of events and engagements. For example, a baby pulling himself along on the floor is described as having ‘*his own personal agenda*’ and being ‘*self-motivated to be ‘on the move*’ (Hatherly & Sands, 2002, p.9). A toddler struggling to take off her jumper, and who states ‘no’ in response to an offer of help, is described as demonstrating an ‘*emerging ability to be responsible for her own well-being*’ (Hatherly & Sands, 2002, p.12). A child’s screen-printing forays, over several days, are interpreted not, for instance, as an engaging, aesthetic experience, but as evidence of the child’s emerging persistence and problem-solving (Ministry of Education, 2004, Booklet 4).

The dominant construction of learning as the strengthening of learning dispositions, coupled with the extended space of the learning opportunity, creates, the narratives suggest, a somewhat boundless domain of normatively regulated understanding and action. *People, places and things* seem to be understood primarily as constituent elements in the learning opportunity and experience. Children's affects, intentions, and actions also seem to be primarily apprehended according to what I term *the learning scheme*. The concept of voice helps to elaborate this point. *The child's voice* is a central, emotive, and quite nebulous, motif in the assessment commentary. It was not explicitly defined within any of the source documents that were studied. It seems to stand for the voice literally—what a child says—but also, more broadly, to signify a child's contribution or their perspective about what matters to them. One scholarly text, for instance, noted that the child's perspective or voice may be communicated by 'gestures, sounds and facial expressions' (Carr et al., 2005, p. 145). In a discussion about New Zealand ECE assessment and curriculum, eminent New Zealand early childhood scholar, Anne Smith (2007) defines voice as 'that cluster of intentions, hopes, grievances, and expectations that children guard as their own' (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004, p. 8, cited in Smith, 2007, p. 4), adding that 'agency is how children express their voice' (Smith, 2007, p. 4). Taken together, these scholarly commentaries indicate an understanding of voice as perspective, intention, expression, and action.

A striking feature of the assessment examples that were studied was the frequent interpretation of the child's voice—children's affects, such as smiling or chuckling, their movements in space, and the expression of desires and intentions—as expressing a learning nature: learning intentions and desires for learning progress. The case of Louie exemplifies the attribution of action and affect to learning intent and desire. *Louie going out the door* (Ministry of Education, 2004, Booklet 4, p.10) is a narrative about a baby who does not yet crawl but who moves himself through toys and other obstacles in order to get outside. The assessment is written with an emphasis on dispositional learning and notions of progress in learning as being to do with strengthening one's learning desire (Fendler, 1998) and engagement. Thus, in a short term review of the learning narrative, a teacher describes the event as an instance of '*great determination... [where] ... he knew what he wanted and went for it, moving whatever got in his way!*' Louie is also described as setting and '*carrying out his self-set goal: getting outside onto the veranda and pulling himself up in the trellis*', and it is noted that '*for Louie, access to the outdoors was an important opportunity for his learning*'. Furthermore, it is suggested in the Ministry of Education written commentary to the assessment that the teacher's comment that Louie '*smiled with great delight about being outside*' indicates that the narrator recognises the way in which Louis communicates that he has achieved his self-set goal. This assessment is also described as providing '*baseline data for documenting development and change in how Louie sets himself goals and indicates that he has assessed his own achievement*' (Ministry of Education, 2004, Booklet 4, p.10).

This assessment, as well as those alluded to earlier, suggest that concepts/practices such as *learning opportunities*, *learning experiences*, and *the child's voice* function as normative moral injunctions, and inscriptive devices. They bring into play and are possible within a specific discursive and moral economy. Positioned as learning-subjects in unbounded spaces of learning opportunities (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006), children are encouraged to mobilise their affects and passions according to a perception of events as learning opportunities, and to conduct themselves *as learners*—where learning is a performance of behaviours related to the intensification of learning dispositions, or as one of the assessment texts studied suggested, 'a cumulative sequence of ever-increasing engagement to learning' (Turnock, 2009, p. 5). The extensiveness of the learning-opportunity space and the 'truth' of the child-as-learner produces a paradoxically reductive logic in narratives such as *Louie goes out the door*. For example, Louie's actions and desires were interpreted and made accountable within the logic of the learning scheme. A myriad of possible motives for his actions – a desire to be in the outside, or to be with others, and so on – are subsumed within the overarching interpretive scheme of action/intent/desire-as-learning.

The inscriptive, normative, and also performative qualities of the dispositional assessment approach are particularly suggested by assessments that involve discussion and interaction between adults and children. In the narratives I studied there were numerous examples where children were being positioned, and taking up understandings of themselves as learners, as was dominantly constructed in assessment discourse practice. In calls and comments by children such as '*write about my moves!*' (Carr et al., 2005, p. 144) and '*I need some*

more photographs of me, don't I?' (Carr et al., 2005, p. 146) there is a suggestion that children are understanding their actions as learning performance: something that should command an audience and be documented for future consideration. In these and other examples there is a sense of children developing self-knowledge and repertoires of action that accord with an overall principle of 'permanent self-performance' (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006, p. 459).

Conclusion

In this discussion, I have focused on highlighting some of the normative dimensions of government that current assessment may bring into play. Important complexities and nuances in the findings of the study are inevitably muted in this brief discussion, and there are limits to this discursive analysis. In identifying what appear to be normative governmental practices, and related implications for child subjectivities, I do not, for example, presume to make definitive claims about the productions of specific child subjectivities and attendant forms of work on the self; the analysis is inevitably, to some extent, speculative. Nevertheless, the centrality in this assessment approach of bringing children, families, and wider communities into an 'assessment consciousness', underscores the need to consider the effects of these narrative, disposition focused forms of assessment.

I do not discount the injustices, forms of educational exclusion, and social inequities that the inclusion and valuing of diverse social practices the curriculum and assessment form seeks to address. However, there are important questions to ask about the effects of the forms of, for instance, inclusion and diversity that current assessment practices promote. This study suggests that there are new normativities at work in New Zealand's disposition focused assessment and curriculum model. Despite the notable inclusion of a wide range of valued activities, there is, as I have suggested, a terminal and reductive quality in this assessment form. There is also, I think, a profound instrumentalism at work. The vision of *the good* of the child subjects of ECE that animates assessment practices seems to be informed by, borrowing from Hultqvist (2004), a superpragmatic form of reasoning about government, where 'anything might be related to anything as long as it increases resources and wealth' (p. 173). In the learning disposition oriented assessment scheme, worlds of people, places, things, affects, intentions, bodies, and actions are it seems brought into visibility and account within a domain of government informed by the primacy of values such as those of opportunity and accrual. It seems that children are being called into instrumental relations with people places and things, and to orient themselves to these elements as *props* and *resources* in the process of accumulating and performing learning intensity, desire and capability.

My analysis should not be read as indicating a call for the removal of the regulation of selves or others in education *per se*, nor should it be seen as an argument for the removal of aspirations and ideals for the outcomes of actions and work on the self. The suggestion that disposition focused assessment is related to both the presumption and promotion of an ontology of the learning-desiring-performing subject is not interpreted as an instance of an *alien invasion* of the child (Foucault, 1986, cited in Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996). Rather, what working with an understating of ontology as technical does suggest is that assessment practice and its concomitant desired outcomes are promoting self constitutive and regulatory practices with reference to normative ideals. Accordingly, what I am arguing for is the need to consider what truths about the child and about learning are operating now; what these truths and attendant practices may presume and perhaps naturalise; and what imperatives for work on the self and others may be being brought into play in this assessment and learning scheme.

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How Far Have We Really Come?

Advancing the notion of an 'ethics of care' in the generation of inclusive quality education in post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

This article focuses on the concept of an ethics of care within the South African education context. In considering the context of an evolving South African education system, post 1994, the aim of the article is to conceptualize the relationship between an ethics of care and quality education that is generally represented statistically. The objective is to explain an ethics of care within a feminist paradigm embodying moral good, consideration, sympathy and tolerance in relation to quality education. Thus in order to establish the philosophical problem, the article turns to the works of Noddings to illustrate that education may be seen as the development of democratic citizens via direct caring experiences that encourage productive learning. The argument as Nussbaum (2000, p. 58) so aptly puts it, is that children are 'sources of agency and worth in their own right' and therefore deserve equal opportunities to educational benefits in supportive environments. Ultimately, by being human, 'one bears an internal relation to all other human beings – especially those who do not belong to the same group' (Smeyers, 2012, p 467). These points of view appear in stark contrast to the current reality as there is a noticeable tension between an ethics of care and the South African educational situation from a conceptual position. The article therefore addresses South African post-1994 education to signpost a conceptual argument that develops an understanding of an ethics of caring as part of the dialogue for change so that social, language and cultural barriers may be overcome to achieve quality education.

Keywords: Ethics of care, school, democratic citizens, virtue of being human, HIV, Aids, disability

Introduction

HIV and Aids related educational challenges often result in too little support and care for South African orphans and vulnerable children thus impacting negatively on accomplishing inclusive quality education. Certain psychosocial and educational circumstances generated by HIV and Aids have distressed children with the effect being compounded upon vulnerable individuals with disabilities. In addition, many of the social hardships during the early stages of the democratic advancement in South Africa - including those of the apartheid legacy - appear to persist almost two decades later. Historical, social, economic and geographical factors have stifled the accomplishment of the optimistic goals set by the 1994 democratic government and as a result growth via education for some. Thus this article questions the lack of progress in terms of inclusive quality education in post-apartheid South Africa with emphasis upon the care or lack thereof of orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV and Aids. My concern is that while the inherent values of democracy may be perpetuated in certain settings there is an inexcusably high learner population – made up predominantly of orphans and vulnerable children who are victims of Aids - that has yet to benefit from democratically inclusive quality education and the turn of events post-1994.

In order to achieve the objectives of this article, the first stage briefly examines inclusive quality education through Noddings' ethics of care lens. The political dialogue pertaining to an ethics of care has a niche in the democratic citizenship rhetoric to foster a democratically righteous society (Waghid and Smeyers, 2013). This line of reasoning is therefore extended to support the claim that education can be the setting for the development

of an ethics of care as described by Noddings (2005) to bring out human dignity imperative for successful inclusive quality education. The second stage is to establish whether the concept of an inclusive quality education is characterized in a post-1994 democratic South African education framework. Such reflection upon an evolving South African education system, strives to concurrently conceptualize the relationship between an ethics of care and inclusive quality education as described by Noddings. In the third stage, HIV and Aids is deliberated upon as a major challenge to quality education. The South African Education system has not evolved sufficiently to include current trends and needs that create more flexible learning opportunities catering for the vulnerable child's educational needs. Discrepancies in South Africa's version of inclusive education are located in the arguments at the fourth stage. The basic education system does not appear to be responding to the dire need for practical solutions to existing complexities particularly where there is a common ground between HIV and Aids and disability. In the fifth stage I deliberate upon a re-imagined inclusive quality education that can ensure caring for the well-being of children while the sixth sums up a dialogue for change. The absence of benevolent education is harmful to the development of a child but it is also true that if the child as a cared-for is exposed to a flawed relationship of care where capability to achieve academic goals is stifled by teachers using the relationship to their own advantage, the latter can deny learners their right to be cared for as described by Noddings. The article also provides research evidence that illustrates the challenges that orphans and vulnerable South African children experience in the face of HIV and Aids and disability. The capacity to provide caring, inclusive quality education as a social priority underpins the ability to attentively recognize and accept children regardless of the diversities.

As an offshoot of a democratic citizenship education project this article is directed at exploring the notion of an ethics of care from a human rights outlook in a South African post-1994 context. The following quotation by Waghid (2005, 323) sums up the overall goals of the broader project stating that:

..., a common aim of democratic citizenship education is to achieve intersubjective, mutual interaction through cooperative human practices.... The view that citizenship education is a social process that can engender cooperative human activity grows out of liberal and communitarian understandings of what it means to be a citizen.... to be a citizen is to enjoy rights to personal security, to freedom of speech, to vote, to access to housing, health care, education, and so forth.

Waghid's declaration above speaks directly to the objectives specific to this article in that the ideals of democratic citizenship as well as quality education evolve around "cooperative human practices". However, the basic structure of social relationships does not seem to have evolved sufficiently in many South African communities to allow for the proliferation of democratic citizenship values and education to be evident. Admittedly the modus operandi of South African basic education is constantly changing in focus and objectives to create quality education that culminates in quality outputs. Twenty years on South Africa is a country with an exceptional constitution but children have been failed by inferior pedagogical environments, inadequate service delivery and substandard policy implementation. While the general tendency among analysts and politicians has been to concentrate on statistical outcomes depicting the path of progress in South African education, this article takes an alternate view in considering progress toward inclusive quality education and relational caring within a democratic pluralistic society.

Inclusive quality education through Noddings' ethics of care lens

Education as a social engagement requires the sharing of ideas and a specific way of reasoning in terms of transforming democracy and humanity crucial to the ideals of 'Education for All' (UNESCO, 2012). Inclusive quality education is meant to be learner-centred as stipulated by UNICEF (2007), catering for the needs of all learners regardless of their socio-economic, physical or psychological difficulties. As a result educators in South African mainstream schools are expected to demonstrate moral good, consideration, sympathy and tolerance to resolve the problems standing in the way of inclusive quality education for all children. The school itself is a breeding ground for meaningful partnerships that are meant to be supportive and nurturing in order to develop caring, knowledgeable and skilled democratic citizens. Educators as key role players ought to overcome their personal shortcomings and bias when addressing classroom diversity so as not to stifle the school's capacity to

create inclusive quality education. The former's fundamental function is to promote caring and encourage inclusive values that demonstrate the respect for all – a standard scaffolding democratic citizenship.

While I may be censured for turning to a Western theorist to exploit my African argument, I find Noddings' theoretical framework more supportive of my present contentions. It is not that I refute the claims made by my fellow Africans but find the assertion "we should care more genuinely for our children and teach them to care" (Noddings, 1995) of great consequence to the crucial role of inclusive quality education in the vulnerable child's life. If inclusive quality education is envisaged as supportive and nurturing for all learners, as mentioned in the paragraph before, then Noddings' (2003) ethics of care theory is germane to this discourse in that it allows me to consider the guiding principles of South Africa's interpretation of inclusive quality education in the context of caring within a pluralistic society. Education is central to an individual's well-being hence Noddings' (2003) interpretation of an ethics of care regarding mutually beneficial relationships of trust underpins my claim that orphans and vulnerable children ought to be protected by the close relationships within a school culture if they do not have adult support in their home environment. Apart from being protected such children need to learn to become resilient in the face of the adversities they face thus the basic tenets of quality education can assist them to try to overcome apathy and self destruction if they are inspired by those who do not see them as "the other". Noddings (1992) also proposes that dialogue is fundamental to securing a caring bond especially to establish relationships of care and trust thus reinforcing the roles of the school and educator that can guarantee the success in terms of educational quality and perhaps personal upliftment. Orphans and vulnerable learners require what Noddings (2005) alludes to as educators who are able to acknowledge diversity and individuality and build caring climates of learning that respond positively to the learners' often tacit pleas. This represents quality education that is inclusive in a South African basic education setting where children are compelled to adopt the roles of caregivers and providers to the detriment of their physical and mental health and their educational aspirations. Hence, I see merit in using Noddings' ethics of care theory to emphasize two particularly complicated social issues that challenge South African education in isolation and more so when these two characteristics appear together which are HIV and Aids and disability.

South African Education 2013

In tracing the path from 1994 I acknowledge the South African Constitution (1994), the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education 2001) as well as the Bill of Responsibilities, launched by the South African Department of Basic Education in 2008, are guiding principles that communicate good citizenship and probably endorse ethics of caring. As 'a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa' the Bill of Rights is a deliberate attempt to encourage a sense of humanity promoting *moral good, consideration, sympathy and tolerance in order to attain quality education*. Justice, responsibility and recognition in conjunction with acceptance of the other are characteristics of the South African Manifesto on values, education and democracy prescribed by the Department of Education (2001). School partnerships that are supposed to be recognized as ethics of care prompting South Africans via the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) to engage actively to generate democratic citizenship in that it

... provide(s) an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State...(Department of Education, 1996)

The impractical efforts of the state and other parties within school communities are often insufficient to alleviate the tragedy of sub-standard education imposed particularly on learners affected by HIV or Aids. Real life situations that affect education illustrate certain challenges for example: the concept of 'migratory orphans' has introduced highly motivated learners from rural areas who are willing to live alone or with siblings in adult-free homes in the suburbs to satisfy their learning needs; unsafe schools environments; increasing teenage pregnancies; orphans of Aids in child-headed households who have no support within a school culture, are but a

few. As Noddings (2005) contends, caring alone may not realize quality education, but educators' efforts to guide learners to overcome hostile conditions can cultivate learner confidence in their ability to change their social and economic potentials in any democratic society.

While Noddings does not refer directly to 'Education for All' her arguments allude to prerequisites such as human dignity and equality as pillars to the achievement thereof to satisfy the terms of inclusive quality education but which are nonexistent in many South African schools. It is possible that in a haste to remove signs of the colonial heritage early South African policymakers neglected to take into account the rich diverse cultural heritage of the country. Local culture and customs are just as significant as inclusion of the other within the education discourse that prioritizes inclusivity and quality. On the other hand, it is incumbent upon those who create such education narratives to consider that in a country with such a diverse population as South Africa's, each time one group is incorporated, there are others who are excluded. Reaching a consensus - no matter how convincing the rights-based approach may be - presents difficulties that could prove insurmountable for the state in that certain marginalized individuals have no recourse. In contrast, reciprocal acceptance by members of diverse cultures adds rich intercultural knowledge to education.

It is for this reason that I consider South African educators as key to the success of democratic values and human-rights based education demonstrating inclusivity. At the same time one wonders how educators fulfil their mandate to provide quality education exhibiting relational care in settings that are not conducive to teaching and learning. Their efforts may be in vain should the school system not cater for the practical needs of its diverse learner population. The knowledge imparted by educators can ensure that learners are equipped to take care of themselves to avoid becoming infected with HIV but also that learners then contribute to the process of changing attitudes and beliefs about the other who are affected by Aids. As such inclusive quality education is principal to HIV and Aids education in the South African quality education context as it empowers the child in a caring relationship (Noddings, 1992).

HIV/Aids as a challenge to quality education

The South African Department of Education framework suggests that teachers, especially life orientation educators are required to teach their learners about HIV/Aids. White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) dealt with "Special needs education" in South Africa affirms the following regarding HIV/Aids education:

1. The development of inclusive education and training to include HIV/Aids (1.6.1. p23);
2. The Ministry will analyze the impact of HIV/Aids consistently and aim to develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes one of which will be the development of teaching guidelines (2.2.8.1/2.2.8.2. p. 34; 4.3.11.1/4.3.11.2. p. 50).

The reality is that teachers often do not implement Department of Education policies and strategies which may be HIV/Aids Educational Resources: DOE guidelines for learners and teachers; "Develop an HIV and AIDS plan for your school" for school governing bodies, managers, teachers as well as parents (Department of Education 2003a); "What parents need to know" (Department of Education 2003b); "National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12" (Department of Education 2007) – guide for teachers; and The HIV/Aids Emergency: Department of Education Guidelines for teachers (Department of Education 2002). Approved educational support for learners will advance objectives to impede the dissemination of incorrect and false HIV/Aids information. Hartell (2007) asserts that there is an unambiguous connection whereby learners grasp the distinctive values, knowledge, attitudes and skills within their socio-educational environment.

Local research (Mosia, 2009; Prinsloo 2007) confirms that there are South African educators who do not understand and disseminate such knowledge correctly caringly and persistently. This is so especially when they are unable to appreciate the content and aims of the programme as well as the standard of training that was provided to them by the Department of Education. It is generally found that schools from rural areas and those in poor socio-economic areas seem to be more negatively affected than those in the suburbs. These studies (Mosia, 2009; Prinsloo, 2007) also reveal that the extent of community involvement with the school and the

curriculum together with the fact that learners have poor role models – both at school and at home - do not allow for the capacity to produce quality education that demonstrates an ethic of care. Certain school authorities express the view that learners from schools within their control were not affected by the HIV or Aids hence this curriculum is optional. South African schools will do well to create quality HIV/Aids programmes that motivate learners to understand the pandemic to avoid infection. There were regular warnings in the last decade that the South African youth was bewildered by conflicting HIV/Aids knowledge communication even from the educator.

Research (Chabilall, 2004) has also found that children affected by Aids are frequently absent from school and experience more difficulty in trying to pay attention in the classrooms. Giese (2002:65) asserts that orphans, who have limited resources and inadequate adult supervision, “are more likely than their peers to drop out of school.” Even in this decade there are substantial school dropout rates due to deprivation, disease, distress and the lack of adequate educational and social support. Orphans in child-headed households are vulnerable since they carry the burden of stigma and discrimination. The majority of these unfortunate children are forced to abandon their schooling because of financial constraints and in many cases because they have to take care of ailing parents and assume adult responsibilities in their homes. Research (Chabilall 2004) established that there is a lack of parental guidance and support. This means that most of the children fail to continue with schooling, start school late, experience discrimination at school level, are either absent often or drop out completely in order to take care of ailing parents or family members. As a consequence, orphans, especially those in child-headed households, become breadwinners and have added responsibilities such as to provide for their siblings. They are deprived of the benefit of the control and support of some of their teachers and peers because of the secrecy revolving around the pandemic. If, like Noddings (1984) says, caring should be the crux of any education system then the teacher is a central figure in the development of the child. More than ten years on, the numbers of orphans and vulnerable children have snowballed exacerbating the social and educational challenges (KZN Human Settlements). The 2010 South African research (KZN Human Settlements) on child-headed households confirms that the situation persists as there is an increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children.

Discrepancies in South Africa’s version of quality inclusive education

When education is not truly inclusive, learners are exposed to incorrect information regarding people with disabilities within settings that do not exemplify accessible education for those who are labelled the other. School cultures, surroundings and classroom learning that are not inclusive encourage false perceptions mortifying individuals with disabilities or those who are different. The unfortunate reality is that those with disabilities suffer a double jeopardy as they are affected by the education and environment if these promote negative religious, cultural and societal stereotypes placing them at increased risk of prejudice or even of acquiring HIV infection (Groce, 2005). People with disabilities are denied rights due to stigma and injustice as a result of prevailing cultural norms and values. Discrimination emanates predominantly from cultural beliefs and negative societal attitudes that seek to promote the rights of people with disabilities. The school is ideally placed to address such injustices to ensure that limited and incorrect knowledge and experiences do not permeate the lives of people with disabilities.

Thus inclusive education may be a means to address extreme cultural norms that perpetuate false beliefs and attitudes so that caring relationships develop to protect the interests of the child (Noddings, 1992). This may be especially true with problems relating to gender roles where girls feel excluded or when social and cultural norms depict that parents are inclined to be overprotective of their disabled children. The principles of inclusive education can prevent adults from denying learners access to information so that they are accepted as part of the community they are educated and live in. The misconception that disabled people are asexual also implies that they may be free from HIV, which makes them vulnerable in terms of sexual abuse and increases their risk of becoming HIV-infected (Wazakili, Mpofu, and Devlieger, 2009). Groce (2005) claims that the increased vulnerability of disabled adolescent girls, who are more often than not excluded from the social interaction, generally makes them victims of immoral or deviant behaviour. Although girls or women with disabilities may

be considered as being available for sexual pleasure, they are seldom chosen to be partners in stable relationships (Wazakili, Mpofo, and Devlieger, 2009).

Most cultures prohibit parents from discussing matters of sexuality with their children. On the other hand, parents may often be blamed for avoiding the subject of sexuality as it affects disabled young women (Wazakili, Mpofo & Devlieger, 2009). Thus, cultural stereotypes imagine disabled young women to be asexual, unfit to reproduce, overly dependent, not interested in sex and unattractive. Some cultural factors that influence the vulnerability of young women with disabilities include, engaging in multiple sexual relationships, such as polygamy or wife sharing arrangements. Unequal power relations between males and females also increase the vulnerability of disabled women to sexual exploitation. Teachers and parents, who regard sexual education for disabled girls taboo or unnecessary, choose to avoid such discussions. Such a stance increases the helplessness of the children who are inadvertently exposed to sexual abuse, and consequent sexually transmitted diseases (Groce 2005). Disability itself is not a barrier to people with disabilities obtaining appropriate sexuality knowledge and education (Nganwa, Batesaki, Balaba, Serunkuma, & Yousafzai, 2002, p. 188). These authors (Nganwa, Batesaki, Balaba, Serunkuma & Yousafzai, 2002, p. 188) believe existing societal and cultural beliefs contribute significantly to increased risk to sexual abuse within this group.

Re-imagining Inclusive Quality Education

South African education, without becoming overwhelmingly paternalistic, ought to have nurtured its fledglings from 1994 onwards to promote well being in all aspects of personal lives. The initial process of transforming South African education from a colonial-based apartheid creation to one that is both inclusive and of superior quality is a commitment to eradicate the injustices of the past,

... for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation. (South African Schools Act, 1996).

However, it has become evident that many of those born in 1994 and after have suffered the consequences of constantly changing leadership exacerbated by the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation together with the Aids pandemic. I question whether we as a nation have missed our cue in terms of ethical caring or dismissing the cultural notion of *ubuntu*. The priority of a quality education is to change social attitudes toward victims of socio-cultural, racial, economic, ethnic and gender discrimination that appear to suffer the inadequacies of the dysfunctional education system even more so. The valiant attempt to move away from a colonial past is supposed to have ensured academic progress for all children regardless of their physical disabilities or indigent conditions within the context of South African democratic citizenry. However, such modifications to achieve quality education seem to have ignored individual complexities, cultural nuances as well as social structures that had not evolved as readily as the new South African government had stepped in. In addition, both quality and inclusivity – although used freely - are still finding their identities with both being re-imagined at intervals. For the purposes of this discussion it is taken that the term ‘quality education’ refers to just, rights-based, superior teaching and learning that is not limited to the classroom and that which produces positive learning outcomes. Inclusivity is more complex to unravel but I find Dickson’s comment, (2012, p. 1094), significant – ‘Although there is international recognition of the right to an inclusive education, there remains very little clearly developed and articulated theory available to underpin that right.’ The term ‘inclusive’ is situated within the directives espoused by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The criteria are meant to steer South African education, with competent support services, towards non-discrimination of any sort so that everyone is entitled to the opportunity to uplift their social and economic circumstances.

It is significant to note that South African school-based democratic citizenship education was intended via guidelines provided by documents such as the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (Department of

Education, 2001a) and the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001b) to create civic awareness, ethical caring and moral responsibility among learners, educators, parents and the general community albeit from different perspectives. Besides being clear on citizenship education, the second document also foregrounded the position of the Department regarding people with disabilities. The upshot is that such characteristics are meant to produce positive dialogue and action for change, as Noddings (1992) maintains, within the micro- and macro-social context with inclusive quality education as a priority. It is assumed that power relationships are a reality that may often impose unfair advantage to those in power and a sense of passivity to inferior participants such as the child who is much lower down the ladder. Just as learners may feel comfortable in trust-based relationships, there will be democratic learning that creates the space for citizenship education if such trust-based relational caring exists at all levels of implementation of inclusive quality education. This begs the question whether the significance of inculcating an ethics of care militates against the danger of inequity and neglect.

The success of implementing a quality system of education that is also inclusive depends upon citizen buy-in to maintain social order suggesting that citizens recognize that children are ‘sources of agency and worth in their own right’ and therefore deserve equal opportunities to educational benefits in supportive environments that depict sympathy and interaction as Noddings (1992) suggests. While this is so, it is also true that there ought to be respect for authoritative structures and understanding by all participants about what is acceptable. Hence the principles discussed call attention to the possibility of learners’ opportunities being promoted or constrained by teachers if a teacher is not motivated in this task of caring (Noddings 1992). Quality education is intended to equip learners with the knowledge, values and attitudes that enable them to become democratic citizens. The nature of inclusive quality education that ultimately reaches the child is dependent upon those whom the child interacts with as well as those who are higher up in decision making positions. Therefore any upgrading of South African education challenges policymakers and implementers to consider the pluralistic nature of its population while it speaks extensively of human rights. It is important to move beyond the reality of a strife torn nation that South Africa has become where learners, educators and parents freely and without hesitation become brutally vocal about their frustrations. The unfortunate results of such actions are that the disadvantaged learners or educators become the other who cannot seem to enjoy the recognition and acceptance they are entitled to. Ultimately, South African education ought to provide the enabling environment that will allow all learners to achieve success by acquiring knowledge. Such acceptance, tolerance and implementation of rights may be seen to facilitate inclusive quality education. It is true that the execution of South African transformation was a democratically executed process with various stages of public deliberation, claims and calls for contributions. Even so, all regions of the country have not been privileged to enjoy equal service delivery as there are those who have become the disadvantaged other with substandard educational administration and delivery.

Dialogue for Change

It is crucial to the mechanics of quality education that the South African Department of Education develops the competence of the pedagogical environment in addition to all related capabilities to allow for “full participation”. What is unfortunate is that the systemic capability stifles individual access to real freedom and opportunities to fair education as a result of deprived social conditions that lead to personal marginalization. Complexities evident in the gradual attrition of trust in the world of power relations are real despite the nature and promotion of democratic citizenship via policy and education.

Learners deprived of material resources, caring or value- and human-rights based education may be unable to remove themselves or assist their families from the cyclical impact of poverty and deprivation. In order to ensure that South African children benefit from inclusive quality education and democracy centred on honourable human values, adult participants in or beyond the classroom have to overcome their personal stereotypes to be confident in their own ability to teach through a caring process for change as Noddings (1992; 2005) suggests. If the state and related bodies are cognizant of the learners’ needs these influential groups will look to provide for all capabilities ‘making them fully human’ – including the fact that children require suitable role models. Learners are entitled to inclusive quality education representative of justice and equality so that as adults they too may be able to promote a human-rights based citizenship within the evolving South African

society. Ultimately, by being human, ‘one bears an internal relation to all other human beings – especially those who do not belong to the same group’ (Smeyers, 2012, p. 467). Xenophobia has been an unfortunate consequence of an ill-prepared South African society that had previously been interested in their own kind with limited exposure to other Africans. Acts of xenophobic violence played out by adults in overcrowded poor communities set dangerous examples for school-going learners. Negative behaviour defeats the purpose of democratic relationships of caring that school education is supposed to inculcate (Noddings 1992). It is difficult for children who live in deprived conditions that are often exposed to high incidence of HIV to learn tolerance, responsibility or humanity if they have had little or no exposure to these values. In this regard the school culture is crucial to the development of value-laden teaching and learning. These points underscore the stark contrast between the fundamental principles and the current reality as there is a noticeable tension between an ethics of care and the South African educational situation from a conceptual position.

Conclusion

The article has ultimately attempted to address South African post-1994 education to signpost a conceptual argument developing an understanding of ethics of caring as part of the dialogue for change so that social, racial, ethnic, gender, language and cultural barriers may be overcome to achieve quality education. While the state has set the stage for the dissemination of resources and inclusive quality education, there is a stark absence of Departmental collaboration and networks that can ensure the viability of sophisticated schemes designed according to UN human rights policies and the South African constitution. I assert that South African education has to recognize the need for caring, respect for rights, culture and quality education so as to afford more individuals the opportunity to enhance their potential via the system.

Hence, my argument has found reason in situating itself upon a human-rights-based ethics of caring as discussed by Noddings to illustrate the way in which inclusive quality education may be achieved - by engaging with ideal that knowledge is a must for all. In order to establish philosophical solutions to the problems, the article turns to the works of Noddings to illustrate that South African education will benefit from developing citizens via direct caring experiences that encourage productive learning. Ultimately, the attainment of authentic democratic citizenship is dependent upon the individual’s appreciation thereof via open communication with significant others. Thus, democracy is acknowledged as the solid foundation that gives rise to national pride – where South African citizens must be encouraged to achieve inclusive quality education that teaches caring for the environment and others with the same sense of commitment (Noddings 2005). However, it is debatable whether inclusive education in South Africa depends solely upon the capabilities developed by the system to be successful. One may discover that the attributes of relationships the child experiences inside and outside the school may be insipid in that the presumed functions of adult role players will lack effect in terms of furthering the learners’ ability to enjoy significant caring responses representative of moral good, justice and harmony despite diversity. The challenge is whether to laud the successes of a select group of previously disadvantaged South African minority who have excelled while there are substantial pockets of presently disadvantaged learners, schools and educators who have as yet not benefitted from democratic nor inclusive quality schooling.

Notes

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Multiliteracies and The Critical Thinker: Philosophical Engagement with Mass Media in The Classroom

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Abstract:

Teaching children philosophy enhances critical thinking skills that are sorely needed in today's technological society. When it comes to mass art and social media, we need to discern between reliable sources of information and the plethora of dross. Using a virtue epistemological approach, I claim that Philosophy in the schools supports a values- and outcomes-based approach to education. There are measurable outcomes that are academic, but there are also holistic benefits including social outcomes that emerge from using philosophy in the classroom. Multiliteracies competencies is an important skill that can be gained by critical engagement with multi-media sources. As such sources are commonplace, we as educators should embrace them, and teach our students to engage with them critically. Teaching children critical thinking skills through the study of Philosophy is important because philosophical thinkers continue conversations that seek to dispel ignorance. I will support this claim using examples of engagement with mass art and media that can be applied to the classroom setting.

Keywords: Multiliteracies; critical thinking; virtue epistemology; CoI; P4C; philosophy.

"Students must be agents of text rather than victims of text, whether that text is printed and found in school or visually digitized and found in the street."

(Albers & Hartse, 2007, p.7).

Introduction:

Increasingly an awareness of the need to prepare students not simply for exams but also life has been behind educational approaches to pedagogy. Over the past twenty years, traditional epistemology has been augmented by the increased scholarship devoted to social epistemology and virtue epistemology. Social epistemology argues that forms of knowledge often depend on social factors for their possibility and claims we should critique social institutions that contribute to spreading knowledge. Such institutions and systems include education, science, politics, and mass media. Virtue epistemology, influenced by Aristotelian virtue ethics, claims that instead of focusing on what the knower knows we should examine the knower him/herself. For the virtue epistemologist, the relevant question becomes what does it mean to be a good knower? (Kotzee, 2013, p.157). When it comes to educational institutions, which specialise in the product of 'knowledge', we should include the study of Philosophy into the curriculum. Philosophy teaches critical thinking skills that are required for children to become informed, socially situated learners. When it comes to social media, for example, we need to discern between reliable sources of information and misinformation or, worse, hoaxes.

In this paper, I will be using a virtue epistemological approach to consider how it is possible to constructively engage with social media networking sites as a way of gaining and sharing knowledge. I will focus on the knower who possesses the intellectual virtue of discernment and claim that the community of inquiry method as understood by philosophy for children practitioners is a useful tool by which to develop and encourage critical thinking skills that can be applied to engagement with social media.

P4C and the Community of Inquiry:

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) is a method well-developed and practiced by advocates of Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Lipman, 2003). The CoI is valuable at all schooling levels if we wish to teach students critical, creative and caring interpersonal skills. Such skills assist these students to not only perform better academically, but also socially, encouraging self awareness as they identify as a member of a community of thinkers (Millett & Tapper, 2012, p.546). It is through an open, facilitated conversation that learners can reflect on the ideas of others as well as their own, and engage with meaningful topics in a safe environment that encourages intellectual exploration as well as a compassionate respect for views of others that may differ from their own. When it comes to social media, dialogue occurs online in cyberspace, but this may not be as 'safe' as in a classroom setting or when face-to-face with other inquirers.

In a CoI students and the teacher sit in a circle and the teacher acts as a facilitator for a discussion based on a particular topic. Usually work has been done beforehand, individually and in small groups, to develop questions associated with the chosen topic. This will work with any topic, including the media and news items. The teacher or students can bring in stimulus material in the form of a newspaper clipping or a story from the internet to discuss. Developing students' own questions is a key preliminary aspect to a CoI as it gives students the opportunity to first reflect individually on the subject before entering into dialogue. Once in the CoI itself, ideas are shared in an effort to uncover truth.

As Laurance Splitter explains:

Participating in a CoI allows students, individually and collaboratively, to develop their own ideas and perspectives based on appropriately rigorous modes of thinking *and* against the background of a thorough understanding and appreciation of those ideas and perspectives that, having stood the test of time, may be represented as society's best view of things to date. (Splitter, 2011, p.497)

The teacher as facilitator allows the conversation to follow the line of inquiry that emerges whilst keeping the discussion on topic. In this way, the CoI allows for intellectual inquiry that is contextual and dynamic. The ideas of participants are interactive, developing and transforming as they meet or yield to those of others. The CoI is aimed at truth rather than winning, valuing knowledge for its own sake as per the Socratic tradition.

Virtue Ethics, Virtue Epistemology and the Value of Knowledge:

The benefits of community of inquiry methodology are well-articulated by the language of virtue ethics and virtue epistemology. As a participant in a CoI the individual recognises that they are not an isolated cogito but, rather, a social, moral and rational being who is practically engaged with the world in a time and place. This seeing myself as '*one among others*' (Splitter, 2011, p.497) includes three key components that Splitter identifies as both cognitive and affective. These include, firstly, appreciating my own self-worth that arises from recognising my role in the community; secondly, appreciating that others are also striving for this kind of self-appreciation and thirdly, 'understanding that self-appreciation and appreciation for others are interdependent and mutually reinforcing' (2011, pp.497-8). As a member of a CoI, one may express, question, develop and alter their ideas. They can work out what assumptions and values they hold, as well as consider those of others. Participating in a CoI allows the learner to see which values are shared. Splitter remarks, '[t]he CoI is an interactive environment whose entire rationale is the wellbeing of its members (in intellectual, moral and affective terms)' (2011, p.498). This is similarly the aim of virtue ethics: the recognition of individual eudemonia as intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of the polis (Aristotle, 1876).

The virtue epistemologist and the Aristotelian virtue ethicist identify the knowing self as a social and moral self. This focus on a person's character differs to narrower conceptions of epistemology that focus on what is knowable or the object of knowledge. As educators faced with values-based education alongside learning outcomes, a virtue framework resonates as we do not simply want to teach students facts, but, rather, we'd like them to be moral citizens and happy human beings.

This is no small task, but philosophy can help. Carrie Winstanley (2008) defends the inclusion of philosophy in the school curriculum in the United Kingdom on the grounds that it has the capacity to develop children's thinking, particularly in light of the inclusion of 'thinking skills' in curriculums across the U.K. Winstanley gives Siegel's definition of a critical thinker:

A critical thinker, then, is one who is appropriately moved by reasons: she has the propensity or disposition to believe and act in accordance with reasons; and she has the ability to properly assess the force of reasons in the many contexts in which reasons play a role. (Winstanley, 2008, p.89 ref Siegel, 1988, p.23)

Winstanley also claims that:

Philosophy is the best possible subject for helping children to become effective critical thinkers. It is the subject that can teach them better than any other how to assess reasons, defend positions, define terms, evaluate sources of information, and judge the value of arguments and evidence. (Winstanley, 2008, p.95)

When participating in a CoI, the socially situated learner has the opportunity to practice developing the intellectual virtue of discernment. By discernment, I refer to the ability to consider the evidence for ideas presented and the ability to make truth claims based on such information. The benefit of the CoI is that it encourages self-reflection and openness to new information. This allows for the process of gaining knowledge to be dynamic, self-correcting, structured but democratic, and resists collapse into relativism by continuing dialogue rather than ending a conversation when opinions differ (Golding, 2011, p.476 & 482).

In the dynamic and fast-paced world of technological information and social media networking sites, a dynamic approach to quickly interrogating information received is vital. In this way, by shifting our focus on to the knower instead of what is statically knowable, we are better equipped to face multiple and often conflicting opinions, reports and images that are generated online *en masse*.

Furthermore, we don't want to do away with values and ethics when entering the online world of information and social media or networking sites. With reference to philosophy in classrooms, Christina Hendricks explains that realising we are socially situated and may adopt differing perspectives doesn't deny that normative values or guidelines for knowledge are shared. Referring to Siegel, Hendricks notes:

Siegel insists that without acknowledging that we share belief and criteria for judgement, there seems to be no reason to value consideration of other perspectives for the sake of critically evaluating our own (Hendricks, 2004, p.8, ref Siegel 1988, 14-15; 1987, 43).

In this way, pluralism doesn't deny shared values or normative moral principles. It is worth striving for transcendence even if 'perfect' omniscience may never be fully achieved.

Certainly we have access to more opinions than ever before and education has already moved away from a top-down, teacher-centred model of learning. Clinton Golding recognises that the CoI is not an authoritarian discussion led by a teacher, but, rather, is student directed as the teacher acts as a facilitator. Unlike unstructured discussion, 'the teacher becomes a thinking coach and trains students to engage in independent, productive discussion' (Golding, 2011, p.474). This skill is useful when the student faces the technological world of social media. One intellectual virtue that is encouraged in philosophical CoIs is discernment. Discerning between reliable sources of information and uninformed opinion is required in our technological society, as is the respectful interaction with others, particularly when these others are faceless avatars on Facebook, Twitter and the like. When engaging with a community of learners, it is important not only to consider whether or not you are receiving reliable information, but also to realise that the others with whom you are engaged are people worthy of respect even when you have never met them face-to-face.

If the CoI is disciplined dialogue that follows the inquiry of its members in a manner which allows for reflective judgements (Golding, 2011, p.482), then online discussion through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter may be considered akin to Golding's student-directed, abandoned conversation that results in relativism (2011, p.482). For individual users, this is where I believe the intellectual and moral virtues one has learned and developed through CoIs is of immediate use. If one learns the habits of respectful engagement with ideas and avoids fallacious thinking such as *ad hominem* attacks, then they are more likely to conduct themselves well when engaged in virtual realities as well as face-to-face. In a time where cyber-bullying is a serious issue, this respectful interaction online as well as in the school yard is highly topical.

I claim that philosophical skills may be useful for children because such intellectual, social and moral habits, once internalised, may be applied everywhere. Splitter writes:

Children belong to a variety of communities which come and go in their turn. It is the job of education to enable students to grow as persons, by *internalizing the process of collaborative inquiry à la* Vygotsky, even as these various communities-including communities of inquiry-eventually fall by the wayside (Splitter, 2011, p.503 footnote #37).

Virtue ethics and virtue epistemology both focus on the virtues, whether moral or intellectual, and recognise these as valuable to socially situated individuals. The virtue epistemologists recognise that knowledge is valuable for both ethical and epistemological reasons (Macallister, 2012, p.252). As Macallister states:

Virtue epistemologists have allotted primary relevance to a person's intellectual qualities and habits, in at least three different ways. Intellectual virtues may be demonstrated when: an *agent* deserves credit for obtaining *reliable* truth; truth-seeking inquiries are *regulated by virtue*; a person has a virtuous *motivation* for truth" (2012, p.253).

Figuring out what exactly these virtues are and their relevant dispositions is a trickier matter. Yet I see a link here to the training done in CoIs. The participant of a CoI is credited for aiming at and obtaining reliable truth that is motivated by a virtuous intention or authentic desire to seek the truth. This occurs holistically in the CoI by recognising oneself as a learner amongst other learners, which promotes self-worth as well as critical and empathetic attention to the views and ideas of others. The knower must be willing to be flexible, adaptive and dynamic without collapsing into a relativistic conclusion of, 'you have your idea and corresponding feelings, and I have mine', which so often occurs on social media after a 'cyber-fight' over a particular topic has taken place, for example the raging arguments over whether it is a parent's choice to immunise their own children. When there is a 'harm factor' involved the relativistic position becomes dangerous as, for example, it can adversely affect herd immunity and those who aren't able to immunise their children due to immune disorders, those who do not have the luxury of choice.

The CoI values the virtues of a socially situated learner who can collaboratively work at discovering truth and building knowledge. When this occurs online, social media can be a powerful tool for gathering momentum, spreading awareness and generating a powerful mass response to topical issues such as climate change or the export of live cattle. People signing online petitions or spreading videos until they 'go viral' are acting as citizen journalists and activists. Often images from natural disasters or military coups are captured by ordinary citizens and hit instagram or reddit before the news teams can pick up the story. There is much power in the hands of the ordinary citizen and it is worth using such examples in the classroom to encourage students not to underestimate the responsibility that comes with this type of communication. Negative examples may include the infamous house party that spiralled out of control when Corey Delaney, then 16, advertised it online on MySpace in 2008 and wasn't at all sorry when his parents house in Melbourne was wrecked as a result.

The Problem of Subjectivism:

It is problematic to assert that it is the social media networking technology or software that is to blame. The users of such technology must be critiqued, not the means by which such actions are carried out. While social networking does encourage users to gather contacts and post numerous images of any and all activities with

which one is engaged, this can be used to highlight political inequities just as easily as it can be used to participate in self-indulgent competitions to attract 'likes'. Yet it is particularly contentious to declare that virtue ethics is a normative moral framework. As Crisp notes, we cannot definitely detail the substantive position of a virtue ethicist. In answering the question of 'how should one live?' with 'virtuously', we do not arrive automatically at a set of normative guidelines for living or moral judgement (2010, p.22). This I call the problem of subjectivism, and Crisp identifies that a similar problem could befall virtue epistemology. The strength of virtue ethics and of virtue epistemology are likewise their weakness: both approaches appeal to common sense (2010, p.34). The problem facing both is the universalisation of 'common sense intuitions' and the normative guidelines that follow from these as virtues as well as epistemic intuitions. What we consider to be common sense varies culturally as well as through time, and such 'intuitions' are often or at times contradictory (Crisp, 2010, p.34).

Yet, the strength of this pragmatic approach is its pluralism that allows for multiple perspectives without collapsing into cultural relativism or anarchy. I would like to be optimistic and claim that most people would happily agree that if he had any common sense, Corey Delaney would not have advertised his house party online. I see a link here between virtue ethics, virtue epistemology and the Philosophy for Children pedagogy that aims at developing a holistic learner who is a member of several socially situated communities (that sometimes tug in opposite directions). The pragmatic nature of P4C sees its emphasis on critical, creative and caring thinking, which links well with virtue ethics and virtue epistemology. These frameworks share the same strength that may also be a weakness as they allow space for context whereby the individual is understood as a socially situated human being who thinks as well as feels. These frameworks thus allow for subjectivism and diversity, but their pluralism is overarched by normative guidelines, with the principles (or virtues) employed, along with their blurry boundaries, worked out case by case.

Using Social Networking and Sharing Platforms:

The problem of subjectivism is particularly evident on the internet. If the pragmatic nature of the CoI supports the development of intellectual virtues as well as social or moral virtues, I'd like to believe it is these skills that can be immediately applied not only to other face-to-face discussions, but also to virtual discussions. We have access to many diverse ideas and opinions through blogs, news shows, satirical websites, self-created and uploaded videos, images and discussion boards. We seek out information and we stumble across it, as do our children and students. We want them to be able to understand and process what they find, yet how can they distinguish between valuable sources of reliable information and the plethora of dross? The answer, I argue, lies not in censorship necessarily, but, rather in teaching those who engage with such mediums the ability to critically discern between them.

There is much discussion about multiliteracies as the need for educational institutions to catch up and keep up with the speed of individual technological literacy is felt. Gee (2004) claims that new technologies are redefining the world of literacy and basic notions of what it means to be literate. Children today are learning more about literacy outside of school than they are in, especially through electronic and digital devices and software. Teachers increasingly need to look critically at the influence of media on in-school and out-of-school literacies, but educational institutions cannot afford to ignore these new media platforms. Technological tools must be embraced if we wish to teach our students to engage with them critically as well as creatively. Literacy is reinventing itself, with the advent of new information technologies and the complex multiliteracies allowed by them; but the critical thinking skills required to engage with different texts is the same.

Thinking first trained in communities of inquiry may be applied to social media and online networking sites as it is useful to remember that you and the others you engage with online are forming a community. The intellectual and moral virtues developed in CoIs allow the reader of new texts to ask important questions about the nature of their validity, aim, evidence, scope and intention. The critically engaged user of social and mass media will ask questions such as, what can I believe to be true? What is the intention of the author? What implications does such a view have for society? And, can I make an oppositional reading of this text?

One example of the difficulty in evaluating epistemic evidence occurred recently on Facebook. During October, you may have seen some of your Facebook friends change their profile pictures to an image of a giraffe. You may also have read the accompanying joke that, if you didn't answer correctly, you were told you had to change your Facebook profile picture to an image of a giraffe for 3 days. This is the riddle: *At 3:00 am, the doorbell rings and you wake up. Unexpected visitors, It's your parents and they are there for breakfast. You have strawberry jam, honey, wine, bread and cheese. What is the first thing you open?* (A: your eyes). However, at the same time, a message started rapidly circulating on Facebook that by changing your profile picture to an image of a giraffe, you allow hackers to steal your Facebook login details and remotely control your computer due to the weakness in JPEG images of giraffes. It turns out that the warning message was the actual hoax, not the joke itself. But by then spreading the joke also spread the paranoia associated with the hoax. The question is, as this occurs, how do we know which message to trust?

Exploring this idea within your classroom could be done via a concept game of 'what is a hoax' and an exploration of related questions such as when is a hoax a political act or how do we know if a cyber hoax is illegal or immoral? Think of email chain letters, scams and the like. There are blurry boundaries between a joke, cyber activism, and an illegal or immoral hoax. I asked my Facebook friends who believed what when the giraffe game went viral. Some did Google searches for answers and this revealed opposing answers to the dilemma as some websites were warning people not to change their Facebook profile picture to a giraffe and some adopted a 'better safe than sorry' attitude. Most friends said they trusted sources such as Hoax-Slayer or their 'clever friends'. Hoax-Slayer is a website that was established in 2003 by Australian Brett Christensen who details his mission statement as follows:

The goal of the Hoax-Slayer Website is to help make the Internet a safer, more pleasant and more productive environment by:

- Debunking email and Internet hoaxes
- Thwarting Internet scammers
- Combating spam
- Educating web users about email and Internet security issues.

(<http://www.hoax-slayer.com/about.html>)

The philosophical training of CoIs can come in handy when identifying hoaxes. Critical thinking skills include discernment and understanding that there are at least two sides to every opinion, story or news report. Encouraging multiple perspectives on mass and social media topics is a good thing because it encourages a healthy skepticism that supports informed knowledge.

Social media can raise awareness about important topics and help individuals to feel connected to a global community. Yet online discussions are unstructured and may be restricted in various ways. Important non-verbal cues may be lost online when expression is limited by emoticons or text speak. Twitter further restricts conversations by limiting each tweet to 140 characters. In contrast to a CoI, online discussion is usually non-instantaneous, asynchronous, democratic and relativistic. The forms of evidence used vary greatly in credibility from subjective examples to links provided to other websites, including articles or blogs. In these ways, social media is not the best forum to convey a complex philosophical argument, and yet the power of opinions on social media to persuade others (including large businesses and governments!) and to disseminate ideas is undisputed. It is precisely due to the power and impact of social media that we need to train users to be critically as well as compassionately engaged with it.

What we should be aiming for in terms of social media is the same self-awareness aimed for in CoIs; namely, to realise we are one amongst others and apply the Golden Rule: treat others as you wish to be treated and avoid treating others in a harmful manner. What constitutes harm is a matter of common sense, pausing to reflect on whether you'd be happy if someone treated you in a particular manner and then proceed accordingly. This intention to avoid harm and engage with others in a constructive manner constitutes virtuous behaviour, whether online or face-to-face. With online and in-school bullying as an example of anti-social behaviour that needs rectifying, the training of character is one aspect of trying to solve a difficult and complex problem.

Conclusion:

The virtual public sphere is exciting as ideas are discussed and debated in a transparent and engaging manner. Yet the openness of the internet also makes it a public forum that may be used to voice criticism. The technological tools themselves are value neutral; it is the character that employs them for constructive or destructive means which may be labelled virtuous or vicious. At worst, unstructured discussion online is full of misinformation and promotes superstition and anti-scientism. It may allow for negative personal attacks or bullying. At best it fosters genuine learning through expansive dialogue that respects those engaging in the discussion and encourages self reflection. To foster the latter, we must train the habits of the individual that include critical and creative thinking, the intellectual and moral virtues, discernment and empathy. Instead of dealing with concerns about social media networking sites by banning their use, we ought to teach our students to engage critically with information sources so they have the tools they'll need when out on their own in the technological world; a world that cannot be ignored or avoided without disengaging from society.

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Starting Strong III: Unpacking the Metaphor

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Abstract

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) last year released a new publication in the 'Starting Strong' series, purporting to be a 'quality toolbox' for early childhood education and care. Leaving aside the problematic notion of quality in relation to education, we argue that there is a serious problem with the idea of education as something that can be done with a toolbox, particularly in the formative stages of young children's education. We begin by introducing the OECD publication, focussing especially on the metaphor of the toolbox. We then explore the philosophical idea of metaphor as a persuasive device, using it to 'unpack' some of the contents of the OECD toolbox, in particular the policy 'levers' that feature so prominently. We conclude with the observation that the OECD use of the toolbox as a metaphor is an intentional and surreptitious way of inserting international economic imperatives into local government education policy.

Keywords: Metaphor, early childhood education, OECD.

The OECD Toolbox

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) last year released a new publication in the 'Starting Strong' series, *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox* (OECD, 2012), described as a 'quality toolbox' for early childhood education and care (ECEC) – referred to from here on as 'the publication'. The OECD mission is defined as promoting 'policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world' (OECD, 2013). Although social well-being is included in the definition, its emphasis is clearly on the economic, as OECD specifies its current focus on helping governments in member countries and elsewhere in four main areas: markets, public finances, economic growth, and work-related skills. Given the heavy emphasis on economic matters, it seems reasonable to question the kind of tools that OECD considers beneficial for early childhood education.

The publication is accompanied by a series of documents all entitled *Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education and Care*,¹ with the name of a target country emblazoned in large type on the cover, including (so far) a separate version for Sweden, Norway, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Korea, Czech Republic, United Kingdom (England), Slovak Republic, and Finland. Presumably, naming the country implies local consultation and local relevance. The *Quality Matters* documents for all countries are remarkably similar to one another, all sharing the same three OECD authors,² with the same OECD consultants acknowledged for their work on

¹ List and access at http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/quality-matters-in-early-childhood-and-education_22269673

² The *Quality Matters* documents are authored by Miho Taguma, Ineke Litjens and Kelly Makowiecki. They are acknowledged along with Janice Heejin Kim as the OECD Early Childhood Education and Care team

preliminary drafts. The same people are credited with responsibility for the draft of the *Toolbox* publication as well, so it is understandable that much of the content of the *Quality Matters* documents is identical to sections of the master publication. Publishing purportedly local documents for specific countries is really just repeated re-badging of the original – a mechanism, we surmise, intended to increase the likelihood of subjective identification with the content, based on feelings of recognition and inclusion – ‘Oh look, it’s about us!’ Superficially framed as relevant to local contexts, the toolbox can be seen as a metaphor that appeals to familiar notions of getting things fixed, while, at the same time, advancing the OECD project of globalised economic governmentality.

The publication identifies five ‘policy levers’ as key to encouraging quality in ECEC, having positive effects on early child development and learning:

- Policy Lever 1: Setting out quality goals and regulations
- Policy Lever 2: Designing and implementing curriculum and standards
- Policy Lever 3: Improving qualifications, training and working conditions
- Policy Lever 4: Engaging families and communities
- Policy Lever 5: Advancing data collection, research and monitoring

(OECD, 2012, p. 9)

Clearly, the OECD ‘toolbox’ and its constituent ‘levers’ constitute education as a mechanical process, subject to remedies and improvements of a technician nature. There are, though, other metaphors/tropes/historical memes for education, e.g., growth, nurturing, care, training, socialisation, creative exploration, to name a few. Each appeals to specific sentiments, provides a unique emphasis, and steers thinking and practice in education in a particular direction. What, we ask, is the work being done by this new mechanical metaphor? What sentiments does it appeal to? And what are the intentions of those proposing that early childhood education might best be dealt with in terms of a toolbox consisting of a set of levers? To answer these questions, we turn now to the philosophical idea of metaphor, in particular to the way it functions as an effective rhetorical device.

The persuasive power of metaphor

Ricoeur (1977) argued that metaphors are more than tropes of language; they have the power to re-describe the world. Not merely a substitution of one name for another, metaphors establish tension between literal meaning and attributed meaning, creating new relationships with ideas that have previously gone unnoticed or that have not been put together before. The importance Ricoeur attributed to metaphorical language lays in the power of a well-placed metaphor to disturb our sense of reality, to expand the limits of our language and to bring about a ‘metamorphosis of both language and reality’ (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 85). Nietzsche went as far as to argue that all speech is metaphorical, with truth denigrated as ‘the duty to lie according to fixed convention’ (1990, p. 84), for the purpose of preserving at least some form of shared social life. That is to say, it is through metaphor that we create and express our understanding of reality. The point is not whether the physical or social world exists in some objective sense; rather, it is that we inevitably represent our experience or perception of reality through metaphor.

In metaphor, meaning does not inhere *within* objects or situations – it is derived *from* them, or even perhaps, *imposed upon* them. It involves writers/speakers, their intentions, the choice of words they use to represent their intentions, the reader’s/listener’s interpretation of those words, and his/her response (conscious and non-

responsible for drafting the Toolbox publication. Acknowledgement is also given for the contributions from ‘international experts’, although the nature and extent of the contributions are not made clear.

conscious, verbal and non-verbal) based on that interpretation – an interpretation itself influenced by individual experience. Once characterised as merely a linguistic decoration, metaphor is indispensable to our understanding of discourse, from the poetic through to the scientific.

We frequently use metaphor in an unconscious way, although it is fundamental to our social life and intricately interwoven in our narratives about ourselves. Lakoff and Johnson (2003/1980) argue that metaphors structure our perceptions and understandings, and affect the way we communicate ideas. As principal vehicles for understanding, metaphors play a central role in the construction of social and political reality through a ‘coherent network of entailments that highlight some features of reality and hide others. The acceptance of the metaphor, which forces us to focus *only* on those aspects of our experience that it highlights, leads us to view the entailments of the metaphor as being *true*’ (p. 157). The same authors note that metaphors were typically viewed within traditional philosophy as matters of ‘mere language’, a very limited perspective if we take into account ‘their conceptual nature, their contribution to understanding, or their function in cultural reality’ (ibid). The concern for truth in philosophy, they say, often comes out of a focus on objectivity, i.e., a search for objective (absolute and unconditional) truth – a quest that is not only impossible, but also ‘socially and politically dangerous’ (ibid, p. 159).

Most of our metaphors have evolved in our culture over a long period, but many are imposed upon us by people in power – political leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, advertisers, the media, etc. In a culture where the myth of objectivism is very much alive and truth is always absolute truth, the people who get to impose their metaphors on the culture get to define what we consider to be true – absolutely and objectively true (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003/1980, p. 160).

Lakoff & Johnson also distance themselves from the opposite extreme – a radical subjectivist version of truth/reality in which meaning is merely a matter of private feelings, experiences, intuitions and values, not impacted by external context. They promote, instead, an *experiential* paradigm of ‘reasonable objectivity’ in which scientific knowledge is still possible, while acknowledging that such theory may hide as much as it highlights. In this paradigm, real things still exist independently of us, constraining both how we interact with them and how we comprehend them, but the experientialist myth emphasises that meaning is always meaning *to* a person. Where experientialism diverges from subjectivism, they say, is in its rejection of the Romantic idea that imaginative understanding is completely unconstrained.

We see the experientialist myth as capable of satisfying the real and reasonable concerns that have motivated the myths of both subjectivism and objectivism but without either the objectivist obsession with absolute truth or the subjectivist insistence that imagination is totally unrestricted. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003/1980, p. 228).

The use of metaphor as a rhetorical device is not new to philosophy, but the current call in the field of critical discourse analysis is for a more rigorous treatment of the political work done under the name of metaphor (see, for example, Hart, 2008; Musolff, 2012). Musolff (2012) cites the case of a Swiss politician whose racist remarks were excused because his metaphorical expression was considered merely ‘subjective imagery’ rather than factually incorrect statements, indicating that a ‘dominant nonchalant attitude to the meaning value of metaphors allows speakers to express and insinuate even the most extreme views under the guise of “subjectively” coloured figurative speech’ (Musolff, 2012, p. 303). Being a competent political speaker/writer, Musolff argues, implies the expert use of metaphors to promote potentially problematic political concepts without incurring the risk of being held legally or socially responsible. To be aware of the power of metaphor in this regard renders more visible the political intentions of the otherwise innocent wordsmiths.

Developing further on the use of metaphor in critical discourse analysis, Hart (2008) argues that metaphors may very well originate in discourse, but then become embedded at the conceptual level, privileging one understanding over another and creating a ‘cognitive unconscious’ (p. 94). Accepting that metaphor has a powerful influence on our perceptions, our understandings and our communication, we argue here that it is problematic for such influence to operate at an unconscious level. Inherent in education is a focus on bringing awareness to our personal and social situations, a focus that may be undermined by the insertion of metaphorical

elements to the education discourse in ways that are not considered or evaluated in terms of their possible outcomes. The metaphorical toolbox being offered by OECD is therefore queried here in terms of its role in the construction of social and political reality, and, as with any metaphor, how it may highlight some features of reality while hiding others. Our intention is to query the ‘socially and politically dangerous’³ imposition of a single metaphor in a territory such as education, especially when that metaphor appeals to heart-warming images like Bob the Builder⁴ and his toolbox, and even more especially when those images are projected by a hegemonic body as influential as OECD.

Unpacking the toolbox

As an attempt to ‘unpack’ the toolbox and bring awareness to some of the OECD constructions, we now apply the above ideas about metaphor to the OECD toolbox and its constituent levers. We examine the OECD intentions for these levers, and explore the potential impact of some different possible metaphors.

The ‘tool’ metaphor is not new in philosophy. For Aristotle, everything has a *telos* – a purpose or final end, so to understand the significance of what something is, one needs to examine its purpose. The *telos* of a knife, for instance, is to cut, because it is created by humans to serve that very purpose. Heidegger’s early tool analysis explored the relational nature of tools and the ‘in order to’ quality, while his later work on technology (Heidegger, 1977) argues that modern technology is a ‘setting-upon nature’, a challenging that calls for only certain aspects to reveal themselves, while others remain concealed. He uses the example of a river, which, dammed up for a power plant, becomes a ‘water power supplier’ deriving its essence from its utility as a resource for the power plant. In that mode, the river is revealed not in its essence but in its utility. Under modern technology, everything is ordered to stand by as a ‘standing-reserve’, where objects lose their character and are only partially revealed. Dewey argued that, as a society, we gain nothing if our progress towards freedom is merely a vocational exercise to ‘increase in the mechanical efficiency of the human tools of production’, while we leave the intelligence which controls those tools as the ‘exclusive possession of remote scientists and captains of industry’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 300). What link these analyses for us are the common threads of goal orientation / extrinsic purpose in relation to people, and an instrumental view of human endeavour as something to be harnessed for the benefit of self-interested others.

In day-to-day life, use of a toolbox generally signifies something needing to be built, repaired, or otherwise modified. A new building may be under construction, some equipment may be broken, or existing resources may need alteration or improvement to their design. We can readily conjure up images of trades people at work, applying their various skilled crafts to the improvement of the way things work, without eventual users having to be too bothered with the fine detail. From experience, it is easy to associate the use of a toolbox with enhancing the quality of our life and our surroundings. For a tradesperson wielding the tools, the toolbox may be a strong feature of his/her identity, and the tools a means to provide the wherewithal for economic and social survival. Instances of tools not being effective or not working properly are addressed through the acquisition of better tools or through the use of other tools to effect repair. Either way, the image of a toolbox and its contents have generally positive connotations for most. Left unexamined, the OECD ‘Toolbox’ is likely to be presumed as beneficial. It is not clear though, from the metaphor or from the publication, what it is that needs constructing, repairing or redesigning. It is also not clear who the toolbox is for, how it is to be used, or what ends it will achieve.

OECD is quite specific about the kind of tools contained in its toolbox – we are dealing with a series of levers, as in ‘policy levers’. In physics, a lever may be defined as something like a rigid bar resting on a pivot,

³ To use the words of Lakoff and Johnson, cited earlier.

⁴ Bob the Builder is an animated television series created in the UK and screened around the world, depicting Bob and the Can-Do Crew hammering out solutions that lead to a job well done, demonstrating the power of positive-thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and follow-through. (http://www.bobthebuilder.com/usa/about_bob.asp)

used to help move a heavy or load with one end when pressure is applied to the other, although levers can take other forms, like a pulley or a set of cogs. The mechanical advantage of a lever is that one can (a) move a heavy object using less force than the weight of the object, (b) propel an object faster by applying a force at a slower speed, or (c) move an object further than the distance you apply to the lever. It was Archimedes who claimed that given a place to stand, and a long enough lever, he could move the earth – although impossible distances would be involved.⁵ From the original French *lever* (to raise or lift up), the word ‘leverage’ now commonly signifies efficiency in accomplishing a task, although in general parlance the lever retains much of the nuance associated with the application of mechanical force – a nuance that is not well-suited to educating young children. Neither unsuitability nor impossibility, however, seems to deter OECD in its quest to move the discursive ‘world’ (of early childhood education) with such levers.

We argued earlier that metaphor has the power to re-describe the world, disturbing our sense of reality, and that the acceptance of any particular metaphor bring us to focus *only* on particular aspects and to view the entailments of the metaphor as being *true*. Noted too was the social and political danger of a single metaphor for our social reality being imposed upon us by powerful agencies, which thereby get to define what we consider to be true. Clearly, the OECD selection of the toolbox and its constituent levers as an appropriate metaphor for education signals something of a worldwide agenda for education. As with any metaphor for education, the selection highlights some aspects while hiding others, a concealment that can’t be exposed by staring more intently at the same image. To examine the extent of what remains hidden, we need to look differently, so we now explore some possibilities for a different kind of box as an image for education – not a toolbox, but (say) a lunchbox.

The Urban dictionary⁶ has ‘lunchbox’ as a pejorative term for a clueless person lacking common sense (That kid is such a lunchbox!), a term possibly evolved from the phrase ‘out to lunch’ to indicate an absent minded individual. The newer term ‘lunch bag’ is applied to a person not even good enough for the box! But the metaphor is richer than that, in use of the word ‘lunchbox’ to refer to particular aspects of human genitalia – hardly appropriate as a metaphor for early childhood education, so we don’t intend to elaborate on that here.

Ignoring the urban dictionary, and exploring the metaphor further to interpret some of OECD’s pet phrases, our lunchbox could contain a ‘quality goals and regulations’ sandwich (in which the real content is limited by the form of its outer layers), a ‘curriculum standards’ biscuit (something to get your teeth into, to nibble in small quantities over a cup of tea perhaps, but ultimately not very good for you), or a ‘data collection, research and monitoring’ vitamin drink (a refreshing lift in vitality when energy or enthusiasm for various research projects is flagging or when the findings of the research leaves one feeling somewhat dull and listless). We could discuss education in terms of making fillings more palatable, disguising uninteresting content with attractive sugar coatings, or achieving healthy outcomes through balanced diets. Each of these ingredients would give us a different taste of what life is like in early childhood centres – and give us something to chew over at the same time, as a different perspective to shed light on OECD’s agenda.

What if education were perceived in terms of an art box, covering a range of media, with an assortment of paintbrushes, various shades of colour, and some sculpting tools perhaps? Rather than treating early childhood as a load to be moved with levers, we might be playing with shades of light, or experimenting with perspective and vanishing points to gain fresh insights into the play of early childhood. Think: creative composition, contrast, collage, connoisseurship, colour harmony, complementary colours, naturalism, pictorial space, sketches, shadows and landscapes, or even trompe l’oeil, texture, spatial depth, symmetry, or if one wanted to be

⁵ If this feat were attempted in a uniform gravitational field with an acceleration equivalent to that of the Earth, the corresponding distance to the fulcrum which a human of mass 70 kg would be required to stand to balance a sphere of 1 Earth mass, with center of gravity 1m to the fulcrum, would be... about 9 million light years. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lever>)

⁶ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=lunchbox>

really technical – a dash of *sprezzatura*! (nonchalance). Or perhaps, a certain *Je ne sais quoi* – suggesting the impossibility of defining the term itself.

Or more worryingly, a Pandora's Box. According to the classical Greek myth, Pandora disobeyed instructions and opened the box (actually, a beautiful jar) unleashing all manner of evil upon the world. To open Pandora's Box is to perform an action that may seem small or innocent, but that turns out to have severe and far-reaching consequences. On a brighter note for us in education is that one more thing lay at the bottom – the Spirit of Hope.

Our examples of the lunchbox, the art box and Pandora's Box may be considered a form of light-hearted play and not a serious contender in the quest to 'box up' education into a worldwide distribution package for consumption by the New Zealand Business Round Table⁷, or by other organisations with an economic agenda. They are presented here just to point out the degree to which a single metaphor limits all sorts of other possibilities. There may be images from our three 'not tool' boxes that speak to us positively about aspects of education: e.g., from the lunchbox – life being about balance, or use of suitable ingredients; from the art box – adopting various perspectives, or dealing the intangible; or from Pandora's box – the spirit of hope despite all adversity. If the OECD metaphor is realised, these different possibilities are limited in that they have little to do with the overall instrumental nature of the toolbox and its mechanical contents. In the wielding of the toolbox, education is clearly instrumental, solutions to problems are technical, and the work of early childhood education is to be achieved through leverage – i.e., the application of force with the intention of moving loads, usually with a minimum outlay of effort.

Conclusion

We conclude with the observation that the OECD use of the toolbox as a metaphor is an intentional, powerful way of inserting international economic imperatives into local government education policy, in ways that the citizenry is not aware of. Depending on one's perspective, such insertion may be construed as a form of benevolent aristocracy focussed on the promotion of economic prosperity on a global scale, supported by 'policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world' (OECD, 2013). Alternatively, the toolbox may be seen as an insidious and purely instrumental mechanism to advance OECD's express agenda to 'restore confidence in markets and the institutions and companies that make them function' (ibid.), and in that quest, to promote economic growth and productivity without too much concern for benevolence.

'Toolbox' is a concept clearly at home in the world of machines or on the construction site – territories heavily dependent on the world of physics, forces, engineering and mechanical structures – territories where human characteristics (emotions, sentiments and ambitions) and social concerns (negotiations, communities, equality, justice, democracy and protest) signify trouble, interfering as they do in the teleological goal of growth at all costs, a towering edifice, a useful structure or an efficient piece of engineering.

Even if OECD activity is beneficial for world populations (debatable, selective at best), our concluding position is that the end does not justify the means. One of the features of democracy in practice is groups of people making decisions for themselves in an informed way, albeit that much decision making is delegated to representative bodies. The use of a metaphorical device such as the toolbox serves to obfuscate rather than clarify, so does not provide a basis for decision to be made in an informed way. Although our democracy is under siege from many angles, it is still better than having whole populations resign their lives to a distant aristocracy, benevolent or otherwise.

⁷ The Business Round Table is a New Zealand initiative that describes itself as 'a business group with a difference... a think tank that is a membership organisation... an association of business leaders that is also a research institute... [a group who] 'as business leaders have to play a role in public life and contribute to public debates'. <http://nzinitiative.org.nz/About+Us.html>

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Reading the im/possibility of ethics in pre-service teacher professional experiences

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Abstract

This work begins to deconstruct the ‘obligations’ pre-service teachers name and not-name in a reflection on a collection of ‘ethical events’ articulated in a capstone teacher education course that explored their philosophies of teaching and applied ethics. Obligation is more of a “matter of being claimed, in which something has a hold on us... that has us before we have it” (Caputo, p. 31) rather than the holding of a value or principle or claim for the enduring Good.

In an attempt to recognise the explosiveness of the problem of respecting alterity in writing about ethics one has an obligation to consider the ethical demands of interpretation and the groundlessness of ethics itself. Deconstruction provides the im/possibility of writing about proper names and particularities which are the condition for allowing us to speak about justice.

Acknowledging the variety of contemporary research in the area of ethics in teaching my analysis of these pre-service teachers’ writings traces major concepts and traditions in modern ethics that may have been used in alternative readings to characterise these subjective phenomena and potentially bring deeper meaning to the role morality of teaching. Reading these texts for the ‘possibility of ethics’ one might see implications for the devolution of ethical standardisation in teaching as what it means to take responsibility for responsibility as a teacher educator.

Keywords: possibility of ethics, obligation, teacher education

Introduction

An obligation is a call we receive to which we must respond, a prescriptive to which we must keep an open line. It is of the utmost importance to be able to sort out among prescriptives, to tell the difference between prescriptives to follow and prescriptives to resist, to differentiate among prescriptives, which often conflict, e.g., or which often oblige us precisely to disobey them. That is why we have always required ethics, and that is the disadvantage of speaking against ethics. (Caputo, 1993, p. 26)

How, if at all, should ethics be taught in teacher education and what kinds of understandings ought to arise from pre-service teachers to indicate that they have gained ethical insights, moral imagination and knowledge? If Codes of ethics govern professional discourse around what it means to be an ethical professional, then what kinds of implications follow for teacher educators in the contested field of applied ethics? Are these different if we claim the end of ethics, returning to morality by a way of the post-modern conscience? As a field, applied ethics works in a space of theory/practice where defined roles are claimed to indicate the contribution of a professional to society (Oakley & Cocking, 2006); but since normative questions cannot be answered once and for all, questions in applied ethics for the moral conscience must be taken with some suspicion of the metanarratives through which we are to make sense of them. Caputo claims that “incredulity is an interesting word; the great metanarratives have not been ‘refuted’ but have simply withered away and lost their power to command our belief” (1993, p. 257, endnote 49 (to pages 31-33)). This paper will explore some of the grand

stories of ethics in teaching with some post-modern relief. The aim here is to find a way in and through the reflective work of 151 pre-service teachers in a capstone course towards an understanding of different forms of moral experience in the contemporary Australian professional setting, an understanding that develops a lens through which to comment on the conditions for role morality of teaching as a profession.

To begin, the relationship between ethics and morality needs clarification. Biesta (2010) writes about Dewey's implications for the use of educational research as making decisions more intelligent, rather than describing what will work. He also makes a case using the work of Bauman with his Levinasian lineage, to talk about the problems of accountability and genuine responsibility. In this view, ethics *is* different from morality. As Critchley (1995) states: "for Levinas, the construction of a system or procedure, for formulating and testing the moral acceptability of certain maxims or judgements relating to social action and civic duty is itself derived and distinct from a primordial ethical experience that Levinas's work seeks to describe" (p. 3).

For Biesta (2010), Bauman's most convincing argument for the value of a post modern morality is that "following the rules, however scrupulously, does not and will never save us from responsibility. We can always ask ourselves and we can always be asked by others whether our following of some set of (ethical) rules is or was the right thing to do – and we will never have a conclusive answer" (p. 62). Thus the moral relationship is characterised by *real* responsibility, and, as Biesta explains, this is "one-sided, nonreciprocal and nonreversible" (2010, p. 63). The moral gift is given without any expectation, it is apprehension of the other; "the way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me" (Critchley, p.5, citing Levinas *TEL 21/TI 50*). For Derrida, the moral gift is beyond "any possible restitution, there would be need for my gesture to operate without debt, in absolute ingratitude" (Derrida, *ECM 24* cited in Critchley, p. 111).

The possibility for this moral relationship, Biesta reports, "*has* been neutralized by (modern) society" (2010, p. 66), via sociality and socialisation. The latter in three ways: in a structured society people feel they are part of a chain of command whereby their capacity to have moral effect on the suffering of others is limited and overreached by the impacts of others above and below them; that some people are exempted from moral subjectivity (dehumanized) and finally, the receiving 'object' of moral action is reconstituted as a set of traits without a recognisable moral self.

Biesta argues that the path of least resistance emerging in today's culture of accountability has enabled the relationships between schools/teachers and students/parents to become depoliticised and stripped of real responsibility to each other and to community as a democracy. The crucial argument Biesta makes from his analysis of Bauman's post-modern ethics and the three effects of socialisation (the impact of structured society), is that today's "culture of accountability poses a serious threat to the possibility of proximity" (2010, p. 71) and thus a serious threat to the merely anesthetised (not amputated) moral conscience of humanity. Proximity is the possibility of "attention and waiting" which is both a personal task to be performed over and over again, but "also a professional task, that is, if we are willing to see that responsibility is an essential component of what educational relationships are made of" (Biesta, 2010, p. 72).

Kostogriz and Doecke (2011), in their work on the rise of a neoliberal culture of accountability and standardisation in education in Australia by way of NAPLAN testing and MySchool, describe the impact on the ethical subjectivities of serving teachers in a Melbourne school. They argue that whilst many teachers accept the mantle of accountability, its impact is felt by teachers in the erosion of human relationships and sense of genuine commitment to and responsibility for school community. The reification of the relationships between the intellectual labour of teaching and measurable outputs of learning works to "flatten" the complexity of social relations (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2011, p. 404). The implications are an intensification of perennial tensions such as between justice and caring for example; and the conditions under which educational values are understood.

Dominant and often taken-for-granted assumptions about what is important, what is valued and what education ought to strive to achieve permeate teacher education. Being ethical/moral is about becoming sensitive to and imaginative about intentions, actions, consequences; being able to unpick lines of justification, and ways for making moral judgment; and attuned to the needs of self and others. It is not about shifting responsibility for ethical judgment onto others and shrugging one's shoulders as if there's nothing one can do.

From distinctive post-modern perspective/s, such as Levinas, Derrida and others, proximal relations are characterized by attention, connection and response. The openness to another's call is a presumption of 'attunement', the capacity and willingness to genuinely connect with others that is generous but also risky because the new connection may bring "harm or creative transformation" (Fenwick, 2008, p. 14). These interconnections emphasise "the importance of *relations* among beings, and of 'becomings' as generated within these relations, not pre-existing in them"; and thus Fenwick suggests that educators' sense of ethical responsibility is inherent in their capacity to "focus on the immediate, [be] open to possibility, leap into uncertainty, [and] care without knowledge" (2008, p. 16).

Given this understanding, to ask pre-service teachers to demonstrate moral imagination or ethical knowledge and so forth is largely an artificial task; having said this, it is better to have a constructed form of assessment than to overlook the field altogether. The task needs to be read for the intentions of the author, for the learning contexts and histories in which they arose, for the structure that was externally imposed and the policies and norms in which they were experienced. Given these reservations, suspicions and uncertainties, an analysis of the work of pre-service teachers who write about their ethical understandings needed to acknowledge the basic lack of foundation, or of multiple overlapping foundations, of different forms of disagreement and consensus and the inherent complexity of the tensions and relationships that continually arise around ethics and morality in education. Peters states that in theorizing the legitimation of education in terms of imaginative invention (paralogy) rather than on a principle of consensus or the logic of maximum performance "we might begin to bear witness to the *differend*, to a form of education based on difference, where the little narratives, still largely unwritten, are not forced to resolve themselves into a monologue" (1995, p. xxxii).

Continuing

Thus it is with concepts gleaned from a post-structural ethics linked with deconstruction that this work develops the theoretical basis for the tasks of exploring in depth the articulations of hundreds of pre-service teachers whose writings have been collected over the past several years. These students, transitioning through various permutations of a secondary teacher education program, reflect on their perceptions of an ethical event or series of events occurring during a final year professional placement experience. For a greater majority of the pre-service teachers whose work I have taken through initial stages of content analysis, these writings are an externalization of their struggles with some concept of doing justice on behalf of students, of being or becoming a 'fair teacher' in action and intent and in the context of policies, procedures and received wisdom.

Some pre-service teachers are cognisant of the need for proximity with students, as this excerpt indicates:

I found that my students wanted to get to know about my life and how I dealt with the world but I also wanted to get to know them better, to create relationships with them and gain their trust so that I might know them better to aid with their learning. ... My ethical issue with these students was that I grappled with the desire to move away from course content, if that was what the students were interested in at the time and allowing for myself to be seen on a more 'human' level to these students... I very much wanted to engage my students in meaningful learning through reference to my personal experience and through more personal relationships ... but I felt that the overall attitudes held by teachers in the staffroom and by my supervising teacher, was that they were against it. (pre-service teacher A)

Pre-service teachers are often striving to make sense of their experiences with practicing mentors and colleagues. Sometimes there are obstacles to being able to make sense of an experience and a tension in the expectations they have of their context and conditions, or the actions and expressed beliefs of others, as is the case with this example – this gives reason to look for another way around. Here, the pre-service teacher sometimes reveals something new, a possibility of becoming something else, or something different emerges.

In *The ethics of deconstruction* Derrida is given an ethical possibility with the work of Levinas (Critchley, p. 3). Uncertainty is a feature of moral responsibility in two respects – the other to whom the agent responds is unknowable, and in responding to one other, there are other others whose calls are neglected. Thus moral agents

ought to pay “attention to the singularity of the other, the singularity of the situation...” (Derrida, 1999, p. 78) and ‘endless difference’ (*différance*). Derrida speaks of the essential perpetuation of *aporia* or ‘undecidability’ where the recognition that “‘I don’t know what to do’ ... is not the negative condition of decision. It is rather the possibility of a decision” (Derrida, 1999, p. 66). This decision requires preparation, knowledge, analysis, but it must go beyond knowledge into the unknown which is the ‘terrible experience’ of ethical responsibility.

Derrida asserts that undecidability is not opposed to decision, but is a condition of responsibility. He states

[i]f you don’t experience some undecidability, then the decision would simply be an application of a programme, the consequence of a premise or of a matrix... [it] would simply be the application of a rule, ... and there would be no problem, there would be no decision. Ethics and politics, therefore, start with undecidability. (Derrida, 1999, p. 66)

Without a sense of undecidability, decisions are not genuine. Undecidability is part of the relations in which humans are embedded. Ethical responsibility is a “phenomenal and relational dynamic” (Fenwick, 2008, p. 5) where one’s obligation “calls forth a sense of duty to care for self and others extending beyond one’s own self-interest, and accountability to others for one’s actions” (*ibid*).

The ethical events pre-service teachers describe and for which this paper is a theoretical backlight, are framed with Derrida’s notion of *aporia*. The notion of *aporia* is used to describe the phenomenological state of being in the midst of moral complexity; and as a mundane feature of the highly emotional and political work of teaching. It is used here as a flag for pre-service teachers to become cognisant of during their professional experience placement, and to explain the difficulty of resolving these kinds of aspects of being a teacher, such as the example given above. This is not to say, however, that the writings of pre-service teachers can be characterised by an unknowing; often, in fact, they report clear processes, procedures and policies based in stable values and structural worldviews.

In a discussion of the educational value of the concept of *aporia* the work of Burbules (2000) is helpful. He states that central to the notion of *aporia* is a “sense of being lost”; it is “a problem of having arrived in an unfamiliar location, and a riddle of uncertain signification” (p. 175). He explains that the opposite of *aporia* is a *poros*, which means ‘way’. For Burbules, when faced with *aporia*, individuals either find themselves lost and confused, or trace out a way or rule to follow. In the case of pre-service teachers, how can they find a way to go on, in the face of a moral problem or challenge? Burbules continues:

there are different kinds of *aporia*. The *aporia* of the Meno is an epistemic emptiness; at that moment, one knows nothing, and does not know what to think or say or do next-hence, paralysis, numbness. There is no path in sight. But a different kind of *aporia* is to have lost one’s way, to be confused; there are too many paths from which to choose. Different still is an *aporia* in which one cannot recognize a path that is already there. And yet another is an *aporia* in which the path is apparent, but one cannot or will not follow it (perhaps because the destination is unknown, perhaps because it is known and unpleasant). In all of these cases, one does not know how to go on, but for very different reasons. (2000, p. 179)

Dilemmas have long been understood as interrelated parts of the ‘web’ of teachers’ work that have both ethical and epistemological dimensions (Lyons, 1990). Complex webs, passages, uncertainties, *aporias* are the stuff of teaching, learning, education, as Burbules (2000) explicates. Lyons (1990) asserts that ethics and epistemology are explicitly connected because morality rests in people’s relationships to each other, raising “the question of interpretations; that is, how to make sense of ... knowing” (p. 168). This is important because of the assumption that teacher “dilemmas come out of working relationships between people... that are fed by the everyday interactions between them, that happen over time, and that have no real guarantee of success even though they require daily response and action” the pre-service teacher is exposed to the challenging idea that, “however, resolved, the teacher lives with conflict” (Lyons, 1990, p. 165).

Colnerud's (1997) work identified various types of ethical conflict in teachers' work in an empirical study based in Sweden with 189 teachers and 223 dilemmas. She explored the professional conditions that help to clarify how these arise. She claims that today's "teachers are parts of systems and caught in complicated structures, which may be morally desensitising" (Colnerud, 2003, p. 560). But pre-service teachers are not, it seems, as susceptible to ethical desensitisation, at least initially. Rather, many express a personally vigorous perception of injustice, of the use and abuse of power and of personal obligation to the needs of others, as is seen in the following excerpt from a pre-service teacher's reflective writing:

I wonder if as a new teacher, I have felt more strongly about the situation because I have not yet been exposed or 'desensitised' to such experiences. I have a genuine concern for a lot of the students I taught as their day-to-day life may often seem like something out of a book or movie. This particular situation may not sit perfectly within the context of an ethical dilemma, and does not align with any cases from *The Ethical Teacher* (Campbell, 2003), but it does not sit well within my ethical beliefs, therefore I felt it worthy to discuss. (pre-service teacher B)

Pre-service teachers presume differently about the nature of fulfilling their ethical or moral obligations. The kinds of basic moral tensions they explored largely consisted in issues around notions of fairness in the context of the emotional and individual care of students and the implementation of school policies, especially discipline policies and required curriculum. They are struggling with their emotions and their perception of what it takes to be a professional – objective marking of quality not effort; social distance rather than personal knowledge; enforcement of rules; what it means to provide 'equal' treatment, etc.

The power of the notion of *aporia* is in describing the groundlessness of ethics as a way of helping pre-service teachers to identify and accept feelings of uncertainty, and not to shy away from these but to find them essential in developing ethical sensitivity to their conditions. These states are important for learning, but can be overwhelming, so pre-service teachers sometimes retreat and pull back from them. Here, different examples from two other pre-service teachers write about the nature of ethics in teaching, making appeals to the role, policies and hierarchical organisation:

teaching brings with it many situations in which a teacher must make an ethical decision. The decision may go against one's personal beliefs, but in the end a teacher is part of a profession that involves abiding by a set of standards and codes to ensure that the institute as a whole is protected. (pre-service teacher C)

Although shocking and somewhat stressful, this experience really helped me to clearly and openly define this idea of 'the line' between Professional Interest and the 'friend' type relationship. It also helped me to understand the policies within the school, as well as the existing 'chain of command'. (pre-service teacher D)

Two of the three characterise their obligations as professionals ethically, looking to the structure, process and protection of the greater whole. The other (pre-service teacher B) does so with a more moral bent, feeling the way to understanding their students' conditions of life despite the lack of exemplar in the literature or a sense of fit.

The work of Shapira-Lischinsky (2010) posited five dichotomous ethical tensions characterising teachers' work, as an extension of the work completed by Colnerud (1997) who distinguished several categories of norms that lead to conflicts in teacher's work: ethical 'interpersonal' values; task-specific internal professional norms; institutional norms; social conformity norms and self-protecting norms. These each relate to the teacher's interactions with students, parents and colleagues. Another pre-service teacher explains how ethical problems arose during their placement:

During my internship there were several times where I had to stop and think about what actions to take next, based on the greater good for all parties involved, and in particular, the students... (pre-service teacher E)

Here, a classical ethical tension lies with the perception of the greater good and the particularities of individuals involved; and the need for the pre-service teacher to *stop* and to *think*; to hold still and stable so that the threads of ethical practice might be woven together to make some sense of the good and the right. These threads are re-articulated in Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011) as dichotomous tensions:

1. Caring climate versus formal climate
2. Distributive justice versus school standards
3. Confidentiality versus school rules
4. Loyalty to colleagues versus school norms
5. Family agenda versus educational standards (p. 651)

For instance, the dichotomous tension between distributive justice and school standards is explained as “teachers’ perceptions of tension between distributive justice (rewards appropriate for effort) and school standards which follow clear criteria regarding decision-making at school” (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011, p. 653). What counts as relevant student factors for special treatment from pre-service teachers? That is, what factors mean that there is a victim of unfair policy for whom there are reasons against the application of a rule or policy? One pre-service teacher reported being counselled by their teacher-supervisor to take a more caring approach to an individual under hardship, whilst the pre-service teacher’s individual inclinations were to follow the school policies consistently and rigidly in order to be ‘fair’. This is a case in which a lack of sensitivity on behalf of the pre-service teacher was ‘corrected’ by a more experienced practitioner.

The NSW Code of Conduct states that all employees of the Department must be “committed to social justice by opposing prejudice, injustice and dishonesty” (2010, p. 3.) Having a sense of injustice involves the feelings of outrage against perceptions of injustice and of deservedness/desert. But for Caputo, the “law falls short – inevitably, structurally - of justice, which deals in proper names. ... you should not apply laws to individuals, but individuals to the law... The individual, who always knows better than the law, always protests ‘but this case is different’. That is because ‘this’ is always different (even as difference always involves a ‘this’), and justice is a function of the ‘this’” (1993, p. 89).

A dilemma can be framed as a choice between equally distasteful ‘horns’ and used in the teaching of ethics to differentiate the implications of meta-ethical theories. It can be a pedagogical tool. As one pre-service teacher explains, paraphrasing Campbell (2003), it is

a predicament that entails a choice concerning two equally problematic, commendable, or unsatisfactory options. The choice has unpredictable degrees of advantage or disadvantage for the agents involved. Often the dilemma involves two competing rights or ethical principles. (pre-service teacher F)

In sum, the data oscillates between rich descriptions of the struggles of pre-service teachers in becoming morally sensitive and those perfunctory essays that gloss over the possible uncertainties to find clear solutions indicative of the high ground and ‘just deserts’. Some pre-service teachers report on the tension between individual rights and the good of the whole, with an appeal to laws of process. Others have a stronger eye to relations of power, control and conformity, and pull back from relational proximity with students, whilst recognising certain implications. There is also evidence of the ways in which many pre-service teachers questioningly accept the advice of their supervisors; viewing the state of things – children, policies, expectations- otherwise. As a group, much of the collected work of pre-service teachers describe a perpetual sense of unfairness that many of them effectively claim their experienced supervising teachers have forgotten or perhaps haven’t forgotten but grown weary of. These pre-service teachers test out the limits of ‘professional’ transgression when they experiment with the literal application of school policies to real human beings, and as they record their own emotional misgivings, their expectations of the responsibilities associated with difference, school-organisational roles, and the observed behaviour of others in chronological sequences of events.

How to go on?

In reading and re-reading the ‘obligations’ pre-service teachers are naming and not-naming; one must assume that there is obligation to be found. Obligation is more of a “matter of being claimed, in which something has a hold on us... that has us before we have it” (Caputo, 1993, p. 31) rather than the holding of a value or principle or claim for the enduring Good. The interpretations of these written pre-service teacher reflections through deconstruction operate on the assumption that the meaning of any particular text can never be recovered and in some sense must be re-authored. In other words, through the “very instability of meaning [deconstruction] induces”, the reading and rereading of pre-service teacher reflections on ethics exemplify a kind of authenticity towards their work and the nature of the work of teachers to subvert the need for “finalised solutions or completed understandings” (Irwin, 2013, p. 175).

In *Against Ethics* deconstruction provides the im/possibility of writing about proper names, which are the condition for allowing “us to say when and where obligation is happening, and to whom, and they help us remember” (Caputo, 1993, p.72). It faces the impossibility of justice; which is a particular justice “like the justice that would reign if each case, which is always different, were judged on its own merits without the weight of the law” (Caputo, 1993, p.269, footnote 53). Lyons argues that the complexities of ‘conflicting goods’ teachers face “requires a less confident and yet more particular wisdom” (1990, p.178). Caputo’s (1993) core conceptual and poetic analysis – of a tearing sense of obligation and the individuation of ethics as the ‘almost ineffable’ sum of sentient existence – disrupted my reading of student reflections such that the classical tensions – between justice and care, experience and novelty, wisdom and naivety – were teased open to concede ground.

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Critical Thinking in Education: Reflections on its perceived levels, method and point

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Abstract

In an increasingly information-rich and knowledge-oriented world, where the pace of political, economic, technological, scientific and communication advances often outstrips the pace of educational reform, it is pleasing to see that the development of critical thinking competency in students, at all levels, has continued to permeate educational discourse. This ought to come as no surprise. An investment now in critical thinking competency in students is a direct investment in a nation's future intellectual capital. It is why it has been embedded in the Australian curriculum. This paper, however, posits questions and concerns about the way critical thinking, including its perceived levels, method and point, has been traditionally conceived by educational theorists and practitioners. It argues that a clearer understanding of this key competency in teaching and learning is still needed and must precede attempts at finding reliable and valid ways of measuring and testing critical thinking. It argues further that critical thinking competency cannot be separated from a person's disposition to use that competency.

Keywords: philosophy of education, critical thinking, teaching critical thinking, Australian curriculum, skills and dispositions, General capabilities

Introduction

The explicit development, assessment and reporting of critical thinking competency has recently emerged as one of education's most important, albeit in theoretical and practical terms, most formidable endeavours. Long fostered and fleshed out in philosophy, its role in promoting habits of effective thinking and learning is now considered indisputable. (See Bowman, 2010.) As a key, life-long and transferable generic competency, with profound application in much wider study, work and life contexts, understanding critical thinking has continued to dominate educational discourse.

However, and unlike discipline specific competencies, where the teaching of domain or content-knowledge has largely governed proceedings, critical thinking has been deemed too broad a competency to be contained to any single learning area or discipline. Newly devised educational taxonomies of student learning, therefore, including Australia's new National Curriculum Framework: Foundation to Year 10 (<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>), have instead gravitated towards a cross-discipline embedded approach to the explicit development, assessment and reporting of critical thinking; this having been perceived as the least abrasive of the available models. (See Facione, 1990.) Consequently, the development, assessment and reporting of critical thinking, at least in the Australian context, now reside with teachers across very diverse learning areas and grade levels.

This decision by curricular developers to move, firstly, from the implicit to the explicit teaching of critical thinking, coupled with what has emerged as the preferred cross-discipline embedded approach to its teaching, has also brought with it a renewed urgency to finally find some sort of consensus as to what this key competency actually amounts to. As Jennifer W. Mulnix, professor of philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, rightly points out in her timely and invigorating paper 'Thinking Critically about Critical

Thinking' (Mulnix, 2012), 'if we are charged with teaching students to think critically, then we need to clarify the concept; otherwise we will be shooting arrows at a target that we cannot see.' (p. 464)

In this article I will firstly reflect on an interrelated batch of questions connected to the concept of critical thinking; some of which, I argue, have been the source of considerable confusion and debate. I will then examine Mulnix's account of critical thinking. Mulnix conceives of critical thinking as fundamentally a skilled activity of thought; one that 'consists in acquiring, developing, and exercising the skill of being able to grasp inferential connections holding between statements'. (Ibid, pp. 464-465) I will argue that this only captures part of the story, because critical thinking necessarily demands an antecedent dispositional element for it to be exercised. Lastly, I will suggest that recognising this fundamental dispositional element is as important to educating for thinking as are the more widely recognised inferential elements.

1. Some Confusions

Critical thinking's recent prominence on the educational scene has been accompanied by numerous and often very conflicting conceptions of this elusive competency (too many to list here) as well as how it ought to be taught. Meanwhile, the question of what critical thinking actually consists of has continued to be the cause of considerable *Angst* and anguish. (Kennedy *et al.*, 1991, Pithers & Soden, 2000) After all, what precisely is critical thinking? Uncertainty and confusion have reigned on multiple fronts: Is critical thinking a skill or disposition? Is it a matter of degree, or is it instead an all or nothing affair? What motivates us to think critically? Indeed, why ought we to think critically and what is its point? Whether or not critical thinking can be taught or measured will in large part depend on how we answer these deep philosophical questions. Let us turn first, however, to a mistake in the theory of critical thinking that has proven particularly difficult to eradicate.

On practical and theoretical reason

Now there has existed a longstanding misconception in certain circles in philosophy, evident even today, that the only possible role that critical thinking has to play in reasoning is in the determining of facts or discovering of truths. This mistake, however, of consigning the function of critical thinking to this limited role, of practical reasoning, is one that historically has afflicted the philosophy of education but also the development of ethics. Turning to the latter, and it is a misconception that some in philosophy, most notably English moral philosopher Richard M. Hare, have been eager to put to rest:

That there can be practical as well as theoretical reason was a cardinal thesis of Kant; and Aristotle, with his concept of *phronēsis*, or practical as opposed to theoretical wisdom, showed that he thought the same. But now nearly everybody, whether or not he calls himself a rationalist, seems to agree in thinking that *if* one wishes to be a rationalist (if, that is to say, one wishes to find a place for rationality in moral thinking), one has to be a descriptivist (that is to say, one has to believe that there are moral facts to be discovered). This almost universal mistake has had the most harmful consequences in recent moral philosophy... (Hare, 1989, p. 99)

I believe that Hare was right. And, moreover, that there is a parallel lesson to be learnt in the philosophy of education; where the temptation to similarly dissolve or to wed practical reason with theoretical reason still persists. In fact, one does not need to travel too far in the past to find commentators who continue to view the 'processes of thinking [as being] intertwined with the content of thought (that is domain-knowledge).' (Willingham, 2008, p. 21) Cognitive psychologist, Daniel T. Willingham, in particular, states quite explicitly how he thinks this to be the case. Moreover, he adds: 'You can teach students maxims about how they ought to think, but without background knowledge and practice, they probably will not be able to implement the advice they memorise.' (Ibid) Willingham, is of course correct to the extent that critical thinking is dependent on content or domain knowledge in order to be flexed. But, as Mulnix rightly points out:

There is a difference between having information at our disposal on the one hand, and knowing what to do with that information in order to reach reasonable and justified conclusions on the other. The former is domain knowledge, the latter is critical thinking. Willingham's criticism

seems to rest on the fact that he takes critical thinking to depend on the memorization and application of intellectual ‘maxims’. But this requires no more than a mechanical application of procedures without any need to understand the ‘deep structure’. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 470)

What Mulnix is alluding to here by ‘deep structure’ is, precisely what Hare, as well as Kant and Aristotle before him, had all forewarned us about; that there is more to critical thinking than its role in the determining of bare facts (content knowledge) or discovering of truths (intellectual maxims); and that to connect the two is to simply confute practical reason with theoretical reason.

On skills and dispositions

So what, then, is critical thinking; this, so-called, ‘deep structure’?

In 1987 the American Philosophical Association (APA) through its Committee of Pre-College Philosophy turned its attention to the critical thinking movement and to just this question. It did this by initiating a two-year inquiry using, what it called its ‘powerful qualitative research methodology known as the Delphi Method’. (Facione, 1990, p. 2) Comprising an interactive panel of forty-six experts from across Philosophy, Education, the Social Sciences and the Physical Sciences, critical thinking (CT) was eventually defined, albeit somewhat clumsily, as:

[The] *purposeful, self-regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference*, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgement is based. (Facione, 1990, p. 2, emphasis added.)

Note that by separating the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological and contextual considerations upon which judgements are based, from the judgements themselves, the Delphi panel were very deliberate in acknowledging the difference between practical reason and theoretical reason (the sort of deep structure that Mulnix refers to). And, their findings did not stop there:

CT is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, CT is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one’s personal and civic life. While not synonymous with good thinking, CT is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgements, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused on inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developing CT skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society. (Ibid)

Emerging, then, from this consensus statement was an acknowledgement that what had been proposed looked unashamedly like an intellectual or educational virtue or ideal, and, additionally, that no person is actually ‘fully adept at all skills and sub-skills that the experts found to be central to CT’. (Ibid) The implication, too, was that critical thinking competency is a matter of degree; a view that has been echoed by many others, including, more recently, by Mulnix (2012), Michael Scriven and Richard Paul: ‘No one is a critical thinker through-and-through. But only to such-and-such a degree, with such-and-such insights and blind spots, subject to such-and-such tendencies towards self-delusion.’ (Scriven & Paul, 2008)

The Delphi Report also included amongst its findings that good critical thinking was comprised of both a skill dimension and a dispositional dimension. Beginning with the skill dimension, and it was decided that critical thinking included six *central* or *core* skills, each with corresponding and clarifying sub-skills which, it was envisioned, could be used as possible future instructional or assessment strategies:

CRITICAL THINKING COGNITIVE SKILLS AND SUB SKILLS

SKILLS	SUB-SKILLS
1. Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorization • Decoding Significance • Clarifying Meaning
2. Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining Ideas • Identifying Arguments • Analysing Arguments
3. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing Claims • Assessing Arguments
4. Inference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Querying Evidence • Conjecturing Alternatives • Drawing Conclusions
5. Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating Results • Justifying Procedures • Presenting Arguments
6. Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-examination • Self-correction

Table 1: “Delphi Report” consensus list of CT cognitive skills and sub-skills. (Facione, 1990, p.6)

Just as importantly, was their widespread agreement that:

[E]ach cognitive skill, if it is to be exercised appropriately, can be correlated with the cognitive disposition to do so. In each case a person who is proficient in a given skill can be said to have the aptitude to execute that skill, even if at a given moment the person is not using the skill. (Facione, 1990, p. 11)

Most significantly, though, there was widespread disagreement when it came to deciding the precise logical or conceptual status of the sorts of personal traits, habits of mind and attitudes, in short the affective or normative dispositions, which all Delphi discussants agreed were characteristic of sound critical thinkers:

[T]here is a critical spirit, a probing inquisitiveness, a keenness of mind, a zealous dedication to reason, and a hunger or eagerness for reliable information which good critical thinkers possess but weak critical thinkers do not seem to have.’ (Facione, 1990, p. 11)

To summarise, then, the Delphi Report’s findings were: firstly, that critical thinking constitutes a purposeful self-regulatory tool of inquiry, which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, and that it is not just a body of content-knowledge. It is one member of ‘a family of closely related forms of higher-order thinking, along with, for example, problem-solving, decision making and creative thinking’ (Ibid, p. 5) Secondly, critical thinking is comprised of two modes or levels: It is both a *skilled* activity of thought, comprising of skills and sub-skills, and a *dispositional* activity of thought. Thirdly, the dispositions are, in turn, categorised as being either cognitive (if they correlate with particular procedural skills) or affective (if they are

more normative in character). Cognitive dispositions are the dispositions that are implied by the sort of reasoning that conforms to the rules of rationality and that one would typically find being taught in first year Logic. They would include, for example, 'the willingness to evaluate arguments that are congruent with one's own goals and beliefs critically'. (Edman, *et al*, 2000, p. 3) Examples of affective dispositions include being habitually inquisitive, open-minded, diligent in seeking relevant information and being fair-minded.

Controversially, though, a deep theoretical division had also clearly emerged from the Delphi Report; one, I think, that has continued to stymie contemporary educational theory: Do the sorts of affective dispositions that are pivotal to sound critical thinking (like, being trusting of reason, open-minded and flexible in one's thinking, fair-mindedness and honesty, etc.), comprise part of the *meaning* of critical thinking? That they are important, is indisputable; but are they *constitutive* of critical thinking?

It is important to pause and examine the far-reaching implications on the theory of critical thinking of how we answer this question. If affective dispositions, like being fair-minded or diligent in seeking relevant information, are *not* part of our characterisation, or are at the very least, derivative of critical thinking, then we run the risk of construing a critical thinking model that is effectively a collection of separate substantive principles, similar to, say, moral-like virtues. And as Mulnix rightly points out, 'any model of critical thinking that asserts that there are definite ends at which critical thinking aims – in terms of what we should or should not believe, or how we should or should not behave – is deeply suspicious'. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 466) It would be to beg the question. If, on the other hand, affective dispositions *are* constitutive of critical thinking, then, we require some logico-conceptual framework to accommodate them. And this effectively brings us to the broader problem of motivation: Why ought one to exercise sound critical thinking? What is its point?

I, like almost two-thirds of the contributors to the Delphi Report, believe that affective dispositions are indeed constitutive of critical thinking. And, moreover, that understanding why will go a long way towards shedding some much needed light on the related and equally essential question of *why* one ought to think critically in the first place. Critical thinking may well be, as proponents of the Delphi Report have suggested, a cognitive tool of enquiry; each one of us with varying degrees of skilfulness or proficiency in the use of the tools of reason and rationality. But, and like all other skills, it requires a *raison d'être*; a *motivation* for why one ought to learn or exercise it in the first place; and, additionally, why it presumably trumps the non-rational methods of enquiry every time.

In other words, just as it is incumbent on a complete theory of morality to provide an account of *moral* motivation prompting us into action, so, too, it is incumbent on a complete theory of critical thinking to provide an account of *critical* motivation. Critical motivation has to be a necessary, antecedent and intrinsic feature of critical thinking; part of its logical or conceptual make-up, and one which warrants explanation; especially for the purposes of educating for thinking.

2. Critical Thinking as Intellectual Virtue

In her recent account of critical thinking, Mulnix sets out to directly resolve the problem of motivation. It is an account that has been informed by Michael Scriven, Richard Paul and Linda Elder's work in the area. (Scriven and Paul, 2008a, Elder, 2007). To understand how, we first need to unpack their respective contributions to the debate.

Scriven and Paul define critical thinking not unlike their 'Delphi' predecessors had done, thirty years earlier:

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. (Scriven and Paul, 2008a)

Importantly, though, Scriven and Paul's definition of critical thinking as an intellectually disciplined process based on certain universal intellectual values, seems to suggest that they are cognizant of the need to account for critical motivation: All that we do, they would later argue, 'we do on the basis of some motivations or reasons. But we rarely examine our motivations to see if they make sense. We rarely scrutinize our reasons critically to see if they are rationally justified' (Scriven and Paul, 2008b)

Mulnix, goes a step further than Scriven and Paul by explicitly positing the existence of what she calls a *metacognitive awareness* on the part of the thinker for the need to improve his or her own thinking. Critical thinking, she announces, cannot merely consist in the mindless and mechanical application of logical principles and arguments, as suggested by those who support a purely *proceduralist* account of critical thinking and that includes amongst its proponents almost one third of the contributors to the Delphi Report. (See also Petress, 2004, Vaughn, 2005)

I think Mulnix is right, as were the majority of the Delphi contributors who likewise thought of the necessary habits of mind, crucial to sound critical deliberation, as being constitutive of sound critical thinking. So what, one might ask, does this 'metacognitive awareness' of the necessary habits of mind and attitudes constitutive of critical thinking derive from?

Paul and Elder seem to think that the answer lies simply in the critical thinking skills themselves. Preferring to call them intellectual virtues, rather than skills or dispositions, and sounding ominously like moral virtues, they include 'intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, intellectual civility, intellectual empathy, intellectual sense of justice and confidence in reason'. (Elder, 2007)

It is at this point that Mulnix's view diverges from those of her contemporaries. Unpersuaded that the aforementioned intellectual virtues can provide the case for critical motivation, Mulnix's solution is to introduce what she calls an antecedent foundational skill from which all the other intellectual virtues are allegedly derived:

If a thinker is to live up to the standards of clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, and so on, then she must first be highly capable of grasping evidential relationships that hold between statements. In other words, these other important aspects of critical thinking depend upon a prior ability to recognise inferential connections. Thus, the other skills suggested by Scriven, Paul and Elder are in fact derived from this more basic foundational ability... While I agree that critical thinking amounts to an intellectual virtue, I think that the above accounts of critical thinking fail to include this foundational skill, which is necessary for the acquisition and development of the other skills contained in the intellectual virtue of critical thinking. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 467)

For Mulnix, then, critical thinking is still an intellectual virtue, but a species of reasoning that 'consists in the ability to grasp inferential connections holding between statements in order to see a progression of evidence in the form of an argument to a specified conclusion'. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 473) The better one is at being able to do this and, importantly, the more adept one is at being able to give reasons in support of one's beliefs and to guard against fallacies, Mulnix concludes, then the better at critical thinking that person is.

To what extent, then, if at all, does Mulnix's introduction of this antecedent foundational skill resolve the problem of motivation?

The answer, I suspect, is that it does not; even though her account of critical thinking as the ability to grasp inferential connections holding between statements, is a significant step forward in explaining why the 'intellectual virtues' nominated by Paul and Elder (and what the authors of the Delphi Report called affective dispositions) are constitutive of critical thinking. After all, there exists a great deal of theoretical and empirical evidence to suggest that the values or standards of clarity, accuracy, precision, etc. are part and parcel of the processes involved in the very formation of inferential connections and the guarding against fallacies; that is, to the exercise of sound reasoning itself. However, it is far from clear how one's *proficiency* at being able to grasp inferential connections, can account for the *motivation* to exercise that skill. Being able to better grasp inferential connections holding between statements does not, in itself, suffice to motivate one to exercise its use;

any more than mastering the skill of, say, solving quadratic equations will endear anyone averse to mathematics from indulging in its use. As the authors of the Minnesota Test of Critical Thinking, too, warn:

It is not enough for the critical thinker to have skills to use reason when considering ill-defined problems. The critical thinker must also desire to use the skills even in situations in which reasonable reflection may lead to discomfort or difficult decisions on the part of the thinker. That is, the thinker must be willing to use critical thinking skills ‘against’ even her or his own opinions and biases. (Edman, 2000, p. 6.)

3. Critical Thinking as Logical Disposition

Mulnix’s mistake, I believe, can ultimately be attributed to her insistence that critical thinking is an *intellectual virtue* and fundamentally a *skilled* activity of thought, and that the development of all other cognitive skills and ‘intellectual values’ (affective dispositions) involved in critical thinking, can be entirely derived from, or justified, by her single antecedent skill.

It seems that Mulnix has been tempted by the following line of thought: A justification for the employment of sound critical thinking must come to an end somewhere. As a basic and overarching belief-forming method, the ability to grasp inferential connections holding between statements provides ‘a plausible place for such an end. So there is no need for a substantive account of our justification to employ [this] basic belief-forming method. The absence of an account poses no difficulty’. (Enoch & Schechter, 2008, p. 548)

This and other similar lines of thought in the theory of rationality are unsatisfactory, and not only because they are psychologically unsatisfying. In their paper, ‘How are Basic Belief-Forming Methods Justified?’ (2008) David Enoch and Joshua Schechter explain why such arguments fall short:

In virtue of what are we justified in employing the rules of inference and other belief-forming methods that we employ? Consider, for example, the rule of inference known as the Inference to the Best Explanation (IBE). We often reason by employing IBE, or a rule of inference like it. We are often justified in so reasoning. And we are often justified in believing that we infer justified beliefs using the rule. This justification requires explanation. Why is it that we are justified in employing IBE? Why is it that beliefs inferred from justified beliefs using IBE are themselves justified?

. . . We cannot justify our use of IBE with a justification that relies upon IBE (or otherwise assumes its privileged epistemic status) since such a justification would be objectionably circular. (Enoch & Schechter, 2008, p.547)

The problem that Enoch and Schechter rightly identify, can be generalised to other basic belief-forming methods too, including, Modus Ponens, and indeed all inferential connections that may hold between statements and on which Mulnix’s theory entirely relies.

The question of ‘how it is that we are justified in employing basic belief-forming methods is thus very pressing’ (Ibid, p. 548), particularly in our quest to account for critical motivation, And a satisfactory answer to this question is one which Mulnix’s theory of critical thinking (as fundamentally a skilled activity of thought) is ill-equipped to give.

Equally problematic is that Mulnix’s stance also lures her into some unpalatable pedagogical conclusions when recommending how to instil sound critical thinking in students:

Skills are taught (or, maybe more accurately, coached) in a rather straightforward way. It involves modelling the skill, having the student practice the skill, providing feedback on his performance, and some amount of natural talent. Though I can model the skill through a list of inferential patterns and fallacies, and I can model it through being a strong exemplar of the skill, nothing can replace repetitive practice. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 474)

If I am correct, and Mulnix's antecedent foundational skill, or indeed any other basic skill or belief-forming method, cannot account for critical motivation, then what can?

The answer, I believe, lies in the basic antecedent logical disposition that all rational, thinking beings manifest; and that is the fundamental disposition, or habit of mind, we all exhibit in seeking justification in the form of evidence or reasons for the beliefs that we hold. We do, as a matter of empirical fact, seek evidence for our beliefs; reasons for our conclusions. Some of us, admittedly, are better at consistently accomplishing this feat than others. Nevertheless, as rational beings, we simply don't pluck our beliefs out of thin air. Whether consciously or not, we avoid leaving ourselves open to the *charge of arbitrariness*; that is, the logical mistake of formulating beliefs based purely on our own subjective whims. We do, as a matter of objective fact, as rational adult thinking human beings, seek reasons for the beliefs that we hold and guard or rid ourselves of those that are devoid of any evidential support. As Derek Parfit suggests, 'to be rational is to respond to reasons'. (Parfit, 1997, p. 99)

Consider, to extend on a well-known example, that I were to suddenly and inexplicably, posit the existence of, say, a pink unicorn. Suppose too that I believed it to have two defining characteristics; firstly, that it was the most intelligent creature in the universe and, secondly, that it was the shyest creature in the universe. Suppose, further still, that owing to its supreme intelligence and consummate shyness that I, nor anyone else, have, nor ever will have, any evidential support for its existence. That is, the creature would be, in principle, neither verifiable nor falsifiable; even though his existence, however improbable, would be logically possible (conceivable).

The point here is that few of us would likely subscribe to such a belief; at least not without being insincere. And the reason for this is because we would have no evidential support for it. Any evidence would lie permanently beyond one's reach. Conversely, if one were to genuinely believe in its existence, it would not be its unfalsifiability or unverifiability that would warrant our suspicions. What would warrant our suspicions, is that it would constitute a belief entirely devoid of any evidential support; of reason.

The guiding idea of my account here is simple and not too dissimilar to what Enoch and Schechter have dubbed the 'explanatory project'; the project all rational beings share of understanding and explaining the world in which we live:

This project is of fundamental importance to us. Indeed, it seems that engaging in this project is central to rationality; a thinker who does not inquire about the world around him is intuitively doing something wrong. This counts in favour of employing whatever methods are necessary for successfully engaging in the explanatory project. It is plausible that employing IBE (or a close relative) is needed for successfully engaging in the explanatory project. And this explains why we are justified in employing IBE as a basic rule of thought.' (Enoch & Schechter, 2008, p. 546)

If it is the case that we as rational agents, as a matter of empirical fact, do seek evidence for the beliefs we hold, prompted, perhaps, by what Enoch and Schechter would claim is some intuitive desire to better understand and explain the world around us, then Mulnix's overarching foundational skill, of being able to recognise inferential connections holding between statements, quite obviously has a key role to play. To be proficient critical thinkers requires being able to see clearly the inferential relationships that hold between our reasons and beliefs; between our premises and our conclusions. Mulnix's mistake is to think that this skill could double as intrinsic motivation for the exercise of effective critical thinking.

To summarise, our predisposition to avoid leaving ourselves open to the charge of arbitrariness is, I suggest, part of what it means to *be* rational (or what Enoch and Schechter would, perhaps, prefer to call part of their *rationality required* project), and this is not to be mistaken for espousing a particular intellectual virtue or ideal, or ethical-like value. After all, it is, it must again be stressed, a fundamental requirement of any sound model of critical thinking that it be objective and not assert that there are definite ends at which it is aimed. It cannot prescribe or presuppose the truth of any particular virtue or value; be it ethical, prudential, educational or, in

Mulnix's case, intellectual. (See also Ten Dam *et al*, 2011, Yang and Chung, 2009) That after all, would be to beg the question.

Critical thinking, then, is, as Mulnix rightly describes, the 'attempt to understand what it is for a belief to be justified'. (Mulnix, 2012, p. 471.) This is precisely its point. However, our propensity to provide reasons in support of our beliefs and, additionally, 'the ability to recognise what would count as evidence against one's beliefs' (Mulnix, 2012, p. 473), are not, as Mulnix contends, mere proficiencies to be honed but also are dispositions to be understood and nurtured. We are logically constrained, on pain of inconsistency and insincerity, to doing no less. This, to repeat, is what it means to be rational; at least in one sense of the term 'rational'.

That cognitive dispositions, like consistency and sincerity, can provide a working model for critical thinking and rational motivation has been amply demonstrated in Hare's early work in moral philosophy; though to argue this here is beyond the scope of this paper. (For more on Hare's theory of universal prescriptivism, see Hare, 1981.)

Conclusion

Mulnix defines critical thinking as 'the ability to grasp the inferential connections that hold between statements. However, as she adds, one also requires to be 'proficient in providing reasons in support of one's beliefs' as well as being in possession of 'the ability to recognise what would count as evidence against one's beliefs'. However, I have argued that what Mulnix describes here as a 'proficiency' is not merely a skill, but that there exists an antecedent foundational logical disposition which alone can account for the motivation to exercise that skill and from which all the other critical thinking skills and affective dispositions flow.

Philosophy, having long been involved in honing critical thinking skills and in cultivating critical thinking dispositions, is, I think, singularly equipped to nurture this competency. The Australian Curriculum model, as an exemplar of the cross-discipline embedded approach, and with its curricular-wide emphasis on critical thinking, has, perhaps unwittingly, manoeuvred philosophy *ipso facto* to the very centre of this 21st century educational debate.

Notes

1. 'Educational taxonomies map sequences of skills and processes considered to be foundational and essential for learning'. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2012).
2. 'A *belief-forming method* is a method (a procedure, for instance, or algorithm, or rule) that a thinker uses in forming beliefs and other belief-like mental states. To employ a belief-forming method, thinkers need not believe that they employ the method. They need only follow it... Certain belief-forming methods – rules of inference – govern transitions between beliefs. Other belief-forming methods govern the non-inferential formation of beliefs. These arguably include the methods guiding the formation of beliefs on the basis of perception and memory.' (Enoch & Schechter, 2008, p. 550)

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'People love metrics': A super sad true love story

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Abstract

*A speaker at a recent conference on higher education stated that "people love metrics." What might make it possible for such a statement to be uttered as if it were true? This paper explores the truth of the love of metrics, through the narrative of Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* and the work of Albert Camus and Martin Heidegger. In Shteyngart's novel the central character, a bit of an intellectual and a hopeless Romantic, questions his identity in a metric-ocratic future. Of particular interest in this paper is the statistically probable future in which the great social network machines no longer sell their hidden user data to the highest bidder – a time in which citizens are a composite of their metrics, a more or less sexy array of 'trend' values. This future looks quite familiar to an academic whose semesters are calculated in student satisfaction ratings, research performance scores, and perhaps the occasional self-assessment out of five. That we might love this future, and that it be a sad love story, is drawn out through the work of Camus's challenge to the ways in which the world is enumerated, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and through Heidegger's suggestion that it is entirely in measurement we dwell as human. The paper concludes by drawing the work of these three authors into the metricocratic spaces of early childhood learning and teaching and the love of an adult world for the child's learning to measure the world.*

Keywords: Metrics, Camus, Heidegger, people, love, measuring

Act I

Amongst scholars, the critique of the progress of the university is perhaps becoming a little stale. A familiar Nietzschean lament hangs over the Readingsian ruins, and there is a sense of sadness in the air that the seemingly obvious problems of institutional purpose, growth, and structure continue to "thoroughly artificial, and that the most fatal weaknesses of the present day are to be ascribed to this artificiality" (Nietzsche, 1910, p. 13).

I have been shaken out of this lament by a few words that offer some hope for the academic life: "people love metrics". I have not fallen in love with the utterer, and I have not fallen in love with the utterance, but like this thing we think to call falling in love, like a Shakespearean moment, I am turned around and upside down and have to look at the world anew. Oh crazy and foolish world in which I live that I must have forgotten of my love for the metric. And now what do I know of love if metrics be its fix'd object?

Yes, this paper developed from the proposition at a conference that "people love metrics" and the interest in taking this to be true. The paper is a journey in questioning this love, and in a style that draws upon the (apparent) charm of a play on love: the comedic moments of an endearing bond; the intensity of making sense of a feeling; the tragedy of giving one's self to the institution; and the excitement of an unravelling of an idea. The journey was laid out in abstract before the theme of love could really take hold, and so for the reader of the abstract there might also be some surprise that the shape of the analysis took a curious turn towards an (all too obvious of course) authority on love. It makes sense to use Shakespeare, and this sense will be the true love story of this work.

So where do we go from this entrance?

Some structure to the play...

Act I: In which I have just attempted to play on the idea of introducing a love story

Act II: The terrain of a metric future explored through the work of a contemporary novelist who mixes love and numbers

Act III: The facts for higher education that take the fiction of absurd enumeration seriously

Act IV: On Camus, the absurd, and measurement as a response

Act V: Heidegger's understanding of the poetic meaning of measurement

Act VI: Measure for measure, or what can we learn from early childhood education

Act II: The terrain laid out through the work of a contemporary novelist

In Gary Shtynegart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010) an intellectual romantic grapples with a sense of identity in what we might come to know as not a meritocratic but a metricocratic future. In other words, in this novel, in our future world, people's lives are determined not simply by what they have been successful at, but by the numerical value that has measured and published the success.

Briefly, the central character is Lenny Abramov. He is in love (hence the title of the story and also the connection between the story and the proposition that people love metrics). He is an absurd man in a world of self-centred expansionism and mindless markets of consumers. In this story his generation Z girlfriend will not save the future with her new collective consciousness and her radical rejection of exploitation. Her capital is communicated in trending values; her valued spaces are the social networks that generate a matrix of metric data, a new virtual exchange, and growth, of daily stocks.

The growth of this future generation, Shtynegart hints, might have something to do with the nature of their higher education experience. The object of Lenny's love studied Images (the major) and Assertiveness (the minor) although it is unclear whether this programme was in media studies, philosophy or psychology – perhaps Assertiveness subsumes all degrees in the future university. While she worries about new fads in brushing her teeth, he is occupied with his status in a business that relieves super rich clients of their anxiety for the future by cryogenically freezing them until a day when science can sort out their mortality issues.

His social life is a play between the real and the virtual – he is drinking with friends at a bar worrying about his life while they are narrating their experiences to anyone that wishes to follow, and of course to 'like' online. Their social network metrics provide a sense, for the reader, of understanding the condition of the absurd future and an absurd hero who holds on to some kind of strange, different, essence – a kind of moral resistance to the matrix that places him outside, but sadly not immune to, a world of trending values. Lenny is in a perpetual anxiety towards the numbers that determine his character second by second. He is determined to stand against his numbers yet he can't resist them, they are irresistible, and they prove the thesis that people love their metrics – an explicit kind of love that reveals the mobile citizen is a joke. Openness, change, innovation, creativity, potential are all trending values that are disciplined and exploited through the social network. Do we want to search for true love here?

Act III: The facts that take the fiction seriously

Like *Super Sad True Love Story*, university strategic plans narrate a metricocratic future. These documents bind universities to each other and to the powerful narratives of global economic senses and sensibilities. This section explores examples from strategic plans and then engages them in a brief critical analysis of metrics.

Strategic plans provide their own metre through their talk about research, teaching and learning: we, the people of the university, must innovate, generate, and communicate: "New Zealanders must be not only academically and technically equipped, *but also* creative, innovative and connected" (2012, p. 3, emphasis added). Understanding this language from a metric position, we see that the university has the problem of enumerating not just the technical role of the academic (let us call these the research outputs and the student

satisfaction ratings) but also the creativity, innovation and connection of the individual. We might also ask how we measure the strategically diminished purpose of being critic and conscience, but that shall be asked elsewhere.

The solution is as yet unclear, however it is very clear that in higher education institutions, as in a corporate world concerned with meaningful data on its health, strategise enumerated networks that crunch the daily grind of their collective academic human resource into evidence of where a whole institution fits into a bizarre race. Bizarre because, looking at strategic plans, the race is being run as if each institution is doing its own thing, and yet the visionary documents compare so thoroughly. This may not be a problem for the measurement of the effectiveness of the academy, yet one of the strongest marketing tools for these universities is to talk about the possibilities of defining the future in a changing world. If all of the strategies are the same, and the measurement of their success is the same, there would be limited scope for the kind of innovative thinking that is also loved, and we might as well have just one university. Entertaining the branding for a moment, we could imagine that this university is the engine of the new New Zealand (Massey University, 2012). Engines run effectively on metrics. Onboard computers provide assumed faultless metrics, data on the smooth operation.

The future of the university in an uncertain world as a technically and administratively known and resolved problem involves more rhetoric than it does restructure. Key to the rhetoric is this thing called global economic recession. Times are tough and as such the university is central to navigating out of the challenges of our times. The incessant talk of the parlous state of economic and social affairs, that lends a science fiction quality to these documents, also unites the institutions. That all universities have strategically articulated the world as an entity on the brink of ruins suggests that whatever it is that lays waste to the university has been let out of the box.

The purpose of the strategic plan is then efficient management of resources and so it may be no surprise that metrics have a role to play. Priority funds head to assurance quality products rather than research and development – the development of the best curriculum will be decided through administrative enumeration of what has already happened. And coming up with new measures is an industry of its own that costs higher education. Staff satisfaction surveys are a convenient example. Or are they? Do they actually count as metrics?

While some authors explain metrics as typically being a result of the association of data, information, measures, and a 'root question', a systematic but creative sets of indicative ideas that is only required if the question does not require a single quantitative measurement (for instance how many research outputs have you published) (see for instance Klubeck, 2011) others seem to apply the concept of metrics to any recently generated data that attempts to create a measure of comparative success between academics and institutions (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2012; Marginson, 2009). Klubeck (2011) challenges that these latter are not metrics, at best, at worst they are the worst examples of metrics because they are misused by amateurs who do not respect the unreliability of data, focus on improving numbers and not experiences, keep the full picture of the metrics hidden with senior management, use metrics to manipulate people's behaviours, and in general do not realise that "metrics are dangerous" (p. 304).

The possibility that higher education quality assurance metrics are indeed poor and not engendering better quality student experiences and academic research was predicted to necessitate stronger global metric systems (van Damme, 2002). These worldwide systems emerged during the 2000s and soon went 'viral', with higher education executives and governmental agencies adjusting their "strategic behaviours" towards rapid implementation of policies and practices that would appeal to the trending metrics (Marginson, 2009, p. 41). While some argued that these would lead to more protection of the academic community, others regarded the community as needing the metric protection from the academy and its dangerous sense of entitlement to public purses (Palfreyman, 2007).

We can see that there is an element in reporting that is reasonable. The academy is accountable to the society that finances its research and teaching. The phenomena of a competitive knowledge economy and the implications of that economy for the expansion of higher education have reinforced the value of what academics do. A society might love that the measurement of academics keeps them honest to the investment, however the love of the measurement might hide concerns about the reliability of the data and the cost to the country of

generating unreliable data both in terms of the investment of the systems and those that run them, the handing over of the systems to corporate interests who are certainly not critic and conscience of society and whose sense of innovation, creativity and connection operates around a narrow terrain of self interest, and also for the impact of the measuring on the quality of what is being measured. In other words, academics measuring their research and teaching quality are not enhancing their research and teaching quality, of course this is a bit of speculation however it is supported by the challenge that metrics lead to safe scoring research rather than innovative work that risks missing the metric (Butler & McAllister, 2011). It is not clear how onerous reporting on one's research is, and it is not clear how that putting upon the academic to engage in metric self-reporting impacts on the quality of their research. That the New Zealand review process for research performance has proposed significantly adjusting the quantity of reporting might support this speculation. There are other emerging stories of a falling out of love for metrics. Ako Aotearoa (2012), for instance, has decided that impact factors are best narrated in researcher-generated stories.

It's the scope of the movement of metrics that evokes the concern. The score is totalizing, it seems to be writing all strategic direction for universities to speak a narrow language of progress, in which branding is the university story, and in which an absurd playing out of metrics means that universities cut and paste academic CVs, good teachers, new and or isolated academics are decreasingly employable, and ironically those with the worst outputs are those managers that police outputs and put out the newspeak of metric visions (Bignall, 2102) and the interest becomes more about companies that generate the metrics, companies that help institutions approach the metrics.

Act IV: On Camus the absurdist

Given the trouble, above, with the kind of enumerated world we might live in, the next concerns might be how to live and/or how to rebel. This section explores the first of these possibilities through the work of Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1991). While Camus is regarded to have moved on from his thinking in the myth (Thody, 1957), particularly in relation to the rebellion, it is important to consider that this essay provided Camus with the possibility of moving on, and so for us to move on from our love of metrics, or at least to jettison what we do not want of that love, then we might listen to Camus on the absurd.

Camus begins his interrogation with the question of whether, having seen the object of our love lying dead in front of us, should we take the apothecary's poison? What happens, more simply, when there is no more meaning? In this sense Camus regards the absurd as "a tool which helps a person determines the direction to follow, or the views or principles to adopt in life" (Baskya, 2009, p. 9).

The idea of human existence being absurd begins with recognition of existence, a consciousness that asks itself about its purpose. The absurd is "denseness" and "strangeness" (Camus, 1991, p. 14); it is the "meaningless pantomime" and the "stranger" in the mirror (p. 15), "born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (p. 29). However this is not a fractal play with the word, there is the serious business of understanding what to do, to explore "how people get away ... and why people stay" (p. 29). The absurd is traced through both its philosophical writing and the rationality of science because this problem requires evidence; however Camus' concern is not to reveal more evidence of the absurd but rather to explore the implications for action.

Where is measurement in all of this? It starts with a comparison, "the magnitude of the absurdity will be in direct ratio to the distance between the two terms of my comparison" – here the terms are human and world (p. 30). The rhythm and pattern of the recurring work day measures a blissful ignorance that one is shaken from by a realisation that there is a question, and that question is 'why?'

Camus is perhaps less interested in saving us from a mechanical life, although it is clear that he is in favour of a poetic existence through his turn to the artist, rather he is interested in the condition that makes one unhappy with the mechanical life. This element in Camus' critique of the absurd resists a romantic turn to a particular myth of existence, in that it can refuse to say that the mechanical life is not our true human life but that is not to say that he is not interested in a moral or humane existence. What he is interested in is the conditions and the

outcome of questioning that human life, and of its ultimate rejection. In part the evidence for this lies in the possibility of the rejection of a poetic life in that a poetic and a mechanical life lead to the same end, they amount to the same. A mechanical life might be as well lived as a poetic life on the condition that neither is mistaken for being better and hence having claim to some kind of meaning.

Hitherto, and it has not been a wasted effort, people have played on words and pretended to believe that refusing to grant a meaning to life necessarily leads to declaring that it is not worth living. In truth, there is no necessary common measure between these two judgements. One merely has to refuse to be misled by the confusions, divorces, and inconsistencies previously pointed out (p. 8).

Intelligence cannot rescue us from the absurd; rather it is further evidence that the world is absurd. Faced with the problem of being uncertain about the nature of the world, and just of being, we must find a way to resolve our play in the ruins of these ideas, and measurement has a role to play here. Camus reckons while "the absurd cancels all my chances of eternal freedom, it restores and magnifies, on the other hand, my freedom of action" (p. 57). In the absurd we are more present; we give up on the future and on the debts to it that take the form of investments for tomorrow. If we cannot break, or put some distance between, this concern for the future and the importance of meaning, then having a meaning to life is the thing that we would seek to find ourselves free of in order to be free.

What "counts is not the best living but the most living" (p. 61) and so Camus sets to exploring what he means to talk of 'most.' Of interest here to Camus are the things that we wish to measure, the norms, the codes we apply to measurement, and most importantly the living that is measured. He argues that to "two men living the same number of years, the world always provides the same sum of experiences" (p. 62).

Do two 42-year-old academics live equivalent years in relation to the sum of their experiences? The answer should depend on the measure. If the measure of an experience is locked into the seconds of a day then perhaps the answer is yes. If it is not then there is some other classification of the object of measurement. If it is not temporal, then it is something that might be increased or decreased within those 100 years. There are important implications for this. A 40-year life might be set into doing twice as much as an 80-year life. This brings us back to a problem of definition. Perhaps we can leave this problem because of its implication that we will then get waylaid and the purpose for Camus is to get on with living (with of course the exception that the asking about the definition of the measure could be the waylaying), he is arguing against suicide as the logical conclusion for a meaningless existence and he is using the idea of freedom. So what is it worth deciding whether we had just one day of this freedom, or 100 years through which we never had the cause to think that there was a point to life? Length of life is perhaps not so important if one can get to doing a lot of it.

If the code is 'do more' then what is the ethics? Camus works through any concerns one might have for the possibility of no appeal to a future or a higher set of values. The absurd academic applies her courage and her wisdom. In courage she lives "*without appeal*" and in reasoning she "knows her limits" (p. 66, emphasis in original). She does not give up on ethics. The recognition of the absurd is not an immunity to a care for others, rather she explores an "ethics of quantity" (p. 79). In order to have an ethics of quantity Camus argues we need to rethink what it means to measure. Here we might turn to Heidegger.

Act V: On Heidegger the poetic

Heidegger explores the idea that it is the essence of being human "that they *must ever learn to dwell*" (Heidegger, 1993, p. 363, emphasis in original), language that he takes from the poetry of Hölderlin and extends in *Poetically Man Dwells* (1971). Dwelling invokes a relationship of caring for, and of giving presence to, and includes building.

But how is "man" – and this means every man and all the time – supposed to dwell poetically? Does not all dwelling remain incompatible with the poetic? Our dwelling is harassed by the housing shortage. Even if that were not so, our dwelling today is harassed by work, made insecure

by the hunt for gain and success, bewitched by the entertainment and recreation industry (1971, p. 213).

Heidegger suggests that we can find a solution to the problem of our industrial enumeration and in the understanding of man's dwelling. Of particular interest here is the measuring that is dwelling. Heidegger claims "dwelling depends on an upward-looking measure-taking of the dimension, in which the sky belongs just as much as the earth" (p. 221). Like the bridge that is, for Heidegger, of interest in the gathering that is building (Heidegger, 1993), measuring gathers together the ground under our feet and our desire for the divine. "Measure-taking gauges the between, which brings the two, heaven and earth, to one another. This measure-taking has its own *metron*, and thus its own metric" (1971, p. 221). The poets can see this:

The roof holds up the sky. The foundations stand firmly in the earth. All humanity is therefore able to stand in the strand of life between, sustained by the strength of your ancestral house. Remember that it will always transcend the ebb and flow of human folly (Ihimaera, 2005, p. 110).

For Heidegger metrics is a question of the essence of being; it is the 'security' of being, and it is also the essence of the poetic in the revealing of being. That we measure, that we put metre to the world, is our poetic essence. However, understanding that this might be a forgotten essence, and that there are perhaps different ways of understanding measuring, we might look to the nature of measuring.

That consists in man's first of all taking the measure which then is applied in every measuring act. In poetry the taking of measure occurs. To write poetry is measure-taking, understood in the strict sense of the word, by which man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being (1971, pp. 221-222).

So while measurement and metrics might include the study of the world through the metre of a poem, measuring has also taken the form of a metric that codifies, classifies, delimits, and homogenises using the objects of measurement, the systems that provide the cybernetic feedback and engender the organic, knowable, machine: "our unpoetic dwelling, its incapacity to take the measure, derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating" (p. 228). We might gather all the empirical data we need to have no questions left, and still not know what to do, in fact; should we find all the numbers, we might then have nothing to love.

Heidegger says "poetry, as the gauging of that strange measure, becomes ever more mysterious" (p. 224) and that this must be so. Heidegger is challenging us to ask, should our time as mortals taken on this earth, underneath this sky, be an unpoetic one? That there might be a more or less poetic measuring and that it is only the poetic that the measuring is a dwelling (and what is more that one might be unpoetic) is for Heidegger the evidence of the poetic, analogising that for "a man to be blind, he must remain a being by nature endowed with sight" (p. 228).

We might then consider the possibility that metrics are not simplifications of what is said about how we perform in the world in order to make such performance more efficient, but rather that metrics is about the study of the rhythm of what we say. We might find ourselves in love with metrics when they are no longer devices that yield 'sterile' configurations of the tragic proportions of our lives.

What wakes us up, removes the screen, reveals the absurdity, measures the dwelling, questions our reasons, and sheds light on our illusions? The metric does. What about metrics understood in relation to metre, the love of the steady rhythm, the pulse that reminds, that assures us, us of our life, is this what we love about metrics, that it keeps our blood flowing? In order to do this we will keep Shakespeare's metre close at hand.

Act VI: Measure for measure

In this last section the creative and sustaining metric is explored through the concluding turn to early childhood education. In early childhood education's many forms space is made for making sense of the metre of what is said. I am turning to early childhood education because in the development of an early childhood profession a tension between poetic and scientific metres occurred and, at least at present, the poetic metre holds steady.

Universities have forgotten the poetics of metre in the rush to make sense of the data as standing reserve. Academic metrics enumerate a super sad academic life. The work of Camus and Heidegger helps us trace the measuring of the academic as a disciplining that keeps the academy bounded by economic knowledge – yet even those in the business of metrics (Klubeck for instance) would question the ethics of the kind of metrics that academics experience.

In early childhood education the problem of measuring was engaged during the 1990s with the rejection of certain forms of assessment of a child's individual cognitive and behavioural trajectories, these being also closely related to a child's physical development. The purpose of the rejection was to prevent the child from being subjected to technical and instrumental norms of cognitive development. Their instruments were presumed neutral however this screening of certain interests and assumptions about education and about development were called out. The technocratic measurements were shown to infiltrate the thinking that is possible about education (Bowers, 1988). The metrics were no longer uncritically accepted because of the assumed value written into the coding (Bowers, 1988). The scientists clutching a data rich image of the metric child were shouted out of professional practice by a chorus of narrative assessment advocates whose child was to be left to her secret and poetic world (van Manen & Levering, 1996). Of course I am talking quite ideologically here. To keep the ideology going I will suggest we live in a measureless universe and busy ourselves with the instruments that create time and space so that we might continue to measure the measureless time and space of our world. And we love this measuring for its purpose is beyond our reason. The metre of our lives is the love of the counting of the rhythm of life that is evident in the magic and wonder about the world within each child's story, and so this is not so far-fetched to think of a love of metrics as creative and poetic. Through telling a child's story we are learning about metre in ways that evidence the play of poetics. The poetics is in the dwelling of the child who is yet to be anxious about the count but at all moments measuring the world, free of the paraphernalia of the metricocracy.

So this is the kind of measurement that we are talking about: a measurement that looks not for the number of publications and the scores of student satisfaction but rather to the poetic metrics that are the different possibilities of our writing and our teaching. This kind of tension is not new to us. In the not so popular and certainly criticised play *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare reminds of us of what can happen when our metric abandons life for Life, poetry for science, and dwelling for reason. We are presented with our absurd anxiety for the future Shakespeare warns against the kind of enumeration of the world that leaves behind the measure-taking which is dwelling (Peters, 2005). Ako Aotearoa have seen this in their impact metrics wherein researchers tell the story of their work (surely another research output, another score!). Learning and research stories provide evidence of the rhythm of what we research and teach. Revolutions like this are hard to maintain, they take a lot of breath, but the intent and the techniques are there and worth investing in now to consider how, for instance, academics can take the poetics of early childhood education into the metrics of their work.

A love of metrics can then be a making available. Academic suicide is not the answer. The metrics of academia reveal that there is no great meaning to our work, and so we get busy with our work because it is our work that is our freedom and our love. In this sense even our sad academic metrics keep our thinking busy, providing a pace to life, an "indifference to the future and a desire to use up everything that is given" (Camus, 1991, p. 60). There are those who hope their metrics mean something and there are those who do not, and those who do not actively accept the measurement. The absurd academic is more productive because their condition requires this. They must get on with as much teaching and writing for as long as possible – and none of it for the inevitable score – because we love these things without ever having to know what this love is or what this lover does for us. The data that is provided for us means nothing. What do we make of this love then? We know that "looking for an order or a logic is necessarily to no avail" (Brackman, 2009, p. 3). We know that our sponsorship has been withdrawn:

When Time withdraws his sponsorship

Time,

is a limiting, inhibitive, sponsor man
of greed, hunger, one-eyed
telescope and key-hole peeping–
armed with a foreclosure on your life.

When he

withdraws sponsorship of all
these personal implicitly complicit complexities
of the truth of what is
really and objectively–
as against subjectively–there–*stop!*
Put your trust in your gods
no longer. The breath of life has
abandoned you–and you are
crossed, eye-to-eye, dead;
cross-eyed-to-eyed dead...Ooooo!
diddly-eye, dyed-in-the-wool dead.

(Tuwhare, 2011, p. 291)

Or:

The only thought to liberate the mind is that which leaves it alone, certain of its limits and of its impending end (Camus, 1991, p. 116).

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Epistemic Responsibility and Constructivism: A virtue-based way of knowing for constructivist teaching and learning environments

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Abstract

The popularity and ubiquity of constructivist teaching and learning methodologies has led to a great diversity of theoretical and pedagogical approaches. However, the epistemological groundings for constructivism have remained largely stable, with knowledge conceived as being external to the individual but is constructed and internalised through active engagement with the environment. Studies in the epistemology of constructivism as well as in educational epistemology as a whole have focused on beliefs about knowledge of the individual but focus less on the traits and characteristics that would impel the person to want to learn. This study aims to explore the use of virtue epistemology as an alternative way of knowing for constructivism that would better take the motivations and traits of the individual into account. A virtue for knowledge can be defined as an acquired excellence of a person who is motivated and reliably successful at gaining knowledge from cognitive contact with reality. In particular, the virtue of epistemic responsibility as a trait that drives a person to substantiate beliefs and knowledge claims in authentic situations can provide those in constructivist classrooms with a better means of judging how and why a student would want to learn. This study seeks not just to elaborate on the aspects of epistemic responsibility that pertain to constructivism – traits of knowledge-maximisation, flexibility and adaptability as well as contact-maximisation, but also to suggest a means of measuring these aspects in students.

Keywords: constructivism, epistemology, virtue theory, responsibility

Knowing Constructivism: The Point of Departure

The ubiquity of constructivism in all areas of education along with the myriad applications of constructivist teaching and learning methodologies brings with it the need to be aware of the conditions by which constructivism can best elicit learning in students. The constructivist view of education and knowledge acquisition emphasises ‘knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission and the recording of information conveyed by others. The role of the learner is conceived as one of building and transforming knowledge.’

Common descriptions of constructivism in education focus on two main features – that knowledge is actively constructed and not passively received by the learner; and that knowledge is not an entity independent of the learner who comes to know through a process of adaptation and organisation of lived experiences. A learner, as conceived by constructivist theorists, should be an actively cognising individual who is adaptable and is able to make sense of his or her experiences in the light of prior knowledge. A good learner within such a context would not only need to be motivated to learn but would also need to know how to create or locate the conditions where better learning can occur.

There is a clear focus on the individual and especially in the individual’s willingness to actively engage with and organise his or her experiences into what could be knowledge. The focus on knowledge construction and the central role of the learner or individual in building knowledge points to a need to go beyond the common conception of knowledge in epistemology as being a matter of justified true beliefs. Here, knowledge exists securely outside the individual and the latter ‘knows’ when the personal beliefs are justified as true based on

propositions that occur. Problems raised by epistemological theorists about the nature and conditions for justification that in turn led to ever greater ‘fastidiousness and technical finery’ in justification made epistemology less relevant to broader human concerns. Epistemology thus conceived were insufficient in taking the individual and his or her motivations or character traits into account that lie at the heart of constructivist teaching environments.

An epistemological system that could be more helpful in accounting for the role of the individual in constructivist learning environments is virtue epistemology that places people and their motivations at the heart of epistemological analysis. Virtue epistemology theorists responded to the seeming deficiency in the view of knowledge as justified true beliefs with the claim that epistemic properties could be reduced to natural ones that were based more in intellectual virtues or character traits like autonomy or open-mindedness. Thinking about knowledge in this way points to it being more a result of a character trait of the person rather than purely resulting from acts of the mind. This conception of knowledge can thus be more closely linked to the motivated, active and adaptive learner that constructivist learning environments can engender.

Ernst von Glasersfeld describes knowledge in the constructivist context as ‘something that is far more important to us, namely what we can do in our experiential world, the successful ways of dealing with the objects we call physical and the successful ways of thinking with abstract concepts’. The individual is thus thrust into the centre of the learning process where learning cannot occur without the individual’s active assent and adaptation to the environment around. The need to examine the motivational component in the learning process and how it relates with the perceptions of knowledge of learners comes as one recognises the importance of the learner’s willingness to come into contact with and actively engage with the reality that would in turn build knowledge. By exploring the inner traits of the individual’s desire to gain knowledge, this paper will attempt to ground the efficaciousness of constructivism in an alternate epistemology that would move it towards the possibility of seeing constructivism as learners gaining stable truths through discovery and exploration.

This paper will make use of virtue epistemology as a backdrop for the examination of the particular virtue of epistemic responsibility as a means of explaining how learners perceive knowledge and how that perception would affect their motivation to put themselves in situations where learning can occur. It is from this examination of epistemic responsibility that three aspects of epistemic responsibility in the individual emerge namely: (1) knowledge maximisation, (2) flexibility-adaptability, and (3) contact maximisation. The philosophical and pedagogical discussions related to epistemology and constructivism indicate that an epistemically responsible individual would demonstrate tendencies towards maximisation of contact with reality, flexibility and adaptability to different learning situations, and would tend towards maximisation of knowledge in general.

Virtue Epistemology: Responsibility for Knowledge

Virtue epistemology came as a response to perceived inadequacies of more ‘traditional’ approaches to epistemology that posits that knowledge is made up of true convictions that are supported by sufficiently good reasons. The locus of knowledge building in this view lies more in the mental assent or acceptance of belief than in traits or characteristics of persons. This suggests that in the ‘traditional’ structuring of knowledge, a person does not need to have particular traits, preferences or motivations to gain knowledge. The look at how the traits and motivations of an individual can lead to the building of knowledge through the virtues can allow for an alternative to this ‘traditional’ approach.

Linda Zagzebski defines a virtue as ‘a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end’ (1996, p. 137). The particular emphasis on the personal dimension of knowledge building and the fact that an individual would tend to choose to act in a way that would lead to knowledge points to the need to examine *why* the individual would want to build knowledge in the first place. Taking Zagzebski’s definition of knowledge as being ‘a state of cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue’ (1996, p. 270), one would be able to see an initial connection between what she considers intellectual virtues and the motivation to build

knowledge. The intellectual virtues, those parts of the person that cause him or her to excel at knowledge building, also provide the same person with the impetus to *want* to gain knowledge.

The very idea of intellectual virtues as being the source of deep motivation to achieve cognitive contact with reality paints a picture of an individual who is aware of his or her relationship with the world and is willing make an effort to understand it better. The orientation towards knowledge that intellectually virtuous persons exhibit presupposes not just an aptitude for learning but ‘a drive or concern or will to understand, to discover truth, to ground their beliefs ever more firmly’. Examples of intellectual virtues as described by virtue epistemologists include courage, intellectual honesty, open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, love of knowledge and conscientiousness (Zagzebski 1996, Code, 1984). An individual who displays such virtues would thrive in a constructivist learning environment as he or she would *want* to harness the opportunities to learn actively through discovery and exploration to learn well.

Motivation or the will to learn seems to lie at the heart of the intellectual virtues and it would not be inapt to claim that intellectually virtuous individuals would tend to hold themselves accountable or responsible for their own efforts at gaining knowledge. It is here that a case for the consideration of epistemic responsibility as a key intellectual virtue can be made. Lorraine Code makes use of the concept of ‘responsibility’ to allow an emphasis on the active and creative nature of the knower in bringing about knowledge, highlighting the role of the individual’s disposition in building knowledge. In particular, she notes that epistemic responsibility should be the primary virtue as it drives a person towards the best means of substantiating beliefs and knowledge claims while rejecting knowledge as a monolithic impersonal structure. This responsibility is also rooted in realism in that an intellectually virtuous person would find value in knowing and understanding things contextually, as they are in the world and not as abstract concepts. Also, epistemic responsibility drives a person to coexist among others within an epistemic community where members exercise their intellectual virtues in a mutually beneficial relationship of knowledge building.

Although very much based on the individual’s perception and actions with regards to knowledge, the discussion of virtue epistemology and epistemic responsibility has broader implications for education. An epistemically responsible person is one who finds value in knowing and understanding things as they are and does so for its own sake and not for any other instrumental reason. Individuals would thus be motivated to act in such a way as to maximise their success in knowledge and understanding – a manifestation of epistemic responsibility that for both Code and Zagzebski represent the fundamental intellectual virtue upon which the rest of the intellectual virtues proceed from. Furthermore, recognising that knowledge is not gained through a single individual act but is often mediated and aided by the actions of others emphasises the social aspect of knowledge building within the virtue epistemology context. Using an epistemically responsible individual as an exemplar for an effective learner, one can see that to learn well, the person needs to be responsible, knowledge-seeking and willing to work with others in the knowledge building enterprise. From the point of view of an educator, creating the conditions for epistemically responsible individuals to operate would be key to maximising the potential of such learners but even more important would be efforts in inculcating the intellectual virtues, and in particular that of epistemic responsibility, in learners themselves.

The Epistemically Responsible Individual

The discussion of virtue epistemology and constructivism leads to the beginnings of a portrait of an epistemically virtuous learner. The need for contact with reality for the building of knowledge as described by Zagzebski (1996) as well as the inclination towards knowledge over other choices as suggested by Code (1984) all point to particular aspects of an individual who is motivated to engage with the world around him or her to build knowledge. This provides a starting point for the description of the aspects of epistemic responsibility.

Locating the intellectual virtues in the individual can be difficult due to their structural diversity and resistance to the ‘one-size-fits-all’ analysis that many epistemological theorists try to bring into the study of the theory of knowledge. Also, given the focus on character traits that drive the individual towards knowledge, it may be more useful to begin the examination of the epistemically virtuous person holistically so as to gain an insight into the orientation of such a person.

Epistemic responsibility is seen as the fundamental virtue because it is this inner drive for knowledge that creates the possibility for both the other intellectual virtues to thrive and work towards the successful building of knowledge. As such, getting a clearer sense of what an epistemically responsible individual is would require an examination of what an epistemically virtuous person would look like. In their examination of the intellectual virtues, Roberts and Wood describe an epistemically virtuous person as being one who ‘values, cherishes, seeks, and appreciates intellectual goods. She wants to know important truths and ... wants contact with reality.’ (2007, p. 72) An individual thus described would not only have the inner drive to want to know the truths of the real world around him or her but also innately appreciate the need for such goods. Taking this ‘*want to know*’ trait as the root of the intellectually virtuous person, it would also be reasonable to consider this same trait to be linked with the idea of epistemic responsibility as described by Code. Furthermore, an epistemically responsible person who values knowledge for its own sake and seeks it for the same reason would thrive as an active and adaptive learner in the constructivist learning environment.

In describing the intellectually responsible individual, it should be noted that the intellectual virtues focus on internal or intrinsic traits over the extrinsic. Epistemic responsibility represents one of these intrinsic traits of the intellectually responsible individual. It is the orientation of the individual towards the end of knowledge as a good in itself that would drive the virtuous person towards knowledge. Three aspects of an epistemically responsible individual emerge from these descriptions, namely knowledge maximisation, contact or reality maximisation and flexibility or adaptability.

These aspects of epistemic responsibility align well with the tenets of constructivism described above. The motivational nature of knowledge maximisation would correspond to active nature of the learner within constructivist learning environments. The aspect of flexibility and adaptability corresponds to the adaptive nature of cognition that constructivists describe. Lastly, the contact maximising nature of the epistemically responsible person aligns well with the need for a learner within the constructivist environment to organise and make sense of real experiences. These aspects are driven by the innate epistemic responsibility of an individual who sees knowledge as an important good in itself and who will act in a knowledge building and truth seeking manner whenever possible.

Knowledge Maximisation

Knowledge maximisation in the epistemically responsible individual can be described as the key aspect that grounds the others. An individual who demonstrates knowledge maximisation will, all things being equal, seek to maximise knowledge in all situations. When there is a choice involved, such an individual would choose to act or think in such a way as to maximise knowledge. The individual is thus shown to be intrinsically oriented towards knowledge and is personally responsible for its increase. Knowledge maximisation is similar to what some theorists describe as the virtue of ‘love for knowledge’, which is a deep motivation for all truths, especially those that are valued¹ by the individual.

It can be difficult to clearly define what constitutes the ‘maximisation’ of knowledge and it may be apposite to examine the motivational component in epistemic responsibility to fully understand how and why an individual would seek to maximise knowledge. A person can be said to be motivated epistemically if he or she has a desire for truth and knowledge and that this desire influences the person’s conduct. Given this motivation, a person would not only seek the best means to acquire knowledge but would choose options that would have the potential to maximise knowledge. To do this would require a certain amount of metacognitive awareness² of what constitutes knowledge and a recognition of what constitutes a maximisation of knowledge and the tasks and strategies that would be required to reliably build that knowledge. For instance, a knowledge maximising learner would be able to weigh the possible knowledge outcomes of a group study session against self study and would choose that which would reliably provide more knowledge. The constructivist paradigm allows this to occur as the learners are encouraged to make such choices in their approach to knowledge.

Flexibility–Adaptability

Learners within a constructivist learning environment are often required to respond to reality in active and imaginative ways and the attribute of flexibility and adaptability is linked to this. In order to build knowledge over a variety of situations, an epistemically responsible person would have to be sufficiently flexible to marshal whatever resources, cognitive or otherwise, to experience or learn what is necessary. The need to be flexible and adaptable flows from the motivation to acquire knowledge and it also follows that a person thus motivated would seek all means necessary to reach the good that is knowledge.

Flexibility, especially in relation to constructivist theorists, refers to a person being able to make use of his or her skills and prior knowledge in a multitude of ways and in different situations for the purpose of gaining knowledge. Adaptability is more attitudinal and has to do with a person's ability to respond to the environment around him or her. An adaptable person would make adjustments to his or her perspectives and approaches to situations of potential learning and would adopt the attitude that would maximise knowledge. Given the fluid nature of constructivist learning environments, a learner who is able to be both flexible and adaptive to the changes and nuances within these situations would be able to adjust and maximise knowledge. As in the previous example, the flexible and adaptable learner would be able to adjust to collaborative or individual learning situations easily as the needs arise.

Contact Maximisation

The definition of knowledge as being cognitive contact with reality according to Zagzebski means that a person who would seek knowledge as a good in itself would also seek to maximise this cognitive contact with reality. What this means is that the individual would take an active role in bringing his or her cognitive powers to bear on the experiences and situations that are encountered and would also actively seek out situations where this would occur. The epistemically responsible person has a 'practical' orientation that leads him or her to make use of both prior knowledge as well as new skills to ensure knowledge is gained. The same practicality also leads the person to want to make use of these skills in a broad range of situations and activities.

The attitude of an individual who maximises contact with reality for the sake of knowledge is somewhat akin to extroversion in interpersonal relations. Just as an extrovert seeks the company of others, the contact maximising learner would seek to maximise experiential contact with people, things or situations that would have the greatest potential for knowledge. As is the case of knowledge maximisation, a contact maximising individual would 'love knowledge' and would not be averse to experimentation, trial and error methods or 'muddling around' in his or her quest to organise experiences to gain a contextual knowledge of reality. An example of this would be a learner who chooses to learn through experiential situations instead of reading about the same subject because the experiential experience presents a more cognitively 'real' knowledge encounter that would in turn have a higher potential for learning and knowledge.

The Way Forward

The identification of epistemic responsibility and its related aspects allows for the possibility of investigating the traits of students who would thrive or do well in constructivist learning environments. Further to this, the ability to identify and possibly measure traits that would dispose students to constructivist methodologies could provide educators with an additional means of assessing the efficacy of constructivism not just in engendering content knowledge but in increasing the learners' individual capacities to learn. By recognising and focusing on the traits of the individuals and not just their actions or beliefs, one would be able to gain a better insight into how learners react and respond to constructivist teaching and learning environments which would in turn aid in the design and crafting of the same.

Further work in quantifying the aspects of epistemic responsibility that are informed by previous studies on epistemological beliefs would help to give an empirical grounding to what has been described in this paper. The recognition of the role of the traits of the individual learner would also add to the understanding of how

constructivism can work in the classroom and how educators can better harness these traits in engendering learning in constructivist teaching and learning environments.

Notes

1. Roberts and Wood also state that a lover of knowledge is able to distinguish between trivial knowledge and knowledge of things of value. To avoid a 'weird intellectual pathology' or just amassing trivial and eclectic knowledge, the lover of knowledge would value propositional knowledge along with knowledge that is worthy and relevant. The ability to discern value is part of the virtue of the love of knowledge and the building up of rationality as a whole.
2. Metacognitive awareness includes knowledge of strategies, tasks and the self. What this means is that an individual who is metacognitively aware has awareness of what kind of knowledge he or she desires, the tasks and strategies that would enable him or her to gain that knowledge as well as a knowledge of the self and preferences.

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Parental Partiality and the Educational Arms Race

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Introduction

Parents are typically thought to have the right to make decisions about how their children are educated. These rights have some obvious limits – few would agree that parents have a right to decide that their child will get absolutely *no* education, for example. But most agree that parents have a right to support their child's education in ways that express some partiality towards their child over other children. This might include taking efforts to put their child at a competitive advantage against their peers (for example, by purchasing a private education, or supplementary private tuition). Still, partiality of this sort is also thought to be limited, at least by political philosophers. This is because it can conflict with other moral values, perhaps most notably certain requirements of educational justice. For example, educational justice plausibly includes some requirement to distribute educational opportunities roughly equally, or at least equally enough to guard against things like nepotism and the endurance of oppressive hierarchies of social class⁸. If parents are permitted to exercise partiality without some limit, these requirements of justice will be violated by some considerable degree. So, some sort of trade-off is needed between pursuing justice and permitting parental partiality.

This paper is part of a collection that aims to say something about the measurement of educational performance. My own contribution will be that many of these measurement policies add a certain complication to the conflict between parental partiality and educational justice that I've just described. I suspect that this complication matters in practice, but I will mainly aim to just sketch it from a theoretical perspective. I will attempt to do this by arguing that reasons to be troubled about excessive measurement of student performance turn out to be instructive with respect to understanding why we should restrict the exercise of parental partiality. My aim is not to actually *solve* the conflict between parental partiality and educational justice. That is to say, I will not be offering any precise claims as to what the most defensible balance is between promoting something like fair equality of opportunity, and permitting a degree of parental partiality. I will instead argue for the claim that the conflict is not so absolute. That is to say, sometimes the more fundamental moral values that justify parental partiality in the first place, might actually support policies that limit it, given some claims about the effects of measuring students' performance. This suggests that the moral reasons to limit parental partiality are not simply those that emerge out of a straightforward conflict with egalitarian goals.

Measurement of academic performance

Let me offer a few remarks about how I understand the measurement of academic performance, or at least which aspects of it are relevant here. Many developed nations are increasingly implementing educational policies that emphasise broadly quantitative means of assessing students' performance. This is principally done through increased use of testing. (To save words, I will use terms like 'educational testing' and 'measurement of performance' largely interchangeably, even though testing is merely one way of measuring.)

⁸ Some authors take fair equality of opportunity to be the more fundamental requirement of educational justice, whereas others focus more on the elimination of oppressive relations between groups. Compare (e.g.) Brighouse & Swift (2009a) with Anderson (2007) and Satz (2007).

It is often said that the educational testing of children is becoming (or is threatening to become) excessive, that the recent trend towards more formal measurement of student performance has gone further than it should. This claim can be read as having moral content. That is to say, a concern that educational testing might be excessive might not simply reduce to a concern that such testing might be inefficient, inaccurate, or counter-productive with respect to the aims of identifying and/or stimulating changes in performance. A concern about excessive testing may be, instead, articulated with reference to what moral requirements might constrain the way education is managed and delivered, apart from any requirement to deliver it in ways that encourage or identify strong performance, as testing might be thought to do. This paper will focus on this second, more moral understanding of excessive measurement.

To be clearer, a moral requirement limiting educational testing can be helpfully treated as a certain sort of proportionality requirement. Such a requirement recognises that the burdens imposed by testing are undesirable and in need of moral justification. Like other proportionality requirements, this one says that testing becomes excessive when the benefits it brings are out of proportion to the burdens it imposes. The philosophical project is not to make any numerically precise claim as to exactly what ratio of burdens and benefits can be permitted. Rather, the search is for more precision as to exactly what sorts of benefits and burdens should go into a proportionality calculation, and what any other interesting features of that calculation might be. Progress of this sort can still provide clues as to how demanding a proportionality requirement might turn out to be⁹.

This is a philosophical paper about a complex contemporary phenomenon on which there is enormous empirical literature. Given this, let me say a few further things about how we might expect a philosophical contribution to be helpful. First, it should go without saying that education is a thoroughly moralised, that is to say normative or evaluative topic. This is already evident in the existing literature on educational theory, including the concern to address the conflict between justice and parental partiality that I mentioned at the outset. But there is a separate, quite general point that can be made about the role of moral and political philosophy in addressing questions about measurement.

To make any sort of claim about the disproportionateness of educational testing involves presupposing that the benefits and burdens of testing are measurable things. Importantly, there is a distinction between what it means to measure the size of something, and what it means to measure its badness. It may be true that increases in badness occur only typically because of some increase in size. But it is incorrect to conclude that a measure of size and a measure of badness are the same thing. Some philosophers have argued, for example, that we need to distinguish between size and badness when measuring economic inequality and perhaps develop separate theories for how to measure each one¹⁰. It is possible that measurement of size is also dependent, conceptually, on measurement of badness. This has been claimed about measuring poverty; when people claim that poverty has got larger, what they may really mean, or be interested in, is that it has got *worse*¹¹. There might ultimately be no sense in which poverty can get larger or smaller without getting more or less worse. It is also possible that we should think of the badness of inequality in terms of whether some proportionality requirement has been satisfied. For example, there is a long tradition in political philosophy of justifying inequality in terms of its being necessary to benefit the least advantaged¹². Although an over-simplification of how this sort of thinking is supposed to work, one might see such justifications as involving a weighing of the supposed badness of inequality against whatever benefits might counter its badness.

⁹ These claims fit with what is said about the study of proportionality requirements in other moral domains, such as just war theory. See Hurka (2005).

¹⁰ For a helpful exchange, see Rabinowicz (2002) and Temkin (2003).

¹¹ See Broome (1989).

¹² Most famously, Rawls's difference principle, and the style of justification of inequality that it instantiates. Whether this sort of defence of inequality is really one that satisfies a requirement of justice has been contested, most notably by Cohen (2008).

I think that moral questions about educational testing are structurally similar, in this way, to questions about inequality and poverty. That is to say, I think we need to be careful, when asking how to measure academic performance, as to whether we are trying to measure the size of the burdens that this sort of assessment imposes, or trying to measure the extent to which imposing such burdens is a bad thing. It is perfectly possible, of course, to measure the amount of educational testing and not be making any moral or evaluative claim. If testing costs a lot of money to implement, but brings only small academic improvements, then the amount of testing being used might be disproportionate in a non-moral sense. But when it is claimed that educational testing is excessive, or that it is being used to early or too often, then I think the claim being made is ultimately one that reflects a measure of badness, rather than size construed in any non-evaluative sense.

In what follows, I will aim to draw on philosophical accounts of the proper goal of education, particularly in the K-12 range. I shall also draw on recent work in the social sciences that has done much to illuminate the nature of positional competition. Combined, these approaches allow some conclusions to be drawn about how to understand the moral limits on measuring children's academic performance. In particular, what is crucial to the analysis below is not just the fact (which is already well-documented) that the measurement of performance can impose psychological and even physical burdens on students. Of considerable importance is an understanding of how these burdens are conferred, and how they might be allowed to spread around, within a competitive context. This, I shall argue, reveals some conflict between some of the consequences of unregulated parental partiality, and some of the values that might account for the importance of parents' rights of partiality in the first place.

Education's dual function

Education has many goals. For the purposes of this paper, I find it helpful to divide its goals into two broad categories. I'll do this by speaking of two sorts of *functions* that educational institutions aim to realise. First, educational institutions must execute what we might call a filtering or 'screening' function. Society relies on its educational institutions to identify which students are suitable candidates to occupy certain important roles later in life, and to provide a framework through which access to these positions can be awarded. This means that education must involve some sort of competitive process, whose outcomes are determined through some sort of measurement of respective students' performance. Educational screening is evident in our reliance on things like grades and exam performance as criteria for gaining access to subsequent, more elite levels of screening (for example, when using screening as part of university admissions)¹³.

A second goal of education consists in what we might call a 'nurturing' function. In addition to the goal of identifying which students should gain access to which sorts of social positions later on, education should also be concerned to benefit students in ways that are separate from, and to some extent provide relief from, educational competition. Following Harry Brighouse, an important part of a child's education should be devoted to equipping that child with the ability to flourish, both while they are a child and also subsequently, in their adult life¹⁴. The idea of 'flourishing' here is open to interpretation. According to Brighouse, education's role in promoting it should include developing a child's capacity for autonomy, so that they can be prepared for the independence required in (successful) adult life. To some extent, this will involve ensuring that a child is trained in the development of certain literacy and numeracy skills, and thus may somewhat coincide with what's needed to realise the screening function. But Brighouse adds that flourishing is also promoted by exposing a child to a wide range of goods from which they might derive happiness later in life, even if this exposure were to play no role in screening. For example, giving children opportunities to consume things like literature and music, learn languages, and be introduced to certain sports might all be motivated largely by the contribution these exposures

¹³ The term 'screening' was coined by Fred Hirsch in his landmark economic study of positional goods. Screening as it might occur in educational contexts served as one of his core examples (1976: 45-51).

¹⁴ The account I'm relying on here is laid out in Brighouse (2006: Ch.3).

might make to the child's adult happiness, rather than because society needs to identify who is best at these things.

Now, I admit that this division between screening and nurturing is clearly a simplification. This is to acknowledge, at least, that it might obscure important aspects of the goals of education that cut across the screening and nurturing functions as I have described them. For example, it is sometimes claimed that education should aim to train young people so that they can relate to each other as civic equals later in life¹⁵. This might require that educational institutions should aim at integrating students from diverse socio-economic groups. The prospects for this are threatened when school intake is restricted to children from a certain religious groups, or when local property values are so high that very privileged children are educated together, away from their less privileged peers. Now, the requirement here might be regarded as concerned with the screening process: Socio-economic segregation hinders the selection of students well suited to positions of power and responsibility whose holders are expected to serve a range of socio-economic groups. But one might also think that segregation is inimical to education's capacity to nurture: The presence of religious schools may restrict the extent to which religious and non-religious children are able to mix with each other. This may reduce their ability to develop an understanding of each other's respective cultures, and this lack of understanding may hinder their prospective autonomy as adults.¹⁶

The reason I find it nevertheless helpful to divide the goals of education into screening and nurturing is that it allows a distinction to be drawn between the space in which measurement of performance must operate (screening) and a space from which it must be largely absent (nurturing). From a moral point of view, the regulation of performance measurement (at least in the K-12 range) needs to strike a balance between these two rather different and potentially conflicting goals. This begins to give us a schematic account of what might be meant by 'excessive' measurement. As I will explain below, one way for measurement to become excessive is for it to allow the pursuit of screening to undermine, crowd-out, or otherwise damage the pursuit of educational nurturing. This sort of complexity is crucial to understanding how the relevant sort of proportionality calculation is supposed to work.

The goods of the family as a constraint on educational policy

The moral evaluation of educational policy does not consist solely in weighing the pursuits of screening and educational nurturing against each other. This is merely one important part of that evaluation. The pursuit of either function also needs to accommodate at least one constraint that is external to this sort of weighing. It is possible to design educational policies that disrupt or distort what's good about families and the relationships between parents and children. This is something that can also count towards the disproportionateness of such policies. And, in principal, it can happen even when educational policies preserve the right balance between the nurturing and screening functions of educational institutions.

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift provide a nice statement of the general form of this constraint:

Familial relationship goods are, we think, great goods. Measures adopted in pursuit of equality of opportunity, or even full distributive justice, would be deeply problematic if they jeopardized their realization...the value of the family gives us strong reason to protect activities essential for creating and sustaining the loving, intimate relationship that is essential for meeting children's interests and is also valuable for the parent, but not for the protection of other things that parents do to, or with, and for their children.¹⁷

¹⁵ See Guttman (1987), also Anderson (2004) and Satz (2004).

¹⁶ Brighouse and Swift (2013: 210-211).

¹⁷ *ibid* (205).

Brighthouse and Swift make these remarks as part of a discussion of parents' rights to shape their child's education. Brighthouse and Swift acknowledge that these rights might sometimes come into conflict with policies that aim to distribute educational opportunities more fairly, or in ways that promote better integration across different socio-economic groups. Sometimes, they say, we should resolve such conflicts in allowing parents to exercise their rights. But this leaves things open as to exactly what rights parents have, and how strong these rights are. This depends on what the relation is between parental freedoms and the sort of values that we think are at stake when we consider the potential for conflicts between family life and other policy goals¹⁸.

All of this gives us a sense of how parental partiality enters into the theoretical picture. Brighthouse and Swift's position is that parental rights are limited in ways guided by considerations about what's necessary to maintain the sort of family relationship goods that they mention. In particular, they conclude that what some parents do when pursuing competitive advantage for their children exceeds what's really needed to maintain valuable loving relationships with those children. Reading bedtime stories to one's children might confer competitive advantage by improving the child's linguistic abilities (among other things), but ought to be protected because it is an important family activity that shouldn't be sacrificed as part of an unwavering pursuit of equal opportunity. It is true that some children may end up disadvantaged because they don't get bedtime stories, but that's not good enough reason to stop other parents from providing stories to their own children. The same cannot be said, however, for sending one's child to an elite private school. Pursuing competitive advantage for one's child in this second way does not help sustain a loving relationship in the way that reading bedtimes stories does. In fact, it is in most cases not really a relationship-maintaining activity at all. So, it is easier to justify restricting parents' freedom to purchase elite education in the name of greater equality of opportunity than restricting activities like reading bedtime stories.

I agree wholeheartedly with Brighthouse and Swift's general position on the limits of parental rights¹⁹. That is to say, I believe that parental partiality exists as a constraint on educational policy, which can sometimes be overridden by policies that pursue some political value, such as fairness or equality, even if some parents protest. What I want to do with Brighthouse and Swift's position is extend their reasoning somewhat. In particular, the moral constrain against allowing educational policy to undermine valuable familial relationships has application to the question of how we measure student performance. In other words, the need to protect family life turns out, I thin, to acts as a constraint on the amount of educational testing that government policy can permissibly impose on children. This constraint exists alongside the need to evaluate educational testing in terms of whether it is compatible with maintaining a defensible balance between education's screening function and its nurturing function.

To summarise the last two sections, then: Education has many goals, and the measurement of performance is a necessary part of the pursuit of one of these goals (screening). The question that confronts us is when the measurement of performance becomes such that it distorts the proper balance of these goals. Another question is whether the measurement of performance violates the constraints imposed on educational policy by the distinct goal of protecting family life. Addressing both of these questions, and the relation between them, will give us an understanding of the moral limits that are to be imposed on measuring academic performance. This will fill out both the idea of what it means for educational testing to be disproportionate (morally speaking) and how we might modify the view taken on parental partiality by authors like Brighthouse and Swift.

¹⁸ It is important to quickly forestall a potential misunderstanding that can emerge when we start talking about the importance of the family. It should be stressed here that in talking about the values associated with family relationships we are not presuming what people often have in mind when referring to 'family values'. That is to say, acknowledging that familial relationships provide us with important goods is not to acknowledge that there is anything whatsoever objectionable about families in which the parents are unmarried, or of the same sex, or that the family must be arranged in any other ways implied by more conservative talk of 'family values'.

¹⁹ The theoretical foundations of their position are defended more fully in Brighthouse & Swift (2009b).

The burdens of testing and the educational arms race

So much for philosophical accounts of what education is for, and how the distribution of its resources must be constrained. In showing how these philosophical views can provide guidance, there are two features of educational testing to which I want to draw attention. The first of these is the impact that testing can have on a child's well-being and on their educational experience. The second is the impact that educational testing has on the way in which participation in educational screening is structured, particularly given the existence of markets that sell various forms of educational services. The first of these topics is one studied largely by educational psychologists. The second topic receives attention largely from economists and sociologists, although not always with a special focus on education in particular.

Now, both of these topics are the subject of substantial amounts of empirical study, with inevitable disagreement as to how to interpret the data. Philosophers typically lack the expertise necessary for making a sophisticated or reliable contribution to these disagreements. This limitation, however, may not be especially important when the task is about understanding moral requirements rather than (say) causal structure. Merely stating what moral requirements might limit government policy on measuring educational performance can be attempted on a fairly minimal and general understanding of how educational testing works in practice, while still taking some guidance from it. At any rate, I believe that what I will say here about the morality of educational testing could be acceptable to anyone working in the various empirically-oriented disciplines that aim to provide larger causal accounts of these processes. In stating the conditions under which educational testing becomes excessive from a moral point of view, I do of course leave it open as to exactly where and when these conditions have or will obtain in practice. Nevertheless, it will be easier to defend the claims I want to put forward having given a brief summary of what the empirical realities are with respect to the burdens of testing and the structure of educational competition.

It has been known for some time that educational testing can be a difficult and burdensome experience. This has given rise to an extensive study of what psychologists call 'test anxiety'²⁰. Quite rightly, most of the study of test anxiety is not aimed at articulating exactly what is morally troubling about it. Most psychologists are concerned to develop reliable accounts of what the determinants of text anxiety are, and to make proposals about how to address it. To some extent, this work doesn't even need to be morally motivated. After all, test anxiety often impairs test performance, meaning that educational testing is made less reliable because of it. So, there is reason to understand the way in which test anxiety occurs, and how it might be reduced, even if we didn't think that there was anything morally troubling about child anxiety. Of course, however, most people agree that reducing test anxiety could also be desirable, from a moral point of view.

Testing children will always make many children anxious to some degree. This is partly why we should think of the morality of burdening children in terms of its being proportionate: Causing anxiety in children can be justified so long as it secures the right sort of benefits. But test anxiety is not the only consideration that should feature in the negative side of a proportionality calculation. Much depends on further analysis of the way in which testing is a competitive process (a form of screening, as described above). Such analysis will fill out our understanding of the proportionality requirement, and will also permit some suggestions to be made about the moral significance of test anxiety.

There are important structural aspects of educational competition that have been revealed, as I have said, largely in an oblique way by social scientists interested in studying patterns in competitive structures across a variety of contexts²¹. The first point to understand is that education is a paradigm example of what economists and philosophers call a positional good. This is to say that the benefits conferred by education, in large part, take

²⁰ Here I have been helped by the survey provided by Zeidner (1998).

²¹ The work of this section draws mainly from the accounts provided in Frank & Cook (1995), Schor (1998), and Frank (2011).

the form of relative advantage. What it means to say that a child is well-educated is to say that they are better educated than their peers. To perform well academically is to perform better than others. Now, not all positional goods are alike, and education is importantly different from other positional goods, in ways I will later mention.

Education, like other positional goods, is becoming increasingly bought and sold through private markets. The growth in markets that supply positional consumption are now the subject of much study in the social sciences²². What these markets are doing is offering consumers greater opportunity to compete with each other for relative advantage, by creating opportunities to make purchases that promise some chance of increased relative advantage.

Positional goods generate what game-theorists have called ‘arms races’. Roughly speaking, arms races occur when people compete for positional goods in ways where it is always rational for them to invest further resources in increasing their competitive efforts. This is because respective persons’ attempts to increase relative advantage simply cancel each other out. So, it is rational for the participants in an arms race to continue to make attempts to increase their positional advantage over each other, just because failure to do so will mean ‘falling behind’. Thus participants tend to keep increasing their investment of resources and continually cancelling each other out at higher absolute levels of investment. Arms races only end when some external factor changes what it is rational for participants to do, or when all but one participants become exhausted and drop out of the race (exhaustion can be quite profound, as in the case of the ‘real’ arms race and the demise of the Soviet Union.) When markets in positional consumption coincide with arms races, this can make for a problematic explosion in what might have otherwise remained a considerably more benign competitive process. This is because markets in positional goods provide arms race participants with potentially limitless opportunity to keep raising their investment of resources in competing harder and harder with each other. Markets in positional goods thus allow arms races to become profoundly wasteful, even though no individual participant need be acting irrationally.

Social scientists have confirmed markets of this sort in a variety of contexts. They include things like markets in expensive designer suits for job interviews, and the huge salaries now paid to professional athletes. In both cases, huge payments get made by participants (job candidates or sports teams) who are simply trying not to be outdone by each other. Because education is a positional good (like suits and top athletes), arms races are possible with respect to educational competition, too. And they can also suck up enormous resources once markets start supplying educational resources. Indeed, the growth for the market in private tutors is one of the fastest growing service markets to be found in developed countries. Much of this can be attributed to the growth in educational testing, if only because test preparation services accounts for much of what markets in education tend to supply.

I now want to make two claims as to exactly what makes educational testing excessive when an arms race is present. The first claim concerns the way in which arms race participation upsets education’s dual function that I described earlier. Educational testing can lead to a bias towards screening in the way that education gets delivered, at the expense of nurturing. Because of the logical structure of arms races, this is something that can occur even if policies that expand testing do not aim at it. The second objection concerns the way in which arms races both proliferates and intensifies the burdens imposed by educational testing. This claim is supported largely by some observations about how education is different in some important ways from other positional goods. Articulating this objection will be done in the next section. It allows more to be said about test anxiety and also about the way in which educational policy can damage family life.

Both of these objections specify ways in which educational testing can easily become excessive, from a moral point of view, but go beyond what is said merely by understanding this excess as a disproportionate balance of the benefits and burdens that testing might cause.

²² See for example Frank (2011), which supplies the examples mentioned below. Frank’s book is part of a series of writings that have some intellectual roots in Hirsch (1977).

As I have said, educational testing fulfils part of education's screening function. This is to say that it provides a means of identifying which children ought to be awarded the highest qualifications and admitted to important social roles. It is part of the meaning of good educational qualifications that requires only a limited number of children to receive them. This is really just to repeat the observation that education is a positional good. Schools are increasingly being assessed according to what sort of qualifications their children achieve. The more testing occurs, and the more school performance is judged according to test results, the more pressure there is on schools and children to devote their efforts to preparing for screening. This is how the educational arms race becomes more profound within educational institutions, before market activity is even considered. Crudely put, more testing means more pressure on schools to reduce the resources invested in providing a nurturing function. And, similarly, more testing means more pressure on students to take less advantage of nurturing opportunities in order to prepare better for tests. The point here, then, is that educational testing becomes excessive not just through generating anxiety, but also through the ease with which it creates pressure to sacrifice the nurturing function. Nurturing may be so easily crowded out by an increase in screening that testing might, for this reason alone, need to be kept within quite serious limits.

The problems with testing become more serious when we consider the role played by markets. The fact that educational qualifications are allocated by screening makes education unlike many other positional goods. Many positional goods are allocated through 'auctioning', i.e. making them more expensive until only a sufficiently small number of people can afford the scarce supply of relative advantage. As an allocation mechanism, auctioning occurs more or less on its own in many of the examples of positional goods discussed by social scientists. Markets in designer suits and professional athletes involve little or no screening: Pay enough money, and you get the best suit or the best athletes. The general point to make about cases where the allocation mechanism involves pure auctioning is that the burdens of positional competition are solely financial. When screening is present, this is not the case. What is most interesting about education, here, is it is a positional good where relative advantage is allocated through screening, but where markets supply assistance with screening in ways that allow auctioning to exist alongside it. This creates much greater potential for burdensome waste.

The educational arms race burdens both parents and children. Parents incur the burden of investing financial resources in purchasing opportunities for their children to prepare for screening, and children then have to shoulder the burden of undertaking this preparation. Since educational policies on testing typically do not include substantial market regulation in their scope, they have no way of stopping the waste generated by educational arms races that they propagate. What is especially troubling about all this is the way in which extra time spent preparing for screening means less time for children to spend with their parents and other family members. This indicates a way in which the regulation of positional competition might ultimately draw support from the constraint against allowing educational policies to intrude on family goods. Setting this further point aside for now, the general point here is just that when a positional good is subject to an allocation mechanism where auctioning and screening can interact in certain ways, then the burdens that result from allowing this arms race to get going can be especially large and proliferate, unlike cases where auctioning or screening act alone. So, it's very easy for the burdens of educational arms race participation to become disproportionate, even setting aside any considerations about burdening children in particular. Since educational testing generates arms race situations, the ease with which it can become disproportionate is something that warrants precaution in selecting policies that allow more educational screening to take place, and which make many other decisions (such as the assessment of school performance) depend on the outcomes of screening.

To conclude this section, then, a large part of understanding the moral limits to measuring academic performance includes an understanding of the structure of the educational arms race. The educational arms race has a structure that warrants an extra demandingness of any proportionality requirement on the burdens of testing. This makes such testing morally harder to justify. And arms races create pressure to replace non-positional consumption with efforts to increase positional consumption. Such pressure wouldn't be as widespread were it not for the increase in educational testing that triggers arms race situations. The loss of education's nurturing role also makes educational testing morally harder to justify. These are really my main points.

What the educational arms race tells us about the protection of familial goods

I would like to finish up with some further comments on what the educational arms race tells us about how the values of family life constrain the permissible implementation of some educational policies. I will begin by saying something about how the educational arms race is plausibly related to psychologists' concerns about the nature of the burdens imposed on children. Then I'll conclude with some thoughts about how to understand the constraint relating to familial goods.

The relation between auctioning and screening threatens to compound the problem of test anxiety. It is well-known that a child's perception of their parents is among the major determinants of test anxiety. Much of this has to do with the way in which parents might criticise or praise different levels of academic performance. Children are naturally made anxious by the prospect of parental criticism. But children will also become anxious if they know that their exam performance is something that their parents have made great sacrifices in order to help prepare them for. The cost of private tuition can lead parents to work long hours, and cut back on important purchases they might otherwise make, such as family holidays. This can only place more pressure on children whose performance is something they inevitably see as evidence of whether they have rendered their parents' efforts worthwhile or pointless.

None of this is any good for family life. If parents are investing large resources in funding their child's participation in the educational arms race, then they will typically lack time to spend with their children, and lack the ability to fund other valuable activities unrelated to positional competition. The rise in markets in private tuition services is something that sees children spend more weekends, evenings, and holiday times preparing for exams when they might be engaged in activities that promote their flourishing and their family's flourishing. (In fact, the point here isn't just about the value of familial relationships, but really about any non-positional goods that get crowded out by investment in positional competition.) What this means, in general, is that the constraint that protects family life isn't just one whose form upholds parental freedom in cases where exercising this freedom is important. One of the theoretical lessons of arms races is that they should lead us to revise what might otherwise be plausible claims about the moral value of freedom, even if we are not abandoning the more fundamental values that can motivate a concern to protect freedom.

Like all collective action problems, attempts to solve arms races tend to involve coercively restricting people's freedom in ways that improve coordination. But it is generally plausible to say that resisting such coercive solutions by appealing to the value of freedom is rather harder to justify than it is when opposing coercion that isn't used to solve collective action problems. This because, although collective action problems involve people rationally exercising their freedom *given* the actions of other individuals, it is usually rational for such individuals to agree to be coerced into not carrying out such actions, so long as they are given the assurance that all such persons are so coerced. The general point is that it is hard to defend the value of freedom when its existence is what leads to the sub-optimal outcomes characteristic of collective action problems. As Robert Frank writes, for example, there's something strange about objecting to nuclear arms control treaties on grounds that they restrict countries' freedom to decide how many bombs to build²³. Like states who invest huge resources in developing nuclear arsenals, many parents purchase educational resources because they are fearful that other parents are doing the same for their children, and they don't want to fail as parents by letting their child fall behind. It would be better to remove this fear, rather than leave parents free to act on it. Generalising, there's a serious philosophical question about whether the restriction of freedom to act on some sort of fear is really freedom at all, or freedom of the sort worth protecting. Far better to remove the source of the fear in the first place, even though this might be something that is done through coercion and, thus, technically counts as restricting freedom.

²³ (2011: 66).

All of this has ramifications for how we should think about the relation between justice in educational policy, and the moral importance of parental partiality. I have said, above, that I agree with the stance taken by Brighouse and Swift on the limits of parents' rights to shape their children's education. But I think that the foundations for this stance overlook the point just made about what may often motivate parents' desires to exercise these freedoms. Brighouse and Swift conceive of the relation between families and justice in terms of their disposition to conflict with each other. For example, activities conducive to sustaining a valuable family relationship, like reading bedtime stories, can make it the case that some children come to have a competitive advantage over their peers when it comes to educational screening that tests the abilities that story-reading can help develop. Brighouse and Swift have, as I have said, a good answer as to when parents can be permitted to confer competitive advantage, at the expense of justice, and when they can't.

This leaves something out. The educational arms race should lead us to acknowledge how the relationship between familial relationship goods and educational justice is not wholly one of conflict. The problem with parents seeking to confer competitive advantage is not just that this disrupts educational justice. Rather, the motive on which parents act is itself traceable to the injustice of unregulated positional competition, something which has occurred due to an increasing use of screening policies such as educational testing. Indeed, parents who try to purchase extra educational resources for their children are not so much trying to get ahead as to avoid falling behind. Unfortunately, Brighouse and Swift occasionally describe the activity of parents as if positional advantage is something that can be purchased automatically and that no sacrifice is involved. This presupposes that the allocation mechanism for education is simply that of auctioning. But it isn't: Purchasing educational resources for one's child often subjects them to greater burdens because education is not like a designer suit that one can put on and benefit automatically. When parents pursue positional advantage for their children, often they know that they are burdening their children and reducing opportunities for other valuable activities for them. Thus, unconstrained parental choice is often a symptom of educational injustice, and not a cause. In sum, the moral foundations of parents' right to exercise partiality is grounded in the role that such partiality might have in promoting both a parent's and a child's interest in forming a valuable relationship²⁴. The educational arms race has a tendency to distort the exercise of partiality into something that can actually undermine this foundation.

To conclude: Philosophers working on education routinely stress the importance of recognising that education is a positional good. They also stress the importance of coming to a proper understanding of the limits of parental partiality, given the need to pursue other values such as educational justice. This paper has attempted to connect these goals with the study of what moral limits there might be on measuring academic performance. Here, the complexities of education's status as a positional good turn out to be quite revealing. There are reasons to believe that the burdens of educational testing become disproportionate very easily, and that they further reinforce the need to think carefully about how our educational policies can hold back the flourishing of children, and their families.

²⁴ The importance of parent's interest tends to be theoretically downplayed. On this point, see the insightful discussion in Brighouse & Swift (2006).

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Environmental Education, Heidegger and the Significance of Poetics

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Abstract

For Heidegger, poetics is not merely a genteel pastime, extraneous to the real work of finding shelter, food and clothing as suggested by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Poetry has a more 'essential' role in human endeavour, bringing understanding of Being from concealment and introducing it in original and originating ways into language. Language is, Heidegger describes, the 'house' of Being. Heidegger regards poetics as a crucial means of rediscovering the appropriate relationship between ourselves and Being. Earlier in his career he tries to annihilate the ancient separation of the subject from the object which divorces humans as individuals from each other and from the earth. In the 1930s he discusses the ways that humanity becomes merely one object amongst all objects because of the technological enframing of everything as a consumable resource. In the light of reducing all beings to objects, nothing can be the subject of knowledge, and he acknowledges that there is some degree of significance to the age old separation of subjectivity. Poetics avoids the reduction of all knowledge to the objectification of technological enframing. Instead of constantly typifying all interaction, events, and objects as potentially consumable resources, poetics re-engages us with the task of what it is to be human - relating to beings as a whole. The paper explores the significance of poetics both in terms of the traditions of philosophical nominalism and in Heidegger's schema of onto-theo-logy.

Environment and education

Exultation knows, and fierce Desire acknowledges, -
Only Lamentation must still learn; with a maiden's hand
She counts out the old sorrows through the night.

But suddenly, slantwise and unpractised,
She holds aloft a constellation of our voices
Against the heavens, left unobscured by her breath.

Rilke, Sonnets to Orpheus, §8

Environmental education is not merely a subdiscipline of education. Rather, it is essential to the educational enterprise. Environmental education occupies an awkward place in education; it is inter-disciplinary and can be politicised or instrumentalised. Rather than explicate in detail the important philosophical differences between environmental education and education for sustainability (Irwin in Gaudiano-Gonzales 2008, Irwin in Thrupp and Irwin, 2010), in this paper I want to develop a Heideggerian reading of environmental education; looking at the limits of modernity, the danger and irreducible hyper-separation of subjectivity from objects, and seeing language as the 'house of being.' I argue that environmental education is a core curriculum for evoking a creative openness to a world that is adapting to the constraints of climate change and peak global population. Environmental education, at its best, about developing a more appropriate relation between humanity and 'nature'. It is creative innovation, opening new ways of knowing, a renewal of modernity through a poetic awakening of our meaningfulness as human beings, and our intimate relationship to the earth.

From primary to tertiary, the education system tends to reiterate curriculum and norms that reinforce the same Social Contract that has predominated in modernity since Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* in 1651. The

presumption is that without a certain type of socialisation, allowing society to cohere, individuals will stroll the earth in anarchistic vulnerability. Life is “nasty, brutish and short” if we are left to fend, alone, with nature. That nature is dangerous – ‘red in tooth and claw’, and it is only through the Social Contract, that we can band together, and master nature’s unpredictable assault. The Social Contract is entirely anthropocentric, with two related ‘laws’; “No harm to others,” and “Keep your promises.” It never occurred to Hobbes that humanity would be in the position to cause harm to Nature. John Locke put more emphasis on honest commercial transactions, and with Locke’s introduction of merchantism, the Social Contract has underpinned modern societies, intact and unchanged, since the 17th century.

Contemporary education stands on the Social Contract, unconsciously embedding an alarmist view of nature, the belief that human society is the master of nature, and the prioritisation of market transactions as the moral underpinnings of modernity.

After centuries of this world-view prevailing, the long term affects are beginning to show up. Commercialisation and consumerism has led to ever-increasing economic growth, along with ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Debate has raged over the last 20 years about whether climate change is actually occurring and in 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change declared it “very likely” that modern behaviour was directly causing the overall temperature of the planet to increase. We have already raised the mean temperature 0.6°C. The latest view is that because of the lag between ground level emissions and upper atmosphere greenhouse gas effect, modern societies have already committed the earth to warm by another 1.4°C *even if we were to halt all emissions from today*. At 2°C above the average pre-industrial levels, Rahmstorf (2009) and Hansen (2010) argue that there is at least a 50% chance of entering highly unstable climate conditions that could see a mass extinction period similar to the extinction of the dinosaurs. Yet political leadership to slow consumerism and lower emissions has been unforthcoming. In New Zealand for example, we are building more and more motorways, huge road tunnels, and we have very poor public transport and virtually no rail infrastructure. The WTO makes it illegal to promote ‘home grown’ products over imports, and instrumental sustainability education is based on market concepts of efficiency and innovation rather than any critique of the socio-political-economy (Irwin 2010).

The context for environmental education is not neutral. It is highly charged. In the face of climate change and the stagnation or, nihilism, of public debate and leadership, education has not yet responded with any depth to the shift in ethos and cultural mores that need to take place in modernity.

Heidegger is highly valuable for thinking through the role that education might take in the future. It is unsurprising that education is not yet able to accommodate the cultural and environmental shift that needs to take place. Heidegger writes despondently, that people have forgotten what it is that makes us human – what makes us meaningful, how our relationship with each other and the earth is characterised. We have lost our direction. For Heidegger, modern people are forgetting to ask the most crucial question of all; “What is the question of Being?” With this simple question Heidegger offers an alternative to the conventional Social Contract. The question of Being is not intrinsically anxious about nature. The question of Being does not privilege societies mastery. Nor does it consolidate market transactions as the moral underpinnings of modernity. Heidegger’s question “What is the question concerning Being?” can be visited and re-visited in myriad ways. Heidegger worries that in modern times we are increasingly forgetting to ask the most meaningful questions. He regards forgetting to ask about Being as nihilism – becoming ‘lost’ in the meaningless world of endless consumerism. In this paper I am going to focus on two main problems associated with forgetting to ask the question concerning Being, and the antidote, which Heidegger finds in poetics. We began to ‘forget’ to ask the question of Being when Idealist philosophy separated the subject from object; later, technological enframing reduces all ways of knowing about Being, Earth, and our selves to resource or potential resource to be bought and sold on the market place. In contrast, when we begin to pay attention once again, language is incredibly important, as the ‘House of Being’, and Heidegger is most enthusiastic about poetic receptivity to earth emerging into the light of Being. Poetics allows the earth to rise up into the awareness and receptivity of Being and human enquiry.

Idealist alienation

The separation of the subject from the object is a widely held motif in modern philosophy, despite being harshly criticised over the last century. It was a very popular concept in the early modern period and still underlies many (though not all) modern philosophy, religions, scientific, and economic creeds. Descartes famously argued, in the *Discourse on Method* (1637), that it is impossible to be *certain* about the essential truth of an object. Our senses are subject to interpretation, and we can be fooled, we can dream, we simply make the wrong association about the object concerned. Thus, there is always a gap between the knowing subject, and the object of knowledge. In fact, Descartes went a lot further, and separated out the body and its phenomenological sensations, as an object, from the pure, essential self; the mind. He wrote,

I am the same being who senses, that is to say who apprehends and knows things, as by the sense-organs, since, in truth, I see light, hear noise and feel heat. But it will be said that these appearances are false and that I am dreaming. Let it be so; all the same, at least, it is very certain that it seems to me that I see light, hear a noise and feel heat; and this is properly what in me is called perceiving and this, taken in this precise sense, is nothing other than thinking. From this I begin to know what I am... (Descartes Second Meditation, 1644, 1980:107).

Not only did Descartes prioritise the mind over the senses, and subjectivity over objects, he also prioritised the individual. His skepticism admonished group-think, in favour of careful deduction based on the individual's intuition and reason (Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 1637, 33). While the particulars of his theory were criticised by his contemporaries (cf especially, Spinoza), the basic premise of individual reason prioritised and rarefied from perceived natural objects held true for a great many Idealist philosophers, including Berkeley, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant. It remains the premise for Analytic philosophy to this day.

This separation – *hyper*-separation, as Val Plumwood puts it (1992), of the subject from the object has any number of consequences. In philosophical terms, it results in the separation of ontology from epistemology, or being from thinking. Although the critique of the hyper-separation of subject from object is now commonplace, the long held normativity of deductive logic, mastery over nature and the 'unknowability' of natural objects (and indeed, each other), is harder to shake off. It informs science, economics, technology, and curricula, and more.

The separation of the subject from object forges the epistemological context of the unknowability of the earth on the one hand, and mastery over the earth on the other. It prioritises the human above all other creatures, except a (monotheistic, modern) God.

I argue, and I am following Heidegger, de Beauvoir, and later, Val Plumwood, Luce Irigaray, Kristeva, Foucault, Derrida, and Morton, and others, that this separation of human individual subjects from their own body, and the perceptions of natural objects is a *requirement* for the subsequent alienation and marketisation of everything in consumer culture. It has allowed us to displace ecosystems, to knowingly bring entire species to extinction, to over-fish, over-hunt, deforest, strip mine, pollute, exhaust, and denature other species, *and our own bodies*. Heidegger describes this phenomena as nihilism, and he explains it in terms of his own major project; the forgetting to ask the question that makes humanity meaningful - "What is the question of Being.?" (see Irwin 2002 for a close discussion of the concept of nihilism).

Epistemology as Economics: technological enframing

The philosophical assumption, that human individuals are privileged over and above objective nature sets the precedent for an economic attitude that regards all elements of the world as 'resource' to be potentially used by consumers. This attitude is exacerbated by modern technology which has allowed us freedom (or alienation) from the seasonal constraints of our local ecology. Modern technology, according to Heidegger, frames the modern horizon of thought, so we are almost unable to view the world in a pre- or post-modern form. Our world view is dictated by the rhetoric of individual solipsist freedom, and technology is taken for granted in its mediation of knowledge of ourselves and our environment. Despite the unfolding evidence of deepening,

unprecedented, ecological crisis, the global discussion of climate change tends to refer to future technological developments that will alleviate the crisis, making business-as-usual possible.

Technology and philosophy came together in a unique fashion at the beginning of the peak of modernity, in Adam Smith's text *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith was writing in support of the Corn Laws. His view of economics was vastly different from earlier agricultural 'home' economics. Along with Riccardo, who later developed the expertise and efficiencies argument for trade, Adam Smith thought that the aggregation of individual economic greed in rational consumer decisions would best distribute scarce resources. Underpinning classical and neoliberal economics is an assumption of the solipsist individual separate and superior to the natural landscape. 'Nature' is reduced to a scarce resource for potential consumption. Smith's model shifted the basis of economics from the home to the nation. From subsistence production to consumerism and mass productivity. Innovation and efficiency have become bylines of the techno-economic model and both underpin continuous 'progress' and 'growth'.

Clearly the consumerist model is responsible for the problem of greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions, but the corporations, and the people working in them, have no means of changing direction. How else would we provide goods and services for millions and millions of consumers? The standardised legislation for 6 monthly profitable returns are what feed the shareholders and the government tax office. There appears to be no other alternative to continuous economic growth and its commensurate growth in consumerism and ghg emissions. Modern epistemology has been subsumed by the techno-economic horizon of knowing.

Dualism, or hyper-separation of people as 'subjects' from nature as 'objects' (Plumwood), is especially problematic in light of modern technology and global consumerism. Heidegger famously wrote about the dangers of modernity, total management, and technology. His critique of metaphysics has an urgency that is growing rather than diminishing. Heidegger's post-war work on the destitution of modernity and the danger of the enframing of the technological *Gestell* seems to indicate an ever tighter boundary on the possibilities available for philosophy and thinking.

The legislation, policy, and procedures in place to deal with climate change, from the global, to the local levels are all increasingly being dealt with in the cynical and self interested fashion that characterises World Trade Organisation negotiations. Everything is seen as a resource with potential to be traded. Human's likewise, are merely objects amongst other objects – human resource – our labour for sale to the highest bidder, The market has been reified to a moral arbiter, capable of fair distribution and thus of all political questions of power, privilege, or equality. Even arguments about the validity of the market's capacity for redistribution remains caught up in the technological paradigm. Nearly all ways of knowing are lost in the nihilistic sway of technological enframing.

Given Heidegger's pessimistic conclusion that the modes of calculation, management and total mobilisation of all spheres of life into the ever-expanding criterion of technological standing reserve. Heidegger's texts on *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerk*, and his other texts on poetics have become a small glimmer of hope. From 'the danger' of technology subsuming all ways of knowing into the potential resource of consumerism, there remains some possibility for thinking and being that might exceed, or at the very least, generate a readiness for those who come after. These broader thinkers might then begin to conceive a new epoch, a new world, a new artwork, a new poetics, new gods, with an abundance that repositions technology and fails to be bound by its horizons.

Language as the House of Being

Having taken the hyper-separation of subject from object as the centre of the problem of modern metaphysics in his early writing (Being and Time, 1928, What is Called Metaphysics, 1935) Heidegger subtly shifts the ground of the argument. Unlike some subsequent authors (Plumwood, Morton), Heidegger does not collapse completely the separation between subject and object. To do so would be complete subsumption in the technological *Gestell*; an object amongst objects, with no subject to 'know' at all. Heidegger argues instead for an irreducible gap between subject and its object of knowledge -without necessarily accepting any of the assumptions of hierarchy, Mastery, or alienation.

Uexküll goes even further than Heidegger (who earlier maintained that humanity holds a special place in the universe as, along with the gods, the animal who 'thinks'). Uexküll demonstrates that animals too cannot have an unadulterated merging of subject with object. Agamben quotes Uexküll "no animal can enter relation with an object as such," but only with "its own carriers of significance." (Uexküll and then Agamben, 2004: 42). Language is the 'carrier of significance' for the human animal. By the late 1930s and especially by 1959, Heidegger was describing language as the 'House of Being'. Poetics has language itself as its object both in terms of form, syntax, meter, and often, but not necessarily, in content.

Heidegger's critique of technological enframing is that it constructs language and meaning in a tightly constrained framework, disfiguring all other ways of knowing to the machinery of consumerism.

The task of poetics is to discover the way towards the sublime, the enigmatic movement of the earth, the consistency, closure, and rupture of what makes a world, and the significance therein of poetic language. It is to exceed, in a plethora of unexpected and also easily identifiable ways, the constraints of the technological *Gestell*.

Heidegger examines the poets, Trakl, Rilke and Hölderlin. All three make use of the Romantic poetic enigma, the Sublime, a focus on Nature, the ability of poetry to approach the ineffable, an entry of emotions, and the concepts that are rarely evoked into language. They make skilled use of poetic devices such as rhyme, rhythm, and meter to evoke the earth. At the same time, all three, in varying ways, retain the nominal difference between the speaking subject and the object of knowledge as irreducible. Thus concepts, and truth, arises in conjunction of nature's objects butting into the horizon of knowledge and shifting the way we know and interpret things. But without the poet to attend to those natural, earthy, illuminations, darkness would continue to reign.

Poetics and worlding

Yes, the Spring-times needed you deeply. Many a star
must have been there for you so you might feel it. A wave
lifted towards you out of the past, or, as you walked
past an open window, a violin
gave of itself.

Rilke, Duino Elegies, §2

For Language to operate as the house of Being, there is an irreducible nominal interpretation of phenomenological stimuli. The dualism cannot collapse, but it need not be hierarchical, or harshly separated from surrounding objects, or nature.

Heidegger wants to make a distinction between the technological *Gestell*, which demands that the earth be brought within the conceptual apparatus that pre-determines all elements of earth/ community/ knowledge practices as potential resource in the ongoing transactions of market consumerism. He calls this "challenging forth" earth to belong to the technological horizon of knowing. The pace is forced by the demands of the market, rather than the seasonal ebbs and flows or the unveiling of understanding as the earth sees fit to reveal it.

When language is philosophically privileged in this way, it can be impossible to understand that signifiers have meaning outside a closed system of signs (cf Wittgenstein, de Saussure, Barthes, Derrida). Heidegger gets around this problem in a number of ways, Language belongs to communities, that exist in historical context. The epoch constitutes a world view, that colludes to bring meaning to particular objects. Yet each signifier attaches to its object with dynamic intensity, as Heidegger notes, sometimes inverting its value over time.

Heidegger wants to make use of poetics as the opening of a new world. It is a romantic demand, and perhaps too exacting a requirement for most poetry to meet.

Heidegger evokes the strifing between earth and world as the site for the emergence or *er-eignis* of poetry as an appropriating event. Which is to say, that Being emerges from the differentiation and mutual disruption of the earth and the closed horizon of the world. But this gives a secondary and dependent relationship of Being upon

the earth which slides about in Heidegger's texts. Perhaps that is why the glimmers of earth are fleeting, and at times re-enveloped in the complex onto-epistemological structure of concealment and disclosure of *aletheia*.

Poetics is the appropriation of everyday meanings and in the strange apartness of new, conceptual illumination, in the lived environment and sharing through language. In what follows I mean to approach the question of the poetic significance by understanding the finite in Heidegger's schema, from the individual, to the Volk or nation, and finally to a 'world' and the gods who symbolise it. The boundaries of finitude close in, and yet announce an openness for truth and language to flourish. The question of earth though, exceeds that openness, neither concealed in Being nor nothingness. Earth exists, and while constantly present, only occasionally does it appear, fresh, into language.

Heidegger was fully aware that we live in a destitute time. At present, nearly 40 years after Heidegger died, there are the beginning intimations of a gathering readiness for *ek-static* change. One of those indications is the growing awareness amongst 'the masses' and also most governments of global warming and the implications of pollution and particularly CO_{2e} emissions on climate change. This gathering readiness has been visible to some artists for several centuries – since in fact, the beginning of the industrial revolution. In *What are Poets for?* Heidegger comments on the difficulties of modernity that it is *necessary* for the poet to face, to evoke the *ek-static* moment that might bring about the strifing of earth and world in a productive unity (in Being).

It is a necessary part of the poet's nature that, before he can be truly a poet in such an age, the time's destitution must have made the whole being and vocation of the poet a poetic question for him. Hence "poets in a destitute time" must especially gather in poetry the nature of poetry. Where that happens we may assume poets to exist who are on the way to the destiny of the world's age.

Poetic Natur and Ek-stasis

Heidegger relishes the opened out field of possibilities held in poetics. It is the inter-relationship between ontology and epistemology, where the physicality of dynamic be-ing erupts, as earth, into the language and meaningfulness of the truth through the vector of human language. Poesis collides the world of humanity with the broader unmasterable ground of earth, undermining the sceptical, nominalist divide between human subject and natural object without demoting the significance of what it is to be human. In these texts, more than any other, Heidegger manages to find a 'holy' and 'spiritual' path that avoids the quagmire of metaphysics and religion and yet rejoices in the specialness of what it is to belong to what he believes is the thinkingmost of animals.

The drive to organise a cohesive world view is in constant tension with the diffusion of the unknowable. Nietzsche took the Ancient Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus to characterise these two opposing but mutually necessary concepts.

Heidegger evokes *ek-stasis* as sublime awe that holds within it both the danger of chaotic dissolution and also the gentle gathering of new insight and ways of knowing and organising a future. *Ek-stasis* both illuminates as insightful enlightenment and explodes the existing order of things.

A flame that inflames, startles, horrifies, and shatters us. Flame is glowing lamination. What flame is the *ek-stasis* which lightens and calls forth radiance, but which may also go on consuming and reducing all to white ashes (*Language* 179).

Ek-stasis is not a corny cliché of the romantic moment of brilliance, exciting and happy for its own sake. It is far more difficult than that "...a being terrified, beside himself, *ek-static*" (*Language*, 179). *Ek-stasis* is a danger, in itself painful, alive - but in pain (*Language*, 181).

Ek-stasis is the signifying moment that draws together the authentic, or better, the way most proper to that which is human. *Ek-stasis* is our *essential* relation to the natural world. It is our significance and holds us apart from mere everyday repetition of the decay of modernity. To put it in terms of early Heidegger, *ek-stasis* differentiates the authentic subject, *Dasein* from the mundane, thrown, world of the 'They.' *Ek-stasis* then, to quote Heidegger again, is,

both gentleness and destructiveness. Gentleness in no way dampens the ecstasy of the inflammatory, but holds it gathered in the peace of friendship. Destructiveness comes from unbridled license, which consumes itself in its own revolt...terror blazing away in blind delusion, which casts all things into unholy fragmentation and threatens to turn the calm, collected blossoming of gentleness to ashes (*Language*, 179).

Ek-stasis posits a new readiness for an alternative horizon of knowledge. What is more, the *ek-static* moment of *poesis* holds a saving power that brings forth a possibility for a new ethos that breaks open the closed world of total management in the modern technological *Gestell*. Because when the earth is respected as the point of rupture and therefore the moment of possibility, rather than as standing reserve for potential consumption, a gathering and a turning has taken place that is far greater than any particular moment of pleasurable insight. So the sublime forges a singularity that can open a new world. It occurs through poetics, or perhaps art, or music, but what it achieves goes beyond any particular artwork and creates an ethos of respect for nature which must unfold in completely new ways of being in the world.

Two beginnings

Thus the oak turns spiritually green
above the dead's forgotten paths

(Rilke? Trakl?)

It is significant that Heidegger quotes and requotes a particular line from Trakl in *On the Way to Language*, "Soul then is purely a blue moment." Heidegger makes the case that the "perfect site" for the most spiritual of poetry is to follow the path of death (*Language*, 188). It is by listening to the death of his young friend that Heidegger believes Trakl sets himself apart from the everyday *hoi poloi* (the They) and finds his authentic voice. The death, and at the same time, the youth of the poet's friend sets Trakl on a 'more pious' path that positively sings the "music of the spirit of apartness" (*Language*, 188). This authenticity associated with death comes not from Christian redemption or an afterlife. Heidegger is careful to note that despite Trakl's biblical language, the poems lament greets not God, but rather the dead youth's sister and finishes with a sublime 'great pain' for 'unborn grandsons' (*Language*, 184 & 188).

For Heidegger the most significant aspect of Trakl's poetry is not its constant Romantic references to nature together with human emotion and spirituality but rather the following of the path of finitude; death and birth as the two interlocuting beginnings from which the poet gathers and enunciates the most meaningful event. Reaching back to discussions on authentic *Dasein*, Heidegger says "As a gathering, apartness is in the nature of a site" (*Language*, 185).

More fully, he describes the death of one who died young as capturing the two ends of finitude in their most pure form, unfettered by the busy everydayness of consumerism or the technological enframing and destitution of modernity.

Apartness, then, is neither merely the state of him who died young, nor the indeterminate realm of his abode. In the way in which it flames, apartness itself is the spirit and thus the gathering power. That power carries mortal nature back to its still childhood, and shelters that childhood as the kind, not yet borne to term, whose stamp marks future generations. The gathering power of apartness holds the unborn generation beyond all that is spent, and saves it for a coming rebirth of mankind out of earliness. The gathering power, spirit of gentleness, stills also the spirit of evil (*Language*, 185).

In the *Beitrag zur Philosophie, vom Ereignis* (1936-38) the structure of finitude and its emphasis on the two ends of a life span; the birth and the death, exceed even the historical community and becomes the organising principle of humanity itself. This theme extends from Aristotle's concept of essence as the seed or beginning from which things spring. Each iteration is subject to its own historical conditions and accidental characteristics, yet the originating essence always controls and springs out into each example again and again, in the same way. In the preface to the *Beitrag* Heidegger says

All beginnings are in themselves completed and unsurpassable. They withdraw from mere history [*Historie*], not because they are super-temporal and eternal, but because they are greater than

eternity: they are the *thrusts* of time which spatialize be-ing's opening of its self-sheltering. The ownmost grounding of this time-space is called *Da-sein*. (1999:13)

Yet, while we may be reasonably clear about the *birth* or essence of the beginning, what is less clear is what Heidegger calls the *second* beginning which derives not from birth but rather from death. Temporally this is not so difficult to understand. Each birth does not go back to the beginning of history, births continuously occur and they simply 'return' to the origin of our genetic heritage; what it is that makes us human. Likewise deaths precede and supercede births and lives, continuously occurring in the passage of the unfolding of humanity as a whole. Heidegger contends that the 'beginning' of death is as essentially important to the way we live authentic lives as the first beginning. And in the case of death, as in the *Ursprung* of birth, it is not individual finitude that matters here so much as the finitude of Being itself, and thus of that peculiarly reflective, decision making time-space orientated creature, *Da-sein*.

Unsurprisingly, the mood associated with the recognition of the second beginning is distress. The mood that belongs to the coming about, or existence rather than nothing of the first beginning is wonder and awe. Hence, Heidegger's best description of the two beginnings reach for these 'grounding attunements.'

The grounding-attunement of the first beginning is *deep wonder* that beings are, that man himself is extant, extant in that which *he* is *not*.

The grounding-attunement of the other beginning is *startled dismay*: startled dismay in the abandonment of being (1999).

This is the organising principle of finitude and poetic *ek-stasis* as the awe-struck revealing of time-space as the crossing from one beginning together with the other beginning.

Earth and world

In the poems of Trakl, the wind, the trees, the blossoms and the stones interact playfully with the living sister, the dead brother and the poet himself. Nature and people are at the same sublime level.

So painful good, so truthful is what lives,
And softly touches you an ancient stone:
Truly! I shall forever be with you.
O mouth! that trembles through the silvery willow.

(*Language*, 183)

Heidegger dwells on the dawning brightness of the sublime that "trembles out of the stillness of concealed pain." He can rejoice in the wellspring of lyric, tragedy and epic, the "breadth of vision, the depth of thought, and the simplicity of saying shine intimate and everlasting, ineffably" (*Language*, 183-184).

The relation to the elements of nature are embedded and are imbibed by the spiritual *geistlichkeit* of, for example, the mouth that trembles *through* the silvery willow, or the *activity* of a stone's soft touch. For in this integration of the dead with the earth, the sublime comes forth as warmth and joy rather than isolating and devastating. The poems speak of sunshine'd glades, and ecological flow, more than abandonment by a loved one who has 'passed' to an otherworld; be it heaven or hell. The binding together of the poet, the dead boy and the sublime reach of the natural into the far vistas of both beginnings; births and deaths are all poetically and philosophically *necessary*.

The dark shape of coolness ever follows the
Wanderer
Over the footbridge of bone, and the boy's hyacinth
Voice.
Softly reciting the forest's forgotten legend...

(*Language*, 174).

In 1959 in *What are Poets for?* in reference to Rilke, Heidegger 'sings the holy' by attuning to nature as ground. This ground is not of philosophy though. It is ontological and has *not yet* arisen to the recognition of Dasein's consciousness. "The ground of beings is Nature."

The ground of man is not only of a kind identical with that of plant and beast. The ground is the same for both. It is Nature, as full Nature (1975:100).

In these late works, Heidegger seems to have abandoned the hierarchical privilege of humanity as the thinking, speech-making animal, and taken on board Uexküll's insight that all species are involved with the objects that show up as significant *for them*. Humans are incapable of 'seeing' ultra-violet, for example, and so we fail to comprehend a whole spectrum of information that is signified by ultraviolet patterning. Whereas for many insects, the world is full of ultraviolet distinctions, that are meaningful and informative. Nature reveals itself to us all, in unique and particular ways.

As Nature gives the other creatures over
to the venture of their dim delight
and in soil and branchwork grants none special
cover,
so too our being's pristine ground settles our plight;
we are no dearer to it; it ventures us.
Except that we, more eager than plant or beast
go *with* this venture, will it, adventurous
more sometimes than Life itself is, more daring
by a breath (and not in the least
from selfishness) ... There, outside all caring,
this creates for us a safety – just there,
where the pure forces' gravity rules; in the end,
it is our unshieldedness on which we depend,
and that, when we saw it threaten, we turned it
so into the Open that, in widest orbit somewhere,
where the Law touches us, we may affirm it.

(1975: 99) Rilke, untitled (1924) in *Gesammelte Gedichte (1934)*

The phenomenology of the animals call forth ontology in a way that also opens up new possibilities while never managing to cross the breach between subject and object that makes phenomenological meaning in their world. The structure of signification is not so different to ours.

In conclusion then, the finitude that Heidegger develops in the *Beitrag* of the original beginning the 'other' beginning that interlock and interlocute in *Dasein* bring about a method for understanding history and change. The two beginnings incorporate both the evolutionary unfolding of the cycles of particular lives together with the Kantian internalisation of time through the singular individual as authentic *Dasein*. This makes possible an understanding of change that does not have to progress in a simple teleological or even dialectical process but allows for undiagnosed disruptions to the sometimes long standing continuities that have constituted a world. In view of the technological *Gestell* that encloses the modern horizon of knowledge, this comes as a huge relief.

Likewise, the finitude plays a part in the way the earth is tamed by the world, so that it emerges into Being (rather than existence). *Ek-static poeisis* plays a very important role in this *spiel* between world and earth. Heidegger has for a long time characterised this bringing new ideas into language as the unconcealment of some elements and at the same time, sheltering hiddenness of other elements, that brings about new disclosures of *Being*. The question of the status of animals and their world raises important new dimensions to the *Seinsfrage* which is about whether to draw a line, or whether to allow for a more permeable skin between Being and existence. Nearly 40 years after Heidegger's death, many things have changed, and there is an increasing readiness in the everyday lives of modern society to recognise that 'mastery' concludes with the total annihilation of the environmental conditions that make living possible (Irwin, 2008 and 2010b). To continue to rely on the question of *human* consciousness means that philosophy is always thrown back on un-natural

ground. The ground of Being in *Dasein* has affinities with other animals because what grounds knowing is the way natural objects show up as significant, rather than a privileged logos of human rationality and deduction. Increasingly, it is becoming clear that nature as ground also has a finitude, and this throws open a wider question than that of Being; the question of all lively existence, and the responsibility of humanity not to cast it into peril. Heidegger was well aware of this danger. He began to frame a question of immense scale and importance. Without him it would be difficult to have begun to embark on this path. But each question holds within it, a series of answers. And my contention is that the *Seinsfrage* is still gathering, thinking, speaking, constituting the *ek-static* turning that is intimated in the poetry of Trakl, Rilke and Holderlin. Environmental education is the perfect curricula to dwell further on these initiatives.

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Rational Altruism and Global Citizenship Education

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Abstract

Today there is a growing sense in diverse countries that education should prepare young people to react to effects of globalization, good and bad. In relation, there have been calls for moral philosophers and philosophers of education to focus on concepts underpinning education for “critical democracy” and “compassionate citizenship,” amidst a sense of hopelessness in global anarchy, and against a simplistic globalization-as-free-trade model. In this essay, I examine rational altruism as a virtue underpinning global citizenship and social responsibility. First, I consider the views of altruism offered by Thomas Nagel, Lawrence Blum, and Eamonn Callan, in relation to a Buddhist view of altruism as elaborated by Joel Kupperman. I defend a dispassionate view of altruism, and briefly discuss its implications for education for global citizenship.

Keywords: altruism, global citizenship, compassion, rationalism, moral philosophy

Today there is a growing sense in diverse countries that education should prepare young people to react to effects of globalization, good and bad. In Hong Kong, globalization is a major facet of the curriculum, and textbooks focus on critical perspectives toward cultural, economic, and political globalization. The Australian curriculum similarly focuses on “global conflicts” and developing students’ skills “to participate in contemporary debates” (ACARA, 2013). Kathy Hytten (2009) argues relatedly that philosophers of education should focus on concepts underpinning education for “critical democracy” and “compassionate citizenship,” amidst a sense of hopelessness in global anarchy, and against a simplistic globalization-as-free-trade model. She likens compassion to “caring about others,” and argues for a conception of critical, “justice-oriented” citizens, who focus on root causes of structural injustice and not merely their colorful symptoms.

Compassion and caring are worth scrutinizing in relation to education, however. Though developing appropriate emotional expressions within a cultural context may be within the domain of schooling, people within a community still experience and show emotions in individual ways. It would thus be challenging to systematically teach or assess emotional responses in formal education. Multicultural educators find that attempts to foster feelings, attitudes, and dispositions via schooling can often backfire (Applebaum, 2009; McCarthy, 2003). Students may disengage from or resist education which is seen to have an affective component, which asks them to feel particular ways about others in society. In relation, moral education can generally be challenging. As Martin Buber has noted, teacher instruction about morality can seem like a joke to students, who may not see educators as moral authorities (1955). Though Eamonn Callan views moral education more optimistically, he also acknowledges that teaching from the right sense of moral conviction can be difficult, as issues of morality are often those about which people cannot easily agree to disagree (1997).

Additionally, whether compassion and caring should be promoted and emphasized in education is worth asking. From a liberal view, personal autonomy and reason may be sacrificed when one is swayed by emotion. Immanuel Kant has also written that, “It is not possible that our heart should swell from fondness for every man’s interest and should swim in sadness at every stranger’s need; else the virtuous man...with all this goodheartedness would become nothing but a tenderhearted idler” (1965, p. 58-59). Hytten’s call for compassionate citizenship could develop cynicism or a new kind of hopelessness in youth, when things do not go as planned upon organizing a food drive (as she suggests), or when engaging in similar development projects (Jackson, 2013). Actions arising out of care for others are also scrutinized by egoists, as disingenuous or

otherwise ineffective, as we know our personal interests better than those of others, and may risk seeing people as extensions of ourselves rather than as autonomous individuals, if we try to act for the interest of others rather than for our own good.

Altruism seems a more likely candidate than compassion or caring, as a civic value and moral virtue worth developing through education. In this essay, I examine altruism as a concept underpinning the global citizenship ideal of social responsibility. I consider the notions of altruism which emerge in the views of Thomas Nagel, Lawrence Blum, Callan, and Joel Kupperman. I defend a dispassionate view of altruism, and relate it to global citizenship education.

Defining Altruism

Altruism has been examined more in economics, evolutionary biology, and social psychology than in Western philosophy. Perhaps one reason for this is its connection to emotional states, which many ethicists aim to remove from consideration in questions of fairness and justice. Western thinkers often see emotions as uncontrollable in contrast with rational action, and thus work to filter out affect in moral reasoning. Nagel thus (1970) “pure rational altruism” as lacking in any emotional content: a rational duty of benevolence based in an objective, impartial understanding of common humanity. He argues that although pure altruism “may never occur in isolation from other motives,” such as “sympathy, benevolence, and love,” it is nonetheless the rational understanding of the like interest of another that gives the reason to act (1970, p. 79-80). Against this backdrop, Blum criticizes Kantianism (which he understands as related to, but not exclusively defined by, Kant’s own moral views) as a focus on rational duty which seems to wrongly ignore the moral value of altruism as an emotional disposition.

In his defense of rational altruism, Nagel distinguishes rational ethical altruism from a feeling or “generalized affection for the human race” (1970, p. 3). His rational altruism is undergirded by the ability, or *possibility*, to be objective: to “view ourselves from both the personal and impersonal standpoints” (1970, p. 144). From this possibility he describes both *prudence*, a timeless orientation toward one’s own good, and *altruism*, an interest in objective rather than subjective human good, as secondary “rational requirements on action” (1970, p. 87). Commitment to objective good motivates action that benefits others (and oneself in the future, in the case of prudence), and can theoretically exist without any particular feelings.

Both the possibility and value of dispassionate recognition and action on behalf of the objective good is questioned by Blum (as well as Martha Nussbaum), however. Blum argues that there is a qualitative distinction between acting out of sense of duty and acting due to altruistic emotion in real life, and that the latter should be held as superior to the former, in terms of human relationships and in developing any sense of altruistic duty. He argues first that “a sympathetic, compassionate person is more likely to act to foster the good of others. This is part of what it means to be sympathetic and compassionate, insofar as these involve dispositions to have certain emotions, and these emotions involve a disposition to act for the sake of the other’s good” (1980, p. 132-133). As altruistic feelings are seen to lead to altruistic action, the feelings are fundamental to the altruistic actions, rather than unnecessary or conceptually separate. Nussbaum similarly defends compassion as an emotion motivating altruistic action, defining compassion as the belief that one suffers through no fault of their own and is “an end whose good is to be promoted” (2001, p. 321).

Additionally Blum argues that rational duty without emotionality is not ideal or sufficient in real-life scenarios involving altruistic action. He gives a few examples to consider. The first is a husband’s act of visiting his dying wife in the hospital. Blum contends that it makes a difference to the wife’s appreciation of the act if she were to discover that he did not visit out of a sense of concern and love for her, but out of a sense of objective duty. Additionally, he asks readers to consider that he (Blum) has a flat tire and a man, Manero, pulls over to help him out. Blum argues that if he discovers that Manero has an auto repair shop and will stop in such situations out of a personal business interest rather than out of concern for Blum, this changes the way he feels about the goodness of his (Manero’s) act.

Blum thus argues that the act in the interest of the other with the emotional orientation of concern for the other “constitutes a kind of totality which is the bearer of the good to the recipient” (1980, p. 146). The good is different depending on the emotions which accompany the action, according to Blum. Blum calls this the *intrinsic value* of altruism, which is an emotional concern people can feel and appreciate, whether or not someone can obviously assist them in a hard situation. (Relatedly, Blum criticizes Kantians for giving up prematurely on altruistic emotion, in the case that concern can lead to action, even if the possibility of benevolent action is not clear at the first glance.) Nel Noddings similarly argues that the value of care lies in the appreciation of the one “cared-for,” favorably distinguishing a sense of relational care from more objective views (Noddings, 1999).

Blum’s arguments here are not entirely convincing, however. It is true that in some cases, I would rather someone assist me out of a feeling of concern rather than out of mere duty. Yet this does not mean the emotional concern always makes the action better. As a woman, I would delight in discovering Manero was helping me with my tire out of a sense of cold, rational duty; his genuine empathy could make me uncomfortable. Whether I care why my husband visits me on my death bed depends on many different factors; it is hardly the case that the emotionally-motivated visit will always be received with more appreciation than a more dutiful practice. I do not require affection as often as I wish for a more basic interest in my good, from others.

Furthermore, I do not feel that my own acts of altruism rely on my emotional state, or a related kind of expectation of appreciation from those “cared-for.” When I open a door for a slow-moving or heavy-laden person, or pick up something that he or she dropped on the ground, I do these things out of a sense of duty; there is no need to feel some sort of more passionate or empathetic feeling in order to act toward another person’s good. In the case of rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe, it was discovered that many were equally or more strongly motivated by a desire to protest evil than by empathy (Konarzewski, 1992, p. 27). Empathy or compassionate altruistic emotion may play a role in promoting others’ good; however, too much moral distress and compassion can also be debilitating, as Blum (1980) also notes in conceding that there are appropriate and inappropriate kinds of emotional, altruistic feeling.

Against a view that promotes caring feeling over rational duty, as an intrinsic good or as an appropriate motivator of altruistic action, Callan argues that duty must precede feelings of care when one acts justly. He also gives two examples (1997). First he considers the case of an illiterate husband and wife. The wife wants to learn to read, but the husband forbids her. Finally he consents, perhaps due to a sense of caring attachment for his wife. However, to act altruistically and see her as an end in herself requires more than this: a recognition of her right to pursue her good. The point is made more clearly in a second example, where husband and wife are exchanged for slaveholder and slave. Surely, one should free a slave not out of a sense of affection, which is partial and may not hold across a number of cases, and which can be fleeting and influenced by irrelevant factors. One should act in this case instead out of a sense of moral obligation, even if (or while) the slaveholder may also be emotionally attached to a slave. Through these examples Callan demonstrates that care for others is not mandatory in the same way that rational duty is (though they may be different kinds of goods). Though Blum, Nussbaum, and Noddings (2002) would argue on the contrary, that care, compassion, or sympathy is a kind of good and therefore a disposition we should increase in society apart from that of objective, rational duty, Callan cautions that such feelings of positive connection to others must not replace or come before rational duty, to support others’ good and prevent harm.

The educational implications of Blum’s view of altruistic emotion are also less than straightforward. He discusses two possible approaches to developing altruistic emotion. The first follows Kant in *The Doctrine of Virtue* (1964). It is to habitually seek out situations which expand altruistic emotion, namely those which provide opportunities to better understand the states of disadvantaged people. As Blum notes, this view suggests that we interact with and direct our emotions, rather than being passive with regard to them. Many educators also argue that literature or service which exposes students to others’ lives can change students’ orientations toward others in a positive way (Nussbaum, 2001; Boler, 1999; Noddings, 2003; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Yet Blum concedes this does not always lead to the desired affect. Empirical evidence shows that one can reinforce their stereotypes or simply feel a selfish kind of dismay upon exposure to the sad plight of others

(Applebaum, 2009; McCarthy, 2003). Additionally, Blum notes that even if altruism is thus developed, the feeling can be fleeting, leaving a person as their experience or exposure ends.

Alternatively, Blum proposes one develop altruistic emotion by reflective cognitive practice, seeing appropriate altruism as interrelated to knowing about others' situations: At first you feel sorry that a friend has been laid off from his job; yet your sorrow and concern decrease upon discovering further that he was planning to quit the job before he was laid off, and has another job lined up (1980, p. 202). In this case, your feelings and openness to acting in the interest of your friend likely change as you gain the further information. Yet Blum admits here that we often have emotions even when we know they are not quite appropriate; we may feel too concerned, or not concerned enough, with another person's welfare (see also Nussbaum, 2001). This does not negate the insight that our emotions are related to our cognitive processes. However, that we have such imperfect abilities of self-assessment and rational revision of feelings challenges educators who would prioritize cultivating cognitively-framed emotional altruism over other goals. Indeed, teachers are not necessarily emotional experts, themselves, but may struggle to feel and express appropriate moral distress in the classroom (Callan, 1997; Jackson, 2009).

A more rational than emotional sense of altruism as defended by Nagel and Callan is also promoted in Buddhism. Kupperman (1995) acknowledges that a kind of universal altruistic emotion which is divided equally among all people worldwide (as is advocated in Buddhism) seems to amount to a lack of affection for anyone. However, he argues that such an outlook implies not cold-heartedness to all of humanity, but rather an acceptance of (inevitable) suffering, which is "guarded and limited in intensity" (1995, p. 125). In relation, he interprets Stoic philosophy not as against emotionality altogether, but instead as encouraging a sort of dispassionate impartiality in the face of emotional attachments, as in the statements, "If's it all the same to you, I think I'd rather have X than Y," or, "I have no feelings in the matter" (1995, p. 127). Kupperman notes that such impartiality, of being "at peace," or tranquil rather than apathetic, is demanded in liberal Western societies in the public sphere, though it may not be emphasized over care in relation to friends and family. Though Nussbaum challenges the dispassionate stances of the Stoics and Buddhism in her defense of compassion, she also indicates that compassion should not operate without many rational requirements on understanding (2001). A more dispassionate than emotional altruism is helpful as we consider what care and compassion imply in the global domain.

Altruism and Global Citizenship

Discourses of global citizenship consider that one has choices to make when they act, not merely to aid or not aid another, but to aid different others, with different relationships to oneself. From a view of society as a social contract, it would appear that one has different, if not greater duties to others within their own society than outside of it (Goodin, 2002). Impartial altruism, as opposed to an altruism based in emotional care, would not make such distinctions (although theories of altruism concede the place of special duties and care toward friends and family). Some remain critical of notions of global citizenship given challenges to acting justly and impartially toward others even within their own society. Callan (1997) suggests one should cultivate their sense of reasonable moral distress about others in their own society, before developing more expansive views.

Yet as Amartya Sen argues, "primary allegiance does not eliminate the possibility of other allegiances" (2002, p. 115). If we view the nation-state not as a social contract of individuals, but as having assigned responsibility for people regardless of their value to the collectivity (Goodin, 2002), we may conceive of global altruism arising out of rational recognition of likeness not just to those with whom we share borders, but to all people worldwide. As nation-states are imagined communities (Anderson, 2002), surely our sense of objective duty to compatriots can be applied outside national borders today. Caring more emotionally or compassionately for, or "loving" our neighbors and fellows around the world may also be worthwhile; yet rational altruism is more essential to developing a sense of global social responsibility motivating just action, rather than action inspired by affect, which can be fleeting and difficult to appropriately develop.

Indeed, such a view of rational altruism extending around the globe gives little justification for education to enhance emotions of caring and compassion. While these latter, possibly beneficial dispositions may be seen in some instances to be in short supply, and to be potential motivators of altruistic behavior, they can also be seen to enable rash action or undue sentimentality. In cases of international development work and other projects where people aim to help others across social boundaries, people's care and empathy (among other feelings, like guilt) can preclude their understanding issues and possibilities critically (Jackson, 2013; Jackson, 2008); it can thus preclude effective altruistic action based in a sense of social injustice and breed cynicism. Furthermore, expressions of care are not universally the same, even if care is valued in family relationships around the world (Noddings, 1999). Thus, one should stop short of wondering, "what would make them *feel* good" emotionally, when considering the implications of global citizenship for relating to others, as there is no objective *intrinsic* caring good at hand. One should focus instead on the more objective question of, "what would ensure their *autonomy*," freedom, independence, equal ability, and so on (Engster, 2004).

How to enhance rational altruism is another manner. To learn that one could, without personal fault, be in need of others' help requires firstly information about how poverty and other disadvantages impact people's lives (Nussbaum, 2001). To see that one could be in another person's shoes, as in Nagel's objective view, requires comparison of conditions and experiences. Recognizing that no individual is "self-made" in society is a related disposition whose rational justifications students should be exposed to, given contradictory messages of egoism and neoconservatism powerful in many societies and worldwide today. Moral distress in students is a potential outcome of learning about other people's lives around the world (Callan, 1997). However, while some argue that students should explore their feelings as they engage in such learning (Nussbaum, 2001; Boler, 1999), the prioritization of altruism as a sense of rational duty to others instead implies that teachers should aim to frame moral distress as rational rather than emotional, as possible (Callan, 1997).

Developing in students a rational sense of moral distress rather than altruistic emotion about the lives of poor people in other countries can enhance students' abilities to critically consider systemic causes of inequality and injustice, as Hytten argues, and not just become sad, alienated, cynical, or hopeless, which are all too likely of outcomes when teachers instruct from a sense of emotional indignation (Jackson, 2009), or with the aim of inducing sympathetic feelings in students about others' lives. It is hardly acting in disadvantaged global others' interest to focus on developing students' feelings toward them (Jackson, 2013; Spelman & Lugones, 1983); virtues connected to respect for humanity should be prioritized above affect in such situations. Empathy may be involved, as one considers what it would be like to be in another's shoes. However, it is not productive to dwell on feelings over action if the target is global citizenship as behavior and not just a superficial global-minded sensibility.

In summary, although Nussbaum, Hytten, and others call for a compassionate, caring global citizenship which develops student empathy for others, the value of loving everyone on the planet is questionable; the feeling may be impossible, outside of a Buddhist orientation, echoed in the defense of rational altruism, of duty to others as like oneself, without undue emotional attachment. That rational altruism is a virtue apart from and before emotional altruism suggests we should focus less on building student compassion and caring in global citizenship education, and more on impartial understanding that people need help due to no personal lacking or fault. There is no need for such altruism to be bound by nationality, for one's compatriots are not necessarily any more like oneself than are others outside their nation-state. Altruism as a moral duty to help people to increase objective good can undergird global citizenship, and requires no effort to develop troublesome, tenuous affect.

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The Way to Happiness: Caring Education and Dao De

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Abstract

This article argues that focusing too much on intellectual development and economic goals makes the aim of education too narrow. It is urgent to shift more attention to the broader process of moral education. As caring education is one of the focuses of moral education, this article provides insight into Noddings's caring and Laozi's Dao De, and then attempts to strengthen caring education by the ethic of Dao De. On this basis, our students' happiness is expected to be improved.

Keywords: Nel Noddings, caring, Laozi, Dao De, happiness

Introduction

Driven by the pressure of economic goals, it is unsurprising that education is lost in the fever of measuring up to an academic standard. The humanistic care of education is overshadowed by the emphasis on academic achievement. Admittedly, in educational settings with a lack of humanistic care, it is hard to imagine the effectiveness of moral education. However, this is not an excuse for not trying. To the contrary, our motivation to find the way to improving moral education is greater than ever. In the long run, moral education takes effect gradually, and will bear fruit someday and benefit our students for a lifetime. For that reason, while the contribution of intellectual education must be acknowledged, moral education as integral to advancing our students' holistic development deserves more immediate attention.

Noddings argues, in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, that 'the primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring' (Noddings, 1984/2003a, p. 172). However, in the practice of moral education, the emphasis on caring need not weaken intellectual aims. What Noddings is concerned about is the priorities of today's education:

In pointing to the maintenance and enhancement of caring as the primary aim of education, I am drawing attention to priorities. I certainly do not intend to abandon intellectual and aesthetic aims, but I want to suggest that intellectual tasks and aesthetic appreciation should be deliberately set aside -- not permanently, but temporarily -- if their pursuit endangers the ethical ideal. (Noddings, 1984/2003a, p. 174)

Caring, as the first priority of education, provides us with a new perspective on moral education. Learning to care and be cared for brings a new opportunity and challenge to moral education.

Many philosophers of education have debated Noddings's views on caring, but few look at the important connection between Noddings's caring and Laozi's Dao De. However, caring and Dao De are similar in the emphasis they both place on relationships. The two models both deal with interpersonal relationships. But at the same time, given the essential difference in their cultural roots and theoretical background, there are significant distinctions between the two ideas in solving practical problems.

Therefore, in this article, I attempt to strengthen caring education by the ethic of Dao De. This article begins with an overview of Noddings's caring and Laozi's Dao De. Following a comparison between the two models, my focus will turn to how to enhance the ethic of care by Dao De. At the end of this article, I will discuss the implications of Dao De in contributing to our students' happiness in caring education.

What is Caring?

As Noddings suggests, '[i]n order to establish a firm conceptual foundation that will be free of equivocation, I have given names to the two parties of the relation: the first member is the "one-caring" and the second is the "cared-for"' (Noddings, 1984/2003a, p. 4). The 'one-caring' refers to the carer/caregiver, and the 'cared-for' refers to the recipient of care.

Caring, as an adjective, often refers to a virtue. For example, we often use caring to describe people 'who attend and respond to others regularly and who have such a well-developed capacity to care that they can establish caring relations in even the most difficult situations' (Noddings, 2002, p. 14). We can understand Noddings's meaning in this way: The caring virtue can be cultivated and enhanced in the exercise of caring capacities, but caring capacities in a broader sense also make it possible to establish and maintain caring relations. As Noddings clarifies:

Both of these comments [on caring as a virtue, an individual attribute] capture something of our broader notion of care, but both are misleading because of their emphasis on caring as an individual virtue. As we explore caring in the context of caregiving -- any long-term unequal relation in which one person is carer and the other cared-for -- we will ask about the virtue that support caring. But for now, it is important not to detach carers from caring relations. No matter how much a person professes to care, the result that concerns us is the caring relation. (Noddings, 1992, pp. 17-18)

The main difference between caring as a virtue and caring as a relation is pointed out more clearly as below:

Certainly, people who care in given situations exercise virtues, but if they begin to concentrate on their own character or virtue, the cared-for may feel put off. The cared-for is no longer the focus of attention. Rather, a virtue -- being patient, or generous, or cheerful -- has become the focus, and the relation of caring itself becomes at risk. (Noddings, 2002, p. 14)

It is because of broadening the focus from the one-caring to both the one-caring and cared-for, Noddings warns that 'at the bottom, the ethic of care should not be thought of as an ethic of virtue' (Noddings, 2002, p. 14). In focusing on the effect of care from the one-caring on the cared-for, caring as a relation has been greatly emphasised. Whether to emphasise caring as a virtue or as a relation depends on what the purpose of caring is. In some cases, when our aim is to advance the one-caring's moral development, caring as a virtue is stressed; in other cases, when our focus is the cared-for's need, caring as a relation is emphasised. As a result, caring as a virtue and caring as a relation are not mutually exclusive. Those who have the caring virtue are often able to establish and maintain caring relations; again, in caring relations, their caring virtue is cultivated and enhanced. Or rather, where the emphasis is put results in their different views of caring.

Caring, as a noun, often refers to a medium of relationships. The caring either given or received links two parties in a relationship. Obviously, the meaning of the two different parts of speech are internally related. There is a similar emphasis on relationships in the implied meaning of both parts of speech. Although Noddings does not directly discuss the meaning of caring as a noun, if we try to look at its meaning from Noddings's relation perspective, we would put more emphasis on the relationship in which the caring medium is situated rather than the nature of the medium itself.

From above conceptual description, we can see that Noddings's caring is relational. Strictly speaking, the maintenance and enhancement of caring in itself is the maintenance and enhancement of caring relations. Noddings defines a caring relation as below:

A caring relation is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings - a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for. In order for the relation to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways. A failure on the part of either carer or

cared-for blocks completion of caring and, although there may still be a relation -- that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something toward the other -- it is not a caring relation. (Noddings, 1992, p. 15).

In Noddings's view, the relation of caring is one of the most common relationships. She insists that 'to care and be cared for are fundamental human needs' (Noddings, 1992, p. xi). In other words, we all need to care and be cared for. But what are the sources stimulating us to enter into caring relations? Noddings has indicated that the sources are two feelings: the sentiment of natural caring and the sentiment of ethical caring.

There can be no ethical sentiment without the initial, enabling sentiment. In situations where we act on behalf of the other because we want to do so, we are acting in accord with natural caring. [...] The second sentiment occurs in response to a remembrance of the first. [...] This memory of our own best moments of caring and being cared for sweeps over us as a feeling -- as an ['I must'] -- in response to the plight of the other and our conflicting desire to serve our own interests. (Noddings, 1984/2003a, pp. 79-80)

Noddings (1984/2003a) asserts that caring is a human instinct. Our spontaneous feeling either 'I want' or 'I must' is the prerequisite to entering into caring relations. Spontaneity means occurring as a result of an impulse. Without spontaneity, it is not a caring relation. However, we cannot demand that this spontaneity always occurs. Noddings (1984/2003a, 1992, 2002) notices that a relation fails to be a caring relation if the two parties (i.e., the one-caring and the cared-for) or the conditions under which the parties interact in a relation prevent completion of caring. More specifically, the interruption of a caring relation may happen at three stages: receptivity, relatedness, or responsiveness.

A relation may fail to be one of caring because a carer fails to be attentive, or having attended, rejects the ['I must'] and refuses to respond. Or, it may fail because the cared-for is unable or unwilling to respond; he or she does not receive the efforts of the carer, and therefore caring is not completed. Or finally, both carer cared-for may try to respond appropriately, but some condition prevents completion; perhaps there has been too little time for an adequate relation to develop[,] and the carer aims rather wildly at what he or she thinks the cared-for needs. (Noddings, 2002, p. 14)

Although the failure of a caring relation has been noticed, there is no explicit suggestion for rebuilding the uncompleted caring relation. Putting forward solutions to complete an uncompleted caring relation is necessary and helpful to supplementing the ethic of care.

In ideal caring relations, first, the one-caring is required to empty his or her own soul and place attention to the cared-for in order to receive the cared-for's reality. This capacity is called as engrossment. When the one-caring feels the desire to help the cared-for and steps out of his or her personal frame of reference and concerns the cared-for's reality as if that is his or her own reality, this is motivational displacement. Engrossment and motivational displacement characterise the person as the one-caring. Second, if the concerns received by the one-caring are similar to the one-caring's concerns, i.e., the one-caring and the cared-for have the same concerns, and there are sufficient conditions for help the cared-for, relatedness is established. Third, to complete the caring, the cared-for also need to reciprocally respond the one-caring that he or she has received the care. People who are able and willing to show reception, recognition, and response characterise themselves as the cared-for. In doing so, the one-caring and the cared-for are mutually dependent, and a caring relation is established, maintained, and enhanced. Noddings summarises:

A caring relation requires the engrossment and motivational displacement of the one-caring, and it requires the recognition and spontaneous response of the cared-for. (Noddings, 1984/2003a, p. 78)

But in the process of engrossment and motivational displacement, the conditions and situations the one-caring faces are various. As Noddings explains, 'conditions [in situations] are rarely "sufficiently similar"... to declare that you must do what I do' (Noddings, 1984/2003a, p. 5). Therefore, from Noddings's perspective,

dealing with a particular relation has to be considered in a specific situation on a case-by-case basis, instead of following a universal ethical guideline.

What is Dao De?

To discover the original meaning of Dao De, it may be useful and interesting to look at the ancient Chinese character for Dao De.



Road + Eye + Foot

Figure 1: The ancient Chinese character for Dao

From Figure 1, we can see that the original form of the ancient Chinese character for Dao contains three main components: road, eye, and foot. Thus, the original connotation of Dao can be understood as the Way that we choose and walk. Walking in a right direction is close to the Dao; but walking in the opposite direction is away from the Dao.



Road + Eye + Heart

Figure 2: The ancient Chinese character for De

The ancient Chinese character for De is illustrated in Figure 2. In the Chinese Oracle (16th - 11th century B.C.), De originally implies looking straight ahead. In the Chinese Bronze Inscription (11th - 7th century B.C.), the main connotation of De is emphasised by an additional component -- heart. De is from the heart -- the straight heart, the good heart. The ancient sages, through the two characters Dao and De, inspire us that to keep walking in the right direction, always look straight ahead and follow the good heart.

When we talk about the meaning of Dao De, it is necessary to have a look at the meaning of Dao De in the Daodejing. The author of the Daodejing is controversial. But in order to avoid involving irrelevant discussion, in this article, I default that Laozi was the author of the Daodejing. Laozi's Dao De is used to refer to Dao De in the Daodejing. There are different editions of the Daodejing. The most popular edition was compiled by Wang Bi. The 81 chapters are structured in two parts. The first 37 chapters are known as the Daojing; and the remaining 44 chapters are known as the Dejing. The Daojing focuses on ontological and epistemological issues. It tells us that Dao is the origin and ontology of everything. Dao is also the law of nature and the code of conduct. The Dejing concentrates on ethical issues. It advises us that everything should be done following the Dao. De refers to following the Dao. Today, in Chinese language, De often means virtue. In translations of the Daodejing, De is often translated as virtue. This is misleading. Virtue is an extended meaning but not the original meaning of Laozi's De. In the Daodejing, Laozi never aims to talk about virtue. Instead, he talked about the law of nature and following the law of nature. We can cultivate virtue by following the law of nature. But following the law of nature in itself is total different from virtue.

Laozi believed that opposites can produce each other, complement each other, off-set each other, incline towards each other, and harmonise with each other (please see examples in Lau, 1963, Ch. 2). On this basis, Laozi pointed out '[t]urning back is how the Way moves; / Weaken is the means the [W]ay employs' (Lau, 1963, Ch. 40). He believed that two opposites of the unity can transform mutually (see also Lau, 1963, Ch.22, 36, 45, 63, 76, 78). Laozi saw the law of unity of opposites as an universal law in nature and human society. It can be applied in the field of social ethics as the code of conduct. A core issue of social ethics is the loss-to-gain relationship between people. The ethic of Dao De emphasises benefiting others without contending with them and settling where none would like to be. Laozi argues that the sages's highest good is like water, and water comes close to the Way (see Lau, 1963, Ch. 8). First, Laozi advocated altruism. Benefiting others means to nurture others. Water provides the myriad creatures with one of the necessities. It is like a mother who nurtures her children out of caring for them. Therefore, the goodness of water can be metaphorically understood as a mother's caring. Second, Laozi suggested not to have too many desires. Laozi warned us, 'there is no crime greater than having too many desires; there is no disaster greater than not being content; there is no misfortune greater than being covetous' (Lau, 1963, Ch. 46). Due to too many selfish desires, we compete against with others to win what we want. Laozi advised us not to compete against others. As he explained, 'It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him' (Lau, 1963, Ch. 22, please see also Ch. 66, 68, 73, 81). In this way, the loss of personal interests is a gain in personal interests. In the Chapter 7, Laozi made this point clear: 'the sage places himself in the background, but finds himself in the foreground. / He puts himself away, and yet he always remains. / Is it not because he has no personal interests? / This is the reason why his personal interests are fulfilled' (Lau, 1963, Ch. 7). As opposites of the unity exist relatively, Laozi believed that at the time of loss we also gain. It is a choice between loss and gain, between what we loss and what we gain. To gain via loss is the sage's mutual-benefit wisdom.

The ethic of Dao De provides both an universal principle and concrete solutions. On the one hand, Laozi suggested us to follow the law of nature. This is the universal principle. On the other hand, the law of nature is manifested in the nature of everything and relationships among everything. Dealing with concrete relationships requires us to practice the law of nature on a case-by-case basis. Laozi's claim is helpful to establish harmonious interpersonal relationships. As Roberts (2012, p. 945) comments, Taoism [or Daoism] 'promotes peace-fulness among people, harmony with nature, and respect for all things. The Tao Te Ching [or the Daodejing] warns against activities that encourage people to desire more than they currently have; this, it is suggested, will lead to unhappiness and disharmony'.

Enhance the Caring by Dao De

In Noddings's ethic of care and Laozi's ethic of Dao De, how to deal with relationships is a common theme. Noddings focuses mainly on educational contexts and her ethic of care concentrates on caring relations. Her research provides useful suggestions on how to establish, maintain, and enhance caring relations. Besides caring relations, uncompleted caring relationship and conflicts are inevitable. How to rebuild uncompleted caring relations and solve conflicts should also be considered. Laozi's ethic of Dao De can provide some reference to supplement the ethic of care. In the Daodejing, we can see advice on how to deal with the interpersonal relationships between the ruler and people. Laozi worried about social conflict under the background the class struggle. He suggested an ideal interpersonal relationship between the sage and people as an alternative. More importantly, Laozi put forward a direct solution to solve the conflict. Based on the law of unity of opposites, Laozi recommended the water-like highest good to the ruler. The wisdom of water-like highest good is a relativism of loss and gain. It is helpful to establish mutual-benefit relationships. Laozi's ethic of Dao De provides both a universal principle (i.e. following the Way) and concrete solutions (i.e., the specific applications of the law of nature). In this point, Noddings would agree, there is no code of conduct which can be applied in every case irrespective of situations. However, dealing with a particular relation does not have to be considered in a specific situation on a case-by-case basis. In general, the ethic of care and the ethic of Dao De have their respective scope of application and model framework. However, Dao De can supplement to the ethic of care. In moral education, learning to care and be cared for is only one aspect of caring curriculum. Learning to solve conflicts is also important in dealing with complicated interpersonal relationships. Laozi's suggestion based on the law of unity of opposites has its positive meaning in solving conflicts. In Laozi's point of view, everything is

interrelated with each other. In the interpersonal network, an individual is not merely in a bilateral relationship, but rather in multilateral relationships. In multilateral relationships, to gain via loss requires a wisdom of choice. To gain via loss is also a basis to establish mutual-benefit relationships.

Contributions to Happiness in Education

Noddings argues, in *Happiness and Education*, that, 'happiness should be an aim of education, and a good education should contribute significantly to personal and collective happiness' (Nodding, 2003b, p. 1). In *Happiness and Education*, Noddings's ethic of care is throughout. The ethic of care as a relational ethics, as Noddings argues, is useful in contributing to students' happiness. Laozi's ethic of Dao De as an ethic involving relationships can also provide important implications for happiness in education.

No Action and No Words:

Therefore the sage keeps to the deed that consists in taking no action
and practices the teaching that uses no words.

The myriad creatures rise from it yet it claims no authority;

It gives them life yet claims no possession;

It benefits them yet exacts no gratitude;

It accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit.

It is because it lays claim to no merit

[T]hat its merit never deserts it.

(Lau, 1963, Ch. 2)

In Chapter 2, Laozi mentions two key concepts - 'no action' and 'no words'. Non-action is not a passive attitude toward life, but rather, as Roberts (2012) points out, a form of action. In order to let students develop fully, we need to first recognise their individual differences and respect their demand for personality development. Based on their characters and needs, good teachers do not control students (i.e., claim no authority and no possession); rather they support and guide students to develop better - this is the highest achievement of education. Besides knowledge, students also acquire an attitude toward life from teachers. Most of the time we try to persuade students by using such words: 'that is wrong', 'listen to me'. But it is hard to say that students can understand our caring for them in this way. Laozi offers an alternative to us - instead of persuading by preaching, a better way of moral teaching is to act as a successful example to students (i.e., teaching that uses no words).

No Rule:

The best of all rulers is but a shadowy presence to his subjects.

Next comes the ruler they love and praise;

Next comes one they fear;

Next comes one with whom they take liberties.

When there is not enough faith, there is lack of good faith.

Hesitant, he does not utter words lightly.

When his task is accomplished and his work is done,

the people say, 'It happened to us naturally'.

(Lau, 1963, Ch. 17)

From Chapter 17, we can see that measuring up to a standard will make students fear testing and learning. Good education requires the art of teaching. In this way of teaching, students concentrate on their learning but do not know the underlying good intentions.

Not Meddling:

In the pursuit of learning one knows more every day;

In the pursuit of the way one does less every day.

One does less and less until one does nothing at all,

and when one does nothing at all,

there is nothing that it undone.

It is always through not meddling,
that the empire is won.
Should you meddle,
then you are not equal to the task of winning the empire.

(Lau, 1963, Ch. 48)

Chapter 48 shows us the relation between intellectual education and moral education. In the first sentence of the original, Laozi does not explicate ‘knows what’. As Roberts (2012, p. 950) discusses, ‘What we need, a Taoist [or Daoist] might say, is to relearn the process of connecting with nature. There is an ambiguity in the Tao Te Ching [or the Daodejing] over the meaning of “nature”... A better way to understand this [nature/a type of learning], I think, is to see the Tao Te Ching as advocating alignment of all we do with the natural harmony of the universe - with the way things ‘naturally’ are, always have been and always will be’. I think, on the one hand, Laozi acknowledges the benefit of learning subject knowledge, because leaning subject knowledge is helpful to one’s intellectual development (i.e., it conforms with human nature). On the other hand, Laozi opposes ‘knowing how to “meddle” or govern others’, because this is a cunning behaviour. Laozi prefers the state of innocence, like infants; so he counsels, one ought to do less and less [cunning things] (i.e., decrease one’s desires, get close to the nature of the universe) - this will finally get close to the way. The sage rule does nothing at all, but everything gets done. We can see that Laozi prioritises moral education, but that does not mean abandoning intellectual education. Today’s education, while it places emphasis on intellectual education, should also pay more attention to moral education and students’ holistic development.

Holistic Happiness and Good Education

In *Happiness and Education*, Noddings has explored various views on happiness that have an effect on education. Based on Noddings’s discussion on happiness, I suggest that, according to the direction from which we seek happiness, there are at least three ways of thinking: (i) the objectification of happiness; (ii) the internalisation of happiness; and (iii) relational thinking. If we believe that happiness is from the outside towards the inside, and that happiness as a temporary good mood is dependent on external factors (e.g. a high score/ranking, a high-paying job, personal material wealth), that is the objectification of happiness. In this way of thinking, a rich material life is considered as a form of happiness. This is a very common view of happiness. For example, some research in happiness economics (please see Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003; Richard, 2004) has discussed the positive correlation between incomes and happiness. However, happiness is also thought as a long-term state of mind, especially a mindset of contentment -- being content with what we already have and not asking for more. According to this view, happiness is contingent on internal factors which are typically tested in psychology, or in other words, happiness is from the inside towards the outside. However, material basis and mind state are two inseparable elements of happiness. If the lack of a necessary material basis is too great, happiness is too far to reach. The basic material needs can help to maintain our basic living standard. Without the necessities, we cannot survive, let alone decide how to live and how to live happily. But without a healthy state of mind, the excessive pursuit of material wealth will not enhance happiness. Always seeking to satisfy endless desires can only make us feel transient pleasure at best. Never stopping to appreciate what we already have keeps us far from long-term happiness. Happiness is neither a rich material life nor a good state of mind, but rather the harmony of desire and reason. Furthermore, beyond the level of inner harmony, from a relational view, each of us is not an isolated individual but also a part of an interpersonal network. Relational thinking, according to Noddings (2003b, p. 35), puts more emphasis on ‘moral interdependence’ and ‘creating the conditions under which people are likely to interact with others in mutually supportive ways’, because ‘the domain of human interaction’ is ‘the principal arena of happiness’. Interpersonal harmony and social harmony are also important sources of happiness, because personal happiness and collective happiness are not separated: Personal happiness as a part of the whole influences collective happiness; again, collective happiness as the whole contains personal happiness. Therefore, to say there are three ways of thinking is not to suggest that the sources of happiness are mutually exclusive. In most of the cases, more than one element of happiness (i.e., external factors, internal factors, and relational factors) may coexist at the same time. For example, a student feels happy in the school because he/she not only makes progress in study but also gets on well with others. Combining various perspectives on happiness, I conclude that happiness at least includes a

necessary material basis, a good state of mind, an inner harmony (i.e., the harmony of desire and reason), virtuous activities, a harmonious interpersonal relationship with others, and a harmonious interrelationship with nature -- this is a holistic view on happiness.

The next question is about what good education is for or what the standard of educational measurement should be. As Biesta suggests: 'One way to develop a framework for discussions about the aims and ends of education is to start from the actual functions educational systems perform' (Biesta, 2009, p. 39). From Biesta's point of view, education generally performs three different (but related) functions - qualification, socialisation, and subjectification (Biesta, 2009, p. 39). Qualification functions to provide students with the 'knowledge, skills and understanding' and to prepare them for 'the workforce', which aims for 'economic development and growth' (Biesta, 2009, pp. 39-40). The socialisation function of education is revealed as 'the transmission of particular norms and values', 'the continuation of particular cultural or religious traditions', or 'professional socialisation' (Biesta, 2009, p. 40). The opposite of socialisation is what Biesta refers to as subjectification. Subjectification is 'about ways of being that hint at independence from such [existing] orders; ways of being in which the individual is not simply a "specimen" of a more encompassing order' (ibid.). However, as Noddings expects, 'we hope that the people produced by our educational efforts will be good people...' (Noddings, 2003b, p. 167). At the level of individual student, education is not only for knowledge acquisition (i.e., the qualification function of education), but also for moral development (i.e., the socialisation function of education) and developing personal strength (i.e., the subjectification function of education) -- a good student should be a student developing all round. At the level of overall education, education is not only for achieving economic growth (i.e., the qualification function of education), but also for inheriting shared values and cultural traditions (i.e., the socialisation function of education) and meeting students' expectation for personal happiness (i.e., the subjectification function of education) -- good education should improve students' holistic development and holistic happiness. Accordingly, it is inappropriate to use any single indicator (e.g., the test score) to measure and judge students' overall potential or education's overall effectiveness, or rather, good education is closely related to students' holistic happiness.

Conclusion

This article argues that while the contribution of intellectual education must be acknowledged, moral education as integral to advancing our students' holistic development deserves more immediate attention. Learning to care and be cared for brings a new opportunity and challenge to moral education. Noddings's ethic of care and Laozi's ethic of Dao De are similar in the emphasis on relationships. But given the essential difference in their cultural roots and theoretical background, there are significant distinctions between the two ideas in solving practical problems. Noddings asserts that caring is a human instinct. However, we cannot assume that this feeling always occurs naturally, and the failure of a caring relation has been noticed. Noddings provides no explicit suggestion for rebuilding the uncompleted caring relation. Caring and caring relations cannot be forced. In this point, Laozi offered solutions to solve uncompleted caring relations, which can be a supplement to the ethic of care. Unlike Noddings's view, Dao De is a universal law of nature and specific applications of the law of nature. Dealing with a particular relation does not have to be considered in a specific situation on a case-by-case basis. Laozi's claim is helpful to establish harmonious interpersonal relationships. Laozi suggested an ideal interpersonal relationship between the sage and people as an alternative of the relationship between the ruler and people. More importantly, Laozi put forward direct solution to solve the conflict. Therefore, the main focus of this article is to strengthen caring education by the ethic of Dao De. In particular, enhancing caring education by the ethic of Dao De requires benefiting others without competition. Noddings shows that the ethic of care as a relational ethics is useful in contributing to students' happiness. Thus Laozi's ethic of Dao De as an ethic involving relationships can also provide important implications for happiness in education.

Based on a discussion on the relation between happiness and education, this article proposes that good education should improve students' holistic development and holistic happiness. Following an introduction of Daoist ideas, this article indicates that measurement in education should respect students' nature (their human nature -- i.e., their individual differences but seen in the light of the universal Dao, and their demand for holistic development). First, one of the important responsibilities of education is to help students develop in a rounded

manner. To support students to develop their potential fully, it is not necessary to control students. We are used to targeting high test scores in standardised testing and high rankings in league tables. In using these artificial standards, we can forget that students are not tools. Controlling students' minds for any selfish desire is not helpful to students' holistic development. Second, the aim of educational measurement needs to connect with the aim of education. Intellectual development is not the sole aim of educational measurement. Today's education needs to pay more attention to caring. Caring for others is important for students' holistic happiness. Third, the standard used to judge the overall potential of students and the effectiveness of education is holistic development, rather than test scores alone. Education influences life. What education delivers now is what the students have in the future. Education also influences our future. In what ways that education can support us to pursue a better future still needs more discussion. I want to conclude with Laozi's saying, 'the way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures'. Measuring up to the Way, happiness comes along easily.

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Cultivating Political Morality and Public Reason for Deliberative Citizens – Rawls and Callan revisited

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Abstract

In this paper, I will argue that the implementation of deliberative democracy needs to be supplemented by a specific political morality in order to cultivate free and equal citizens in exercising public reason for achieving a cooperative and inclusive liberal society. This cultivation of personality is literally an educational project with a robust ethical ambition, and hence, it reminds us the orthodox liberal problem concerning the relation between the state and its citizenship education. Following Callan's reformulation of the political conception of the person, I will argue that Rawls's political liberalism can accommodate the ethical demand of deliberative citizenship. This conception of the person portrays a deliberative civic self which could sufficiently entail those desirable characters, traits, and skills for deliberative practices. Rawls's theory thus paves the way for a framework of deliberative citizenship education.

Keywords: Citizenship Education, Political Morality, Public Reason, Deliberative Democracy, Political Liberalism.

Introduction

In recent decades we saw a revival of the idea of citizenship in liberal democratic societies. It is commonplace to say that the mere representative democracy may not guarantee good governance and a desirable political outcome. Active citizenship has thus become a prominent topic in both political and academic debates. To a certain extent, it seems that we have reached consensus that active civic participation should be put forth as one of the agenda for democratic politics. Against this background, deliberative democracy appears to be the latest transformation of active citizenship that advocates a political participation by a responsive and reciprocal citizenry. Indeed, the past two decades witnessed a rapid development of deliberative democracy theories (Bohman, 1996; Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1997; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996) and, building on these theories, the emerging of contextual studies of deliberative citizenship and the practices of deliberative institutions (Dryzek, 2010; Fishkin, 2009; Goodin, 2008). Conceivably, the educational field has shared this trend in a similar fashion: essential work on education for deliberative citizenship widely covers both the theoretical articulation of public deliberation (Enslin et al., 2001; Løvlie, 2007; Roth, 2007, 2011) and the teaching of deliberative citizenship (Annette, 2010; Burgh et al., 2006; Fung & Wright, 2003) that makes deliberative democracy to become a dominant strand of active citizenship education.

In spite of the genuine acceptance of deliberative democracy in both political and educational arenas, I think that the fundamental issue relating to deliberative citizenship education still remains and there is room to articulate more clearly the justification of the greater demands on civic virtue and political participation. Deliberative democracy inevitably requires that citizens should have comprehensive set of virtues, aptitudes and dispositions that aims at facilitating the process of public deliberation. This cultivation of personality is literally an educational project underlining robustly ethical ambition (Weinstock & Kahane, 2010). At the same time, it reminds us the orthodox question concerning the role of state on education, that is, is it plausible for the state to promote particular values and virtues under the framework of liberal pluralism? In fact, one may regard active citizenship education as a form of civic republicanism under which the state exerts its influence on citizens' life.

As such, the conceptualization of deliberative democracy should be placed in a wider context of the modern liberal framework. However, one might note the interesting paradox of democratic education: while democratic theory and practice have undertaken a deliberative turn that substantially transformed the paradigm of democratic citizenship education, the theoretical framework of liberal pluralism does not keep up with the pace of this paradigm shift in order to accommodate the ethically demanding democratic citizenship. This paradox poses a critical challenge to deliberative citizenship education. If contemporary liberalism cherishes a socio-political setting that avoids comprehensively defining any individual conception of good life, how could this framework reconcile with a supposedly ethically robust conception of deliberative democracy? Putting it in an educational context – is it possible to teach deliberative citizenship without touching on the conception of the good?

In this paper, I will bridge this theoretical gap between the avant-garde deliberative democracy and contemporary liberalism by re-examining John Rawls's political liberalism. There are two intertwined theses presented in this paper. First, following Eamon Callan's interpretation, I will argue that there is a substantial ethical account for the political conception of the person within Rawls's political liberalism. This relaxes the condition of being purely political for which Rawls believes that it is one of the most important features of political liberalism. In this light, a reformulated political liberalism can accommodate the ethical demands of deliberative citizenship. And this paves the way for an ethically robust civic education. Secondly, I will further articulate the idea of political morality embedded in the conception of the political person in Rawls's theory. There is an essential linkage between the practice of public reason and the cultivation of political morality within the framework of political liberalism. I will argue that this political conception of the person portrays a deliberative civic self which could sufficiently entail those desirable characters, traits, and skills for deliberative practices. The education for deliberative citizens thus should lie within this idea of the person.

Deliberative Citizenship and the Role of Political Morality

Though the conceptions of deliberative democracy differ from each other in various aspects, they do have certain commonality. By and large, deliberative democracy advocates a form of socio-political institutions that supplements democratic government and helps sustain democratic ways of life, by which free and equal citizens are entitled to voice out their views on public affairs through a process of public deliberation. In contrast to some models of representative democracy which focus on the aggregation of private interests, deliberative democracy affirms mutually acceptable reasons that citizens offer in the process of deliberation, and sees this as the most democratic way to accommodate moral difference in the public sphere and in political institutions. The essence of deliberative democracy thus lies in the spirit of collective decision-making and authentic public deliberation. In other words, it expands democracy from being a formal liberal constitutionalism which basically confine to the scope of individual rights maintenance and representative politics, to a more inclusive and progressive community. Deliberative citizenship needs to be embedded with a conception of political morality as it helps specify the normative constraints and the ethical demands of deliberative agents.

In this regard, the task of deliberative theory of citizenship education is to articulate a sort of political morality in order to facilitate the implementation of deliberative institutions. This political morality inevitably specifies the traits, dispositions, and characters liberal citizens needed in facilitating the due process of public deliberation. Among many other theorizations, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1996) identify some normative principles in which democratic citizens should deliberate with each other when they disagree with one another on issues of public policy. These principles illustrate an account of political morality required for the cultivation of deliberative citizens. They propose that deliberative institutions should respect three conditions – namely *reciprocity*, *publicity* and *accountability* – so as to enhance a due process of deliberation (pp. 347-8). It is noted that they are not only the normative guidelines of deliberative political setting. I argue that the teaching focus of a deliberative civic education syllabus should also rest on these principles and indeed they are also the specific virtues that a deliberative citizen should acquire. To take reciprocity as an example, it is an essential virtue for deliberative citizen to reach collective decision in a fair process of collective reasoning. It helps resolve moral disagreement within deliberation. Reciprocity implies a virtue of accommodation that is unique amongst various forms of collective reasoning. In such a deliberative context, sometimes citizens need to

learn how to suspend their own moral, philosophical or religious beliefs even though they view these as true and fundamental to their own conception of good life. The civic teaching of reciprocity thus emphasizes mutual respect among citizens. When citizens engage in public deliberation, mutual respect portrays the meaning of moral accommodation. This consists of the excellence of flourishing democracy in which mutually respected citizens should be 'self-reflective about their commitments', 'discerning of the difference between respectable and merely tolerable differences of opinion', and ready to change their minds or modify their positions in the process of deliberation (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996: 79).

In this light, being a deliberative citizen is ethically demanding. Ideally, deliberative democracy represents a form of social cooperation among free and equal citizens who are morally responsible and willing to interact reasonably with each other for political affairs. I refer to such a kind of political life as 'citizenship as reasonableness' – a civic life that citizens acknowledged with the political morality to confine themselves in using public reason.¹ Citizens in a deliberative democracy are subject to some normative requirements constrained by the notion of reasonableness. This specifies certain values, skills and virtues necessary for a robust deliberative community. Nevertheless, it is questionable if the citizenship education for deliberative democracy could accommodate with the core values of contemporary liberalism.

Concerning this robust political morality, I argue that there are at least two problems for the liberal theory of citizenship education. First, as mentioned before, the promotion of active citizenship implies that the state has already defined the scope of active civic participation for every citizen in the polity. It specifies that civic life is desirable (as an intrinsic or instrumental good) and that there is a common good that deserves our collective pursuit. This viewpoint of active citizenship raises the problem of neutrality in liberal pluralistic society. If liberal society upholds the idea of pluralism and the virtue of tolerance, what are the grounds for the state to require its citizens to actively participate in public affairs, and how does the government justify a civic education that consists of a robust interpretation of civic virtues for civic engagement? That is to say, liberalism needs to provide a justification for the civic duty demanded for deliberative citizens: Why should citizens in a liberal pluralism value civic participation as one of their conceptions of the good? It is commonly known that liberalism is always vigilant against any sort of manipulation and imposition of values; and it goes against the core liberal argument to determine individuals' conception of the good. There is a theoretical requirement for liberalism to justify why it is morally legitimate for the state to teach particular way of civic life (e.g. deliberative civic participation) in the context of liberal pluralism.

Second, even if liberals agree that civic participation and civic virtue are the constitutive parts of contemporary liberal democratic theory, civic education still needs to address the possible conflicts between the common good and the individual good. Put simply, given that certain liberal virtues are necessary for the functioning of liberal democracy, it is possible to imagine that individual citizens would find some common good defined by the theory of justice contradictory to their own comprehensive moral beliefs. Citizenship education needs to deal with the tension between the common good specified by the theory of justice and the individual good defined by individual comprehensive beliefs. At the end of the day, citizenship is concerned with the moral decision-making of reasonable agents. Especially, when it comes to politically hard cases such as home schooling, abortion, and gay rights, it becomes extremely difficult to reconcile the tension between the public and the private – even though a sound liberal theory of justice is philosophically well justified, it still conceivably raises a moral dilemma for some citizens. The model of deliberative democracy, unsurprisingly, may further intensify this tension.

Against this background, political liberals like John Rawls (1993) contend that it is possible to justify the principles of justice in a freestanding way, that is, that the theory of justice applies only in the political domain and can be recognized by various reasonable moral, religious and philosophical doctrines in a liberal pluralistic society. Although deliberative democracy, as I believe, takes substantial bearings from Rawls's political philosophy in which his conception of the political person provides a foundation for the sorts of traits and dispositions that should be developed for being a deliberative citizen, I intend to argue that deliberative citizenship requires a relatively robust ethical account for its theorization. That is to say, even for political liberalism, it is necessary to embrace a certain form of political morality in order to justify a liberal conception

of democratic citizenship. In this regard, it is implausible to maintain a morally neutral political state that does not attempt to define any version of the common good (indeed, this could be the core liberal virtues embedded in liberalism in general, such as the ideals of equality, freedom, justice and tolerance).

Building on Rawls, then, I will articulate a liberal framework for constructing a political morality that could fit into an account of the political conception of the person for deliberative democracy. The civic virtues required by deliberative democracy are far more demanding than those required by liberal constitutionalism and representative democracy. A specific study of the formulation of the idea of political person and the domain of the civic self for deliberative education thus is necessary. This is essential for the teaching and learning aspects of cultivating deliberative citizens. It defines the moral requirements for cultivating responsible citizenry for a liberal deliberative polity. The reformulations of Rawls' and Callan's ideas on citizens in this sense would depict an ideal account of deliberative citizen from a moral point of view that can enrich the discussion of the theory of person for the consolidation of deliberative democracy and its citizenship education.

Public Reason and the Political Conception of the Person

It might not be commonly known that Rawls, though in a minimal sense, in his later work adopts the concept of deliberative democracy as the core framework for liberal constitutionalism, by stating that his idea of 'a well-ordered constitutional democracy' should be 'understood also as a deliberative democracy'. His conceptualization is based on the idea of deliberation itself which he claims is the representative procedure for free and equal citizens to articulate reasonable judgment concerning the basic social structure. Rawls argues that public reason should filter the political arguments within society and lead those based on the interest of the common humanity of free and equal citizens to form the basic social structure for liberal democracy. In Rawls's framework, the use of public reason only applies to the deliberation of basic justice, namely the principles of justice that define the basic social structure. He sees public reason as an indispensable part of the creation of ideal democratic citizenship. In applying public reason, 'citizens are to conduct their fundamental discussions within the framework of what each regards as a political conception of justice based on values that the others can reasonably be expected to endorse'. The way Rawls justifies his political liberalism presents an illustration of public reason in a deliberation process. The principles of justice should be perceived as an agreement – in Rawls's term as an overlapping consensus – amongst members of the society.

Rawls's interpretation of public reason as deliberative democracy is not without controversy. The reasoning in his Original Position has been accused of constituting one-man-deliberation. In the case of public reason, there seems to be a similar problem in that Rawls does not pay much attention on the social interaction aspect of deliberation among citizens. Public reason seems to be a singular set of reasoning that every citizen is able to reach whatever motive he or she holds in the first place. In Rawls's interpretation, deliberative democracy is a model for free and equal citizens to come up with a consensus for basic justice; thus public reason in this sense is the medium to lead to the conclusion of basic justice (principles of justice). Regardless of Rawls's advocacy of deliberative democracy, with his seemingly 'anti-social' and 'anti-interactive' interpretation of deliberation, he is (at most) generally seen as a deliberative democrat in a 'thin' sense. However, as I will argue, what makes Rawls essential in the theory building for deliberative education does not merely lie in the manner in which he interprets public reason within his own presentation of deliberation, but also stems from the political morality required for citizens in exercising public reason within the deliberative domain of the political. His emphasis on the sense of justice and reciprocity would become the focal points of the idea of political morality that I want to bring into the discussion for deliberative education. Rawls's rich potential for the development of an education theory lies in what Rawls demands of a political conception of person in exercising that public reason. It sets an ideal type of (deliberative) citizenship that we need to bring into the educational domain. In the following I will argue for a reinterpretation of this conception of the person for deliberative education from Rawls's *Political Liberalism*.

Public reason specifies 'the deepest moral and political values' that determine the relationship between constitutional democracy and its citizens and 'their relation to one another'. It implies a set of political values that democratic citizens are required to acknowledge in order to satisfy the criterion of reciprocity that enhances responsible and responsive public life among citizens who hold diverse philosophical and moral beliefs and

religious faiths. Rawls believes that political power exercised in the name of a comprehensive moral doctrine would endanger the unity and stability of the society. This is because the shared understanding of a specific comprehensive moral and philosophical doctrine can only be maintained by ‘oppressive use of state power’. If the justification of liberal state authority lies in a comprehensive moral belief, in Rawls’s examples such as a reasonable form of utilitarianism or Kantian liberalism, it will threaten the legitimacy of state power given the fact that there are various comprehensive doctrines in a liberal pluralist society. Enforcing single comprehensive doctrine as the fundamental justification of liberal state power and its conception of justice is a sort of disrespect to citizens who adopt other moral or philosophical beliefs.

On Rawls’s understanding, a conception of citizenship based on a comprehensive liberalism could not be the legitimate model for a liberal pluralistic democracy. A comprehensive doctrine applies its moral and philosophical beliefs across a wide range of human activities including ‘the values in human life and ideals of personal virtue and character’. It also covers social relations of our ‘non-political conduct’ beyond the political sphere. Despite the fact that comprehensive doctrines have variation in their expansiveness of moral beliefs in limiting the application of ethical requirement beyond the political sphere, Rawls seems to believe that even a partial comprehensive doctrine cannot be the source of political legitimacy under the conditions of pluralism. For a liberal society, it is inappropriate to justify state authority and the duty of civility derived from, say, Kantian ethics or Millian individuality, to those members of society who are not convinced of its foundational principles. Civic education in such a liberal society based on a comprehensive doctrine would inevitably identify specific virtues and ideals of character, which are attributed to the chosen moral doctrine’s category of goods and rights. It requires a pedagogy that upholds the supremacy of certain version of comprehensive liberalism and prescribes its values, be they Kantian or utilitarian, as the source of reference to act against any other comprehensive moral doctrines in civic teaching as well as other subject areas in formal schooling. Rawls claims that taking a comprehensive doctrine as justification for state power (i.e. national curriculum) is problematic.

Rawls believes the framework of political liberalism can deal with the issue of neutrality in liberal pluralistic society. In political liberalism the citizenry does not rely on a presupposed moral conception of the person or specific philosophical doctrine, rather it lies on the public reason of a democratic political culture. Public reason is the source of unanimity on political questions and is applicable to all citizens who wish to participate. It is the reason with which people from different reasonable comprehensive doctrines can agree. In this regard, political education for political liberalism can avoid ‘the oppressive assault on diversity’ as it aims to accommodate the ‘ethical heterogeneity’ in which liberal diversity flourishes under open and free government. Thus, political education intends to teach shared political values that benefit the political community. These liberal values should be recognized by common moral and philosophical doctrines that a reasonable pluralism enhances, that is to say, education facilitating liberal politics should not threaten the faiths and beliefs held by any reasonable comprehensive doctrine. Without subscribing to any specific comprehensive liberalism, political education should promote basic civil rights and liberal values and train up deliberative skills for collective participation in liberal politics. The teaching of citizenship from Rawls’s point of view mainly falls on the emphasis of understanding and exercising public reason. Public reason is the locus in Rawlsian civic education. Callan explains its essential features well. He says,

“A conception of public reason devised within political liberalism does not express any single comprehensive doctrine because it is designed to be compatible with the full range of values that citizens might reasonably endorse. Its perspective is free-standing in that it can be presented and defended apart from the rival doctrine citizens embrace as moral agents outside their civic roles, though their beliefs must nonetheless cohere with the demand of liberal citizenship”

The essentiality of public reason in Rawls’s theory of justice and its justification of citizenship in political liberalism reveal a dilemma in constituting two fundamental virtues – autonomy and tolerance – in liberal pluralistic society. This debate also features in discussions of citizenship education. On a Rawlsian interpretation, the outline of political liberalism seems to successfully develop a solution to the problem, while the notion of public reason can cover the full range of diversity of reasonable pluralism and also set up the basic

agreement for a political constitution. Members who hold different comprehensive doctrines could on the one hand respect each other and tolerate religious, moral and philosophical differences existing in a liberal society. On the other hand, they could still become autonomous beings in choosing their ways of life and conceptions of the good. Citizens can also exercise their full range of liberal freedoms, which are supported by public reason, in pursuing their own projects within a liberal pluralistic society. This represents the political conception of the person that Rawls regards as the ideal form of deliberative citizen. Citizenship education thus is justified from a freestanding point of view that could accommodate the diversity of the good life, as the teaching of public reason is acknowledged from various reasonable comprehensive doctrines.

Public reason, however I argue, is a twofold task. It is an ethical issue on the one hand that public reason needs to specify the moral ingredients of liberal democracy – including the scope of rights, the expansiveness of political freedom, and the moral justification of political sovereignty. Political liberalism as a conception of justice itself is a kind of moral conception in which its content incorporates certain ideals, principles, standards, and values even though Rawls contends that the justification of the theory of justice is political and is not based on any metaphysical assumption. In any sense, as Rawls states, public reason is a representation of the ideal of liberal democracy, as it prescribes the moral domain required for consolidating liberal democratic society and its implementation in political institutions. On the other hand, public reason, situated in the background of democratic culture, should be plausibly constructed (or at least recognised) from the respective standpoints of the diverse of religious, philosophical, and moral beliefs existing in liberal democratic societies. Its free-standing feature allows various rival but reasonable comprehensive beliefs to be accommodated within the ethical domain of liberal democracy. But inevitably it also specifies a standard of civic values that urges each citizen to learn, to recognize and to reconstruct in order for them to become deliberative citizens.

Rawls acknowledges the fact of reasonable pluralism and believes political liberalism is not a theory of truism in either a moral or an epistemological sense. In this light, civic education facilitating this conception of justice could only be justified in the circumstances in which citizens could find reasons within each of their reasonable religious, philosophical or social doctrine to agree with. Civic education upholding public reason could legitimately promote basic civil rights, liberal values, civic duty and political solidarity. Nevertheless, it should be noted that public reason also has a justificatory status in arguing for a liberal democracy in favour of political liberalism. It presents its own moral arguments for citizens to follow. This means that citizens holding various comprehensive doctrines should also affirm public reason from the resource of their own beliefs. Public reason is not self-evident; it should be reconstructed inside various possibly rival frameworks of comprehensive beliefs, each of which may justify public reason with different moral reasons. In this regard, Rawls's assumption regarding the epistemic status of democratic culture that consists of public reason might overlook the ethical dilemma citizens faced in affirming the public reason as reasonable from the civic point of view and at the same time seeing it as rational to comply with in reference to their own comprehensive beliefs.

The Sense of Justice and the Burdens of Judgement

In a Rawlsian political liberal society defined by public reason, citizenship education is literally represented as only requiring the teaching of a minimal set of liberal values and skills to an extent that can facilitate the function of public reason in liberal politics. The characters and dispositions of citizens cultivated for liberal civic life in this model of citizenship teaching seem not to raise any challenge to the practices of various reasonably comprehensive doctrines. However, I would argue that this claim (which Rawls endorses) is mistaken. Despite recognizing 'the fact of reasonable pluralism' in liberal society and claiming political liberalism as the right theory for respecting such a liberal pluralistic condition, Rawls does not pay enough attention to the ethical burden of citizens in maintaining a robust environment for the accommodation of diversity under the notion of public reason. Borrowing from the work of Callan, I argue that Rawls's political liberalism demands a much richer ethical scope for citizenship education. His theory of citizenship requires people to have a specific ethical capacity in exercising public reason. There is also an urgent need to develop a 'thick' version of citizenship theory for liberal democracy if we want to promote a flourishing democratic public life. I believe this reinterpretation of Rawls's theory could constitute an ethical framework for teaching deliberative democracy. His ideas bring insight to the issue of the tension between autonomy and toleration in the context of deliberative

democracy in which citizens are required to actively take part in public life. The further tension between these two concepts raised by deliberative polity could be eased by a reformulation of Rawls's idea of citizenship, as I will elaborate.

Public reason is essential to the practice of deliberative democracy. However, in the due process of public deliberation, public reason unavoidably excludes some forms of comprehensive belief that are at odds with liberal principles. It is because liberal democracy is not obliged to accommodate unreasonable doctrines (such as sectarianism) and does not bother to count their perspectives in reaching the overlapping consensus. In fact, public reason represents a specific form of social cooperation that specifies certain basic rights, liberties and opportunities and also assigns their priority in the distribution among citizens. Public reason thus is not morally neutral or merely a formal reasoning system for decision-making. It is robust in the sense that it embodies the liberal political values that underpin a political conception of justice for liberal democracy. Therefore, public reason should not be seen as a compromise among various existing comprehensive doctrines; it is rather a representation of a specific political morality of the principles of justice that liberal democracy endorses and that every reasonable comprehensive doctrine in liberal society should recognize. During the public deliberation on these essential issues relating to basic justice, citizens have to be equipped with the corresponding knowledge, skills, values, and virtues that enhance their exercise of public reason. Conceivably, the full exercise of public reason is in fact an ideal form of democratic citizenship. It also portrays an ideal form of a political conception of the person for citizenship education with a view to cultivating corresponding liberal democratic skills and characters. As Rawls acknowledges, the understanding of an ideal of public reason is important to conduct oneself to be a democratic citizen. The specific conception of moral powers for exercising public reason in reasonable pluralism is particularly important in Rawls's theory of citizenship. It is also important for maintaining a deliberative democracy and could be one of the first crucial elements of citizenship education. Deliberative citizens somehow need to learn the essentiality of the use of public reason in facilitating the reasonable pluralism that could benefit all of us.

Given the endorsement of public reason, citizens engaging in fair social cooperation, Rawls argues, are equipped with moral powers representing the virtues of being both rational and reasonable, namely the capacity for a conception of the good and a capacity for a sense of justice. The former portrays a rational being that is able to autonomously define what constitutes as good life, while the latter represents a capacity for citizens to reasonably understand a public conception of justice and to apply it in their political participation. I believe that this infers the specification of political morality in theory of citizenship education. The sense of justice is a willingness to act along with each other on the terms that can be publicly endorsed. Reasonable citizens thus respect the idea of reciprocity. They are ethically endowed with the intention to work with each other in order to comply with rules of justice under a fair social cooperation system. Reciprocity in this sense is also an elementary feature that constitutes the political morality of liberal citizens in a deliberative democracy. Despite being guided by various rational ends, reasonable citizens equipped with a sense of justice can respect each other in processes of political participation, whether in a citizens' forum or at a street protest. Given the deliberative spaces of both institutional and informal civic participation, they mutually acknowledge each other's moral status as citizens to specify the terms of fair social cooperation, to negotiate what constitutes the principles of justice, and to engage in the decision-making process, in recognition of what Rawls calls 'independent validity of the claims of others'. The idea of reciprocity specifies the application of the sense of justice in which Rawls believes to be important in the development of the political conception of the person. It also illustrates one of the core essences of liberal virtue for deliberative democracy.

The idea of the reasonable also identifies another application of the sense of justice for the development of the conception of the person in terms of Rawls's theory of citizenship – the idea of the burdens of judgement. This idea plays a central role in translating Rawlsian liberalism into a theoretical foundation for deliberative democracy. The political conception of the person is essential to reasonable pluralism, as the sense of justice could enhance the reasonable differentiation of diverse doctrines and accommodate them into a public conception of justice. Apart from being reciprocally able to act on and comply with the principles of justice, Rawls claims that citizens with a sense of justice would be willing 'to recognize the burdens of judgement and to accept their consequence for the use of public reason in directing the legitimate exercise of political power in

a constitutional regime'. In a liberal pluralistic society, reasonable disagreement prevails among citizens and a liberal society should acknowledge this as the fact of diversity. Indeed, there are various sources and causes of disagreement. Rawls classifies these legitimate sources as the burdens of judgement for reasonable citizens to take as 'hazards' in the process of exercising their power of reason and judgement in political life. The burdens are those specific sources of divergent judgement and conflict among reasonable citizens that are compatible with the idea of reasonableness. The idea of burdens of judgement signifies the unavoidable imperfection of human reason in public deliberation even though the participants are both rational and reasonable and willing to exercise their sense of justice. These sources include, according to Rawls, the complex and conflicting environment for one to perceive empirical evidence; a wide range of possibility regarding the interpretation and judgement of political and moral concepts among reasonable citizens; and different kinds of normative considerations from different forces to reach an overall assessment on public issues. Rawlsian citizens as both rational and reasonable would sometimes face a predicament in making judgements concerning public affairs, in that on the one hand they wish to accommodate their own rational ends and comply with their comprehensive beliefs, and on the other hand they must still be recognized as reasonable from a public justice point of view.

Most importantly, the notion of reasonable pluralism indicates that the comprehensive doctrine one holds is only one of the reasonable doctrines in a liberal pluralistic society. Due to the acknowledgement of the burdens of judgement, citizens understand that they do not have the grounds to claim their own comprehensive doctrines as true even though they are all affirmed in a liberal pluralistic society. Citizens thus are in an interesting position that on the one hand they affirm one another's comprehensive beliefs as reasonable, but on the other hand they may only believe their own belief is true (in moral or epistemological senses). Citizens acknowledging the burdens of judgement realize that their own comprehensive doctrines play no role in making special claims for public support beyond their own views of their merits. It explains why the burdens of judgement become the necessary 'hazards' for citizens undertaking public deliberation in Rawls's political liberalism. They have to understand the potential conflicts in reaching consensus and learn to be ready to put in extra effort to overcome the burdens in the due course of social cooperation. Rawls argues that acknowledging the burdens of judgement set the limits for reasonable persons to judge what counts as reasonably justified in the public sphere. It also endorses specific forms of liberty of conscience and freedom of speech for political liberalism. This makes clear that state power cannot be arbitrarily used to repress comprehensive views that are not unreasonable. The idea of burdens of judgement thus implicitly suggests a formulation of liberal citizenship to accommodate toleration and personal autonomy.

The idea of the burdens of judgement is basic to the framework of reasonable pluralism and the exercise of deliberative democracy. It is important to assume that citizens are willing to accept these burdens of judgement in the process of public deliberation. A commitment to being reciprocal – as one of the applications of the sense of justice entailed by Rawls's two moral powers – is not enough to justify a successful use of public reason in fair social cooperation that recognize the autonomous status of reasonable citizens. The willingness to accept the burdens of judgement means that citizens are expected to face the difficulties arising from the fact of divergent comprehensive beliefs in exercising public reason in the public domain. Therefore, they might become morally capable of making concessions concerning their own claim in the face of a dilemma between public reason and their own comprehensive doctrines; or they might be able to adjust their own beliefs or suppress their own ethical values on certain controversial issues when they are required to assess each others' ethical point of view and to weigh different public proposals from an impartial standpoint. The idea of the burdens of judgement becomes a crucial application of the political conception of person in order to facilitate the reciprocal and deliberative features of liberal citizenship in conditions of reasonable pluralism. In other words, the acceptance of the burdens of judgement overcomes the difficulties of accommodating various reasonable but conflicting comprehensive doctrines in the selection of principles of justice. It takes up a critical justificatory force in Rawls's theory of justice and his conception of liberal citizenship.

By introducing this idea, Rawls thinks he can indicate how citizens in a liberal pluralistic society who hold various comprehensive doctrines could agree with a unanimous conception of justice. This line of thinking is that even if citizens can exercise public reason well and are willing to behave reciprocally in the negotiation, one may still challenge the possibility of reaching consensus among irreconcilable comprehensive beliefs. It is

impossible to establish mutual accommodation unless either party makes concession or all parties prefer to leave certain issues unresolved and accept this as the cost of the imperfections of our capacity to reason toward agreement. Indeed, even well-exercised public reason cannot solve some hard cases. Citizens therefore have to prepare for the possibility of discordant opinions and sometimes the vice of unreasonableness during the deliberation process. In this regard, acceptance of the burdens of judgement is a necessary manifestation of reciprocity. It can both explain the irreconcilable disagreement among different ethical doctrines in the use of public reason and justify how reasonable citizens equipped with a sense of justice could overcome (or accept) the burdens in order to achieve mutual accommodation in public deliberation.

That said, the idea of the burdens of judgement somehow completes the notion of Rawls's political conception of person and it describes a more morally vibrant public personhood for both cultivating deliberative citizenship and justifying Rawlsian political liberalism. This is a point that could be further developed in an account of political morality for deliberative citizens. In this light, the exercise of the sense of justice entails the ideas of moral reciprocity and the burdens of judgement that both guide the behaviour of liberal citizens and motivate them to political participation, democratic interaction, and public deliberation. Both ideas formulate the normative qualification for the conceptualization of citizenship in deliberative democracy. In this regard, political liberalism is an ethically robust theoretical framework that could accommodate the teaching of deliberative citizenship. Incorporating the political conception of the person into the framework of reasonable pluralism could be the foundation for specifying forms of political virtues for the idea of citizenship as reasonableness that embodies the core features of political education for deliberative democracy. Rawls's conception of the person could then be instrumental to the theory building of a deliberative 'self' for deliberative democracy.

Nevertheless, the political conception of the person still needs further reformulation, especially in terms of the ethical burden on citizens who are required to suspend their own comprehensive beliefs in public deliberation. It requires citizens who accept the burdens of judgement to be willing to make the distinction between public and private spheres, so that they can exercise the power of public reason to address public issues, while rejecting the same reason for matters which are non-civic or private. This raises concerns regarding the application of Rawls's theory of citizenship to an actual context of deliberative democracy. It is difficult to imagine citizens not reasoning about essential public affairs in accordance with their own comprehensive doctrines if there is no particular version of political morality guiding this interaction, on the basis of which citizens are supposed to reach just and fair decision in a deliberative institutions. Even assuming the acknowledgment of the burdens of judgment, it still seems too unrealistic to expect that any person would or could develop such a compartmentalized way of interpreting public reason and preserving personal belief respectively. Callan thus correctly argues that Rawls's political conception of person cannot entail its enforcement, unless it has an ethical ground behind the idea of the burdens of judgement.² This challenge could also been taken further in the educational development of certain ethical endowments of reasonable citizens in order to facilitate their interaction in deliberative politics.

Thus, despite its rich potential to develop an account of political morality for deliberative citizenship, Rawls's interpretation cannot satisfy the ethical demand on deliberative citizens. Assuming citizens' 'nominal assent' to the burdens of judgement in the theory of citizenship is not enough to reach reasonable pluralism. It is necessary to construct an ethical endowment for deliberative citizens to cultivate a sense of justice that could entertain a partial comprehensive conception of the person. On this basis a 'thick' version of citizenship education is indispensable. It can enforce an 'active acceptance of the burdens of judgement' which could promote 'active and psychological disposition' in order to create fair social cooperation with 'mutual forbearance and respect' and at the same time could accommodate citizens' preservation of rational beliefs in the non-civic spheres. A substantial ethical account of reciprocity is necessary for the cultivation of deliberative citizens. Gutmann and Thompson's theory of deliberative democracy, for instance, would be an essential reference for specifying the content of political morality and the deliberative virtues required in actualize a deliberative polity. It is not surprising, then, that a robust deliberative democracy does not only rely on well-established political institutions; it may, in a more fundamental sense, literally depend on the ethical transformation of the citizenry.

Conclusion

Rawls's interpretation of his own theory – by claiming a shift to political liberalism – mistakenly believes that the neutrality problem in political philosophy as well as the theory of citizenship education has been well addressed. There is a substantial ethical demand embedded in the political conception of the person and hence, Rawls's idea of the burden of judgement needs to be reformulated in order to make sense of his political liberalism and to well acknowledge the neutrality problem of citizenship education. The ideal citizenship portrayed in this framework can therefore accommodate a civic education carrying robust interpretation of civic virtues. In Rawls's account, we note that public reason constitutes one of the core elements of civic learning in a polity of liberal pluralism. Public reason is a form of reasoning about political values and virtues that are shared by free and equal citizens no matter which comprehensive doctrines or ideas about the meaning of their lives they hold privately. On this, an account of political morality is indispensable to the formation of deliberative citizenship, as it requires reasonable citizens to suspend their own comprehensive beliefs for the purpose of common good. Therefore, the blueprint of political liberalism aims to develop a cordon around public affairs whereby the political sphere is seen as a branch of the reasonable, while citizens in the civil society and the private sphere can define their rational domain on their own. It is the task for deliberative citizenship education to cultivate such political conception of the person that is capable of exercising the compartmentalization of values between the public and the private.

In any case, it is undesirable to believe that it is conceptually possible to formulate an ideal type of political liberalism in which incommensurable value systems could be reconciled into a single political conception without touching on any serious ethical predicament. Emphasizing a certain version of liberalism as 'merely' political within reasonable pluralism would blur the ethical credentials of liberal democracy and neglect its ethically demanding standard. On the basis of these two factors about the Rawlsian political liberalism, the problem at stake is how to ensure that citizens act reciprocally and are willing to bear the burdens of judgment. A deliberative citizenship education needs to specify an account of political morality about virtues like reciprocity, mutual respect, and toleration in order to cultivate a civic self for deliberative political participation (Gutmann and Thompson illustrate a good example). Indeed, Callan briefly mentions the idea of political morality but does not elaborate it further. He instead takes the route of analyzing the ideas like care, community, and patriotism in order to assure the presence of solidarity amongst citizens and sees this as the way to develop a vibrant citizenship and inclusive community (Callan, 1997).

This paper focuses on the justification of cultivating political morality for deliberative citizenship in a context of liberal pluralism. I do not intend to argue how political liberalism could become deliberative democracy, rather I would like to illustrate that political liberalism has the capacity to accommodate an ethically demanding deliberative citizenship, especially on its formulation of the conception of political person. In this light, we will see the potential of Rawls's work in developing a framework for educating deliberative citizens and how the idea of deliberative democracy could fit into the framework of contemporary liberalism.² To this end, his ideas are essential for developing a theory of the person for deliberative democracy as Rawls's theory paves the way to an ethically robust citizenship education for deliberative democracy which might be out of his expectation.

Notes

1. While John Rawls identifies his theory of justice as 'justice as fairness', Eamonn Callan in his interpretation of Rawls in terms of political education uses 'citizenship as fairness' to describe the ethical capacity that should be developed to facilitate Rawlsian liberalism. Nevertheless, I would prefer the phrase 'citizenship as reasonableness', as this pinpoints the focus on the reasonable domain that deliberative citizens should develop their ethical capacity.
2. It is because the political conception of person in Rawls's interpretation is too 'lax' to generate an ethically pluralistic citizenry that could be capable to develop the necessary active and psychological disposition to tolerate diverse comprehensive beliefs (Callan, 1997, p.30).

3. Having said that, the claim of deliberative citizenship does not have to take a Rawlsian form. It can be a version of ethical liberalism as expressed, for example, by Ronald Dworkin in “The Foundations of Liberalism”. But every version of liberalism needs to construct its account of conception of the person, especially for those who wish to incorporate their claims into a model of deliberative democracy.

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A Complex Question by Any Measure: Issues of justice in the education of disabled children and young people

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Abstract

There is a well-known and oft-quoted adage that the true measure of a society is how it treats its weakest and most vulnerable citizens. The apparent simplicity of this statement belies the complexity of the issues to which it pertains. The question of just and fair educational provision for disabled children is one such complex issue. Despite widespread acceptance of inclusive education, the question of the place of special school provision within the inclusive education context remains controversial in a number of jurisdictions. So, while some would argue that the presence of special schools is a measure of the failure of a society to treat its disabled children and young people justly and fairly, others would argue that it is a measure of its success. This paper examines and explores this issue. Drawing on the work of Walzer, Nussbaum, and others and with reference to the New Zealand context, I suggest that in relation to place, just educational provision for disabled children and young people is a complex issue and requires more than “simple equality”; the provision of special schooling as an option for these children would seem to attend to this complexity and thus, arguably, is consonant with the demands of justice. The paper concludes by suggesting that with respect to education, the argument for the presence of special schools as one measure of a society’s success in its treatment of disabled children and young people is not an unreasonable one.

Keywords: Justice, inclusion, disabled children, special schools

Introduction

It would be fair to describe inclusion/inclusive education as the pervasive motif of progressive educational thinking with respect to disabled children and young people. Over the last twenty years and more countries across the world have moved to implement policies of inclusion and inclusive education which, while they reflect and are shaped by the different particularities of the political and social environments of each country or jurisdiction, are all similar in their concern for realising the rights of disabled children and young people to education and, more specifically, their right to receive that education at their local school with their non-disabled peers.

However despite what seems to be widespread acceptance of the concept of inclusion, the question of the place of special school provision within the inclusive education context is still the subject of debate and controversy (Terzi, 2010). While some argue against strongly against special schooling (Barton, 1997, Dyson, 2001; Higgins et al., 2008; MacArthur, 2009), others argue in support of it (Cigman, 2007; Croll & Moses, 2000; Head & Pirrie, 2007; Hornby, 1999; Lindsay, 2003;).

Regardless of all of this, special schools remain a feature of many education systems however they occupy a somewhat invidious position. In many policy and educational environments the accepted orthodoxy asserts the moral probity of regular school provision and, thus by implication at least, the corresponding iniquity of special school provision. The view that separate provision is by definition unjust and an affront to the rights of disabled people in general, and disabled children and young people in particular, would seem to have been accepted as a core and fundamental principle by many policymakers and commentators at both national and international levels. Policies in many jurisdictions proclaim a commitment to the goal of all disabled children and young

people receiving their education in the local school alongside their non-disabled peers. The measure of just educational provision for disabled children and young people under this regime is constituted as that which obtains when all are educated in regular school settings alongside their peers and special schools are no longer available, a situation that has been referred to by some as “full inclusion” (Cigman, 2007). For those who support “full inclusion”, the continued presence of separate special school provision marks the failure of policies of inclusion and represents continuing injustice for disabled children and young people, hereafter referred to as disabled children.

But is this in fact a true representation of the situation or could it be that the continued presence of special school provision simply represents a more nuanced interpretation of what is required to achieve just educational provision for disabled children? In this alternative interpretation, far from representing injustice, continued special school provision could, arguably, represent the material enactment of one aspect of justice in education for some disabled children. In the following sections I will explore this question. The paper begins with a brief outline of key features of inclusion pertinent to this paper. Following from this I will examine how under inclusion special school provision is constructed and constituted as an injustice to disabled children. I will then offer a critique of this perspective and in the following sections argue for an alternative perspective in which special school provision can be seen to serve the cause of justice in education for disabled children. The paper concludes with the proposition that with respect to education, the presence of special schooling as one measure of a society’s success in its treatment of disabled children is a reasonable one and eminently justifiable.

Inclusion

Inclusion has been described as a “slippery concept”, and, certainly, it is a concept and term, which admits of a variety of interpretations. While more recently conceived of as a transformative agenda for broad school reform and change (Mitchell, 2010), the most common understanding still and “probably the most frequent use of the term is to refer to children with disabilities participating in mainstream education” (Ballard, 2004, p.318). It is this understanding of the term and, more specifically, its use to denote the situation that obtains when all disabled children attend and receive their education in local regular schools that will be adhered to in this paper.

Inclusion is concerned with issues of justice and human rights; in many Western countries inclusion developed in response to perceived injustices and inadequacies in the way the education of disabled children and others was delivered under the banner of “special education”. Inclusion is underpinned by a belief in the inviolable right of all disabled children to attend local regular school settings, and by the social discourse of disability that understands disability as created and constructed by social attitudes and arrangements, rather than as being peculiar to an individual and related to impairment. Consonant with the social discourse of disability, is the belief that regular schools and school systems can and must adapt so that all children and young people, irrespective of their particular personal attributes, can have their learning needs met and can participate together in the common endeavour of schooling (Dyson, A., & Millward, A., 1997).

With respect to the question of place, it is a core tenet of inclusion that the regular school setting is the optimum place for all children and, particularly, for all disabled children, to receive their education; the corollary, of course, is that special school settings are less than optimum places for disabled children and young people to receive their education. Under this particular discourse any educational arrangement other than the participation of all disabled children in regular class settings at all times is constituted as “exclusion” and as an injustice; special school provision is correspondingly constituted as the most extreme example of exclusion and thus as an injustice to disabled children.

Inclusion as a question of human rights and ethics has a considerable moral claim; the argument that in a democratic and just society all children and young people should be able to receive an education of high quality and fitted to their needs at a local regular school is, I would suggest, unassailable. Similarly it would be difficult to disagree with the argument that justice requires that disabled children should be entitled to attend and receive their education in local state-funded schools alongside their non-disabled peers. However that the argument that special school provision is an offence to justice can claim the same moral veracity and worth is, I would suggest, less convincing despite the certainty of those who argue against special schooling.

The Certainty of Inclusion

Inclusion is different from any other fields of inquiry in that it is premised on an answer rather than a question? That answer, of course, is that inclusive education is superior in one or other way to non-inclusive education. (Dyson, 1999,p.43)

Dyson's comment points to a key feature of inclusion, its certainty. In the writings of activists and academics, and in national and international policy statements, there would appear to be an unquestioning acceptance that the goal of all disabled children receiving their education at their local ordinary school which underpins inclusion, and only this goal, equates to just educational provision. Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998), describing the turn away from special school provision, explain that "inclusion won mainly because it is *right* that it should have done so. Arguments for inclusion are principled ones, stemming from concern for human rights." (p. 308) Here we can see evidence of the certainty of the moral rectitude of inclusion at play, "arguments for inclusion" are described as "principled ones"; the implication that hangs from this statement is that arguments that differ from this position are not. Perhaps, with respect to the issue of place at least, it would not be unreasonable to agree with Corbett's (1997) view that at its most extreme, there is a danger of inclusion becoming a form of "politically correct bullying" (p. 57).

Special schools do not have a right to exist.

(Dissent, 1987, p. 97, as cited in Barton, 1997, p. 235)

This is the cry, albeit often more subtly stated, of those who argue for the particular form of inclusion in which special school provision is seen as an anathema and the epitome of exclusion in our educational systems. Concomitant with the move to inclusion has been a call for the closure and removal of any type of special school provision (Barton, 1997; MacArthur, 2009). This has been argued for on the basis that special school provision is antithetical to inclusion and that the presence of special schools represents the failure of inclusion and thus the failure of justice in education for disabled children. For those promoting inclusion, special schools are perceived as the *bete noire* and the tangible representation of injustice in education for disabled children. For those who take this view, the presence of special schools is an indictment on the societies and education systems in which they endure.

Much of the force of the argument against special school provision rests on the notion that the purpose of special school provision is to segregate disabled children and young people. "Segregation" is, of course, a term that has essentially negative connotations and implies an enforced setting apart of groups of people on the basis of a particular characteristic such as race or, more pertinent to this discussion, disability. Without doubt, historically, disabled people have been segregated from society and deprived of the right to live an ordinary life as others do and this is clearly an unconscionable state of affairs. But whether it is fair to apply this connotation to the provision of alternative special schooling settings is another question. Cigman (2007) argues that this view is based on a premise that special schools are inherently humiliating or demeaning; she challenges the premise that in retaining special schools, societies are sustaining a practice that is fundamentally indecent, a view she attributes to the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE). Cigman argues that while this view may have been accurate in respect of "old-style segregated education", it is now out-dated and not applicable to special schools in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Certainly, in the current New Zealand educational context there is little real evidence to support such a pejorative view of special schooling. Enrolment in special schools in New Zealand is a choice that is made by parents rather than a direction enforced by the educational authorities. In addition, the quality of education offered in the schools has been attested to by the Education Review Office (ERO) which conducts reviews of all schools in New Zealand approximately every three years (ERO, 2010). A brief random search of some of the special school reviews on the ERO website revealed many positive reports with frequent references to inclusive and respectful learning environments, high-quality learning and teaching programmes, enthusiastic students, responsive teachers and good community and school relationships. Despite this special school provision is, in New Zealand, as in many other countries, still framed as negative and damaging by many who promote inclusion and is, thus cast as a morally questionable type of provision.

Troubling the Certainty of Inclusion

The truth is that since educational controversies turn mostly upon different visions of human flourishing there will always be (indeed in a society like ours, there must and should be) room for disagreement concerning what are clearly inherently evaluative, ethical and philosophical issues. (Carr, 2001, p.471)

The issue of the place of special school provision for disabled children is, I would argue, one such controversy that turns on “different visions of human flourishing” and is “inherently, evaluative, ethical and philosophical” in nature. Codd (1987) tells us that ethics “relates to the moral justification of what we do or intend to do in situations that provides alternatives for human action” (Warnock, 1971, p.13 as cited in Codd, 1987, p.70). Under the philosophy of inclusion, just educational provision with respect to place is constituted only as that which obtains when all disabled children attend and receive their education at their local school; no alternative is countenanced. But is this an ethically defensible position? Cigman (2007) describes this particular conception as a “universalist” argument and its proponents as “universalist inclusionists” who are in essence making claims about what is “best for every child without exception”(p.776). With moral questions such as these, as Carr argues, “there must and should be room for disagreement”. But inclusion in taking a “universalist” position appears to allow no such room for the accommodation of any “different vision” in relation to what might constitute just educational provision.

This single, limited vision of what constitutes just provision corresponds with Walzer’s (1983) notion of “simple equality” whereby equality is synonymous with sameness; sameness of treatment and sameness of experience. Walzer describes “simple equality in the sphere of education” (p.202) as that which corresponds with Aristotle’s view that, “the system of education in a state must...be one and the same for all”(Aristotle as cited in Walzer, 1983, p.202). This description seems apposite to the conception of justice that underpins the idea that all disabled children should be educated in local regular schools. With respect to place, inclusion would appear to constitute justice and fairness in education for disabled children as the circumstance whereby, “everyone gets access to the same thing...” (Walzer, as cited in Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p.268). However, I would contend, that in this context, “simple equality” is unlikely to be sufficient to achieve just provision for all disabled children without exception. Walzer (1983) argues that “simple equality is neither achievable or desirable. It is not achievable because people do not have the same means and capacities, and it is not desirable because people do not have the same needs”(p.13). This argument has particular resonance here. Disabled children are characterised by heterogeneity in their means, capacities and needs; given this heterogeneity, it is, as Rizvi & Lingard (1996), suggest likely that “centralised uniformity of educational provision” will be “insufficient for achieving social justice” (p.22) for all of these children without exception. But this is essentially what, in terms of place at least, inclusion promotes; a uniformity of provision that Cigman (2007) suggests fails to recognise the multiple realities that attend disability and its lived experience.

An Alternative Perspective

In contrast to the notion of inclusion as described above, the provision of special schooling, arguably, represents not only an acknowledgement of the difference in “capacities and aspirations of students and parents” (Rizvi & Lingard, 1996, p.22) but also recognition of the inadequacy of “assumptions of uniformity” (Rizvi & Lingard, 1996, p.22) to the task of achieving just educational provision for all disabled children. Special school provision can thus be constituted as representing one facet of justice in education for disabled children and a just response to “what Marx called, “rich human need”, that is to say the need for an irreducible plurality of opportunities for life activities” (Nussbaum, 2006, p.167).

Undoubtedly, as discussed earlier, inclusion is concerned with issues of human rights and justice in education for disabled children. However the proposition that to achieve justice and secure the human rights of these children in the sphere of education requires that there be no alternative educational provision than the local regular school seems to me to be flawed. As Nussbaum observes “... the issue of justice for the disabled is a complex and multifaceted issue” (Nussbaum, 2002.). This observation is clearly pertinent to the sphere of education and certainly applicable to the question of what constitutes just educational provision for disabled

children. In the light of this observation, Nussbaum adjures us to think about the wide variety of desires, aspirations and needs of these children and their families when considering the issue of just educational provision. Special school provision, I would argue, demonstrates one aspect of a society's endeavor to give equal and fair consideration to the variety of desires, aspirations and needs of disabled children and their families. Justice surely must require attention not only to the rights of those who favour the local regular school but also to those who favour special schooling. However for some who promote inclusion the right of choice would appear to carry little weight and the choice of a special school placement is constructed as almost a form of deviance.

...the continuation of such schools has often been as a result of parental choice. While one sympathizes with the difficulties particular parents may face over such decisions, from the perspective adopted in this paper such practices cannot be used as a ground for supporting this system of provision. (Barton, 1997, p 235)

From this point of view, the right to be included in the regular school assumes greater moral probity than the right to participate in a special school setting so that it is claimed that:

Even a superbly well organised special school offering the highest quality curriculum and educational input to its children has no right to exist if that same education can be provided in a mainstream school. (Dissent, 1987, p.97 as cited in Barton, 1997, p.235)

But, it is difficult to reconcile a denial of the option of choice to some disabled children and their families with the requirements of justice. Such a denial would appear to show a lack of respect both for the moral dignity of these people and for their right to choice in aspects of life that affect theirs and their children's flourishing. Nussbaum (2006) contends that respect for a plurality of values is a requirement of living in a pluralistic democracy, choice she argues, "is good in part because of reasonable pluralism: other fellow citizens make different choices, and respecting them includes respecting the space within which those choices are made" (p.184). In a pluralistic society allowing choice "is an aspect of respect for human dignity" (p.186); the presence of special schooling insofar as it enables choice of educational provision demonstrates, I would suggest, a society's respect for the human dignity of those who desire that option. Furthermore, Nussbaum(2006) suggests, that respect for human dignity requires recognition that each person is an "end, and cannot be sacrificed to a larger social good" (p.177). Denial of the right to choose a special school placement on the grounds that such a choice may compromise the aims of inclusion would seem to come dangerously close to treating some disabled children and their families as "mere means to the ends"(Nussbaum, p.70) of inclusion.

Inclusion is predicated on "the assumption that the regular school provides an education worth being included in" (Slee, 1996, p.110), while for many, and possibly most disabled, children this may be a fair assumption, there are also some for whom it will not. It has yet to be shown that regular schools "have clear academic and social benefits over special schools for all students all of the time (Shaddock et al, 2009. p. 78.) In New Zealand, for example it would appear that there is considerable variation in the educational experiences of disabled children in regular schools and that some regular school provision is inadequate to the needs of these children; both ERO (2010) and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2009) have drawn attention to the difficulties faced by disabled children and their families in relation to inclusion in the local regular school. Similarly, both in New Zealand and elsewhere, parents have reported their children in local regular school settings experiencing bullying, social isolation, social and academic exclusion, and inexperienced and unsympathetic teachers (Shaddock, 2009; Lange, C. & Lehr, C., 2000). For some children then, the removal of special schooling as an alternative would surely constitute an injustice for, as Walzer (1983) so acutely observes, "education distributes to individuals not only their futures but their presents as well"(p.198); "justice" he points out "has to do not only with the effects but also with the experience of education" (p.198). If, by providing the alternative of special schooling the "presents" of some disabled children are enhanced and their educational experiences better suited to their needs, surely it is incumbent on any society to do so, and in so doing for it to be seen as a measure of justice and fairness rather than injustice.

Terzi (2008), discussing the debates about the issue of fair educational provision for disabled children, asserts that “there is a crucial but neglected philosophical core to the issue.”(P.3), which centres on the “fundamental question: what constitutes a just educational provision for students with disabilities...” (p.3). In a world in which inclusive education is the dominant orthodoxy and pervasive motif in educational thinking with respect to disabled children, this question could appear otiose - the answer is, of course, inclusion. However, as I have attempted to show in this paper, while inclusion may be a necessary condition for justice in education for some disabled children it is not a sufficient condition for all and so the question stands. With Terzi, I would suggest that at its core the issue of just educational provision for disabled children is fundamentally a philosophical and moral question; the answer to such a question is not one which necessarily admits of certainty (Codd, 1987). Codd (1987) suggests that moral questions are concerned with “the ends of our actions, such as the obligations we have to others...”(p.70). With respect to the education of disabled children, morally, societies must have an obligation to promote just arrangements and limit injustice insofar as possible. Walzer (1983) tells us that “justice and equality can conceivably be worked out as philosophical artefacts, but a just and egalitarian society cannot be” (p.xiv). Similarly Gewirtz (2006) argues that “it is not possible to resolve the question of what counts as justice in education at a purely abstract level, and that what counts as justice can only be properly understood within specific contexts of interpretation and enactment. (p.69) Both these comments point to the fact that judgements about the justice and fairness of educational arrangements and provision can only be determined by examining the material reality of those on whom any such arrangement impacts. The argument that special school provision is an injustice to disabled children, I would suggest, fails to attend to the lived realities of the disabled children who attend these schools and who experience a valued and valuable education therein. It similarly fails to attend to the reality that as of yet we cannot guarantee that local regular schools can provide an appropriate and satisfactory educational experience for all disabled children.

The question of what constitutes just educational provision for disabled children is certainly complex and multi-faceted; the issue of place, considered here, is just one aspect of this complexity. Inclusion proposes that a single, simple solution is all that is required to serve the interests of justice with respect to where disabled children go to school, and that special school provision is by definition an injustice. In this paper I have proposed an alternative position and have argued that both practically and morally, special school provision can be shown to serve the interests of justice and mitigate injustice for some disabled children and their families. Following this, I would argue, that with respect to education, the proposition that special school provision can be seen as a measure of a society’s success in its treatment of disabled children is a reasonable one and eminently justifiable.

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Measuring Up in Educational Philosophy in the 21st Century Nigeria's Education: the fundamental problems of theory and praxis of education

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Abstract

We live in a world where international comparisons of standards in education constantly confront us all as stakeholders in the face of the burgeoning crisis of quality in education. From one end of the world to the other, educational aims, objectives and goals of nations of the world as construed in theory and practice of education are replete with different challenges that depicts their milieu. In contemporary times in Nigeria, foundational philosophies have revolutionized both philosophy and philosophy of education as academic disciplines, but the set pattern of teaching philosophy of education in Nigeria today does not seem to make use of the evolving revolution with a heterogeneous colouration. Philosophy in its various epochs in history has played varied roles in man's development that cannot be down-played or tucked away in the dark. This expository study is informed by the need to recognise the contemporary challenges in global set patterns or standards of teaching and learning philosophy of education in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and mentoring for retention; address the increasing concerns about quality reproduction in education and reduce teachers/learners at-risk syndrome in our classrooms. What do we know about the risk implications of engaging non professionals in teaching? What are the fundamental problems of philosophy of education in Nigeria? In this study, a comparative analysis of models and strategies that can reinvent standards in teaching, using qualitative research methods to update educator's experiences and implications of findings would be discussed.

Key Words: Quality, Standards, Teaching, Mentoring, Diversity, Retention

Introduction

Studies of human nature and existentialist paradigms offers marked theories of freewill and determinism as the pendulum that depicts human actions, thus teachers' volition to measure up to teach in accordance with contemporary developments in philosophy of education, learn, progress or cheat, retrogress and so on can be so inferred. (Ntui, 2013; Wade, 2010). Educational institutions as social institutions where teaching and learning occurs can be construed as centers where the exercise of these rights and the attendant risk factors can be prominent. One would think that poor teaching and learning poses great risk in society and to deal with the vulnerability of uninformed minds and the gravity of the uncertainty of this phenomenon is a subject of volumes. This is why professionalism in teaching and retention in higher education is in response to challenges such as ability to meet students diverse learning needs, discern interest and new innovations in teaching, learning, research and mentoring because most teachers/lecturers begin their careers with little or no formal

preparation in pedagogy. Despite being well-versed in the content discipline, researches have shown that higher education teachers in their first few years of teaching often lack access to the kind of frequent assessment and mentoring that would shorten the learning curve and enhance the experience and productivity of both the mentor and protégé. (Wright, 2011; Dean, et al, 2002; Wenglinsky, 2000).

Again, teacher education in the 21st century is evolving into complex processes that are not limited to pedagogical training but also includes teaching partnership, coaching, support, *midwifery* and mentoring as a new pedagogy for professional growth globally. This provision is not made in teaching among academics in most higher education institutions in Nigeria thus making it a gamble for new entrants to do their work as they deem fit. When they cannot cope, they may leave out of frustration or unfulfilled expectations. Employing the analytic, speculative and prescriptive research methods in philosophy of education, the study advances the argument that a new age of learning to measure up in philosophy of education globally, should create a culture of synergy and partnership, spirited by cooperative learning, friendly support and the active construction of knowledge by mentors and mentees.

Methods of Philosophical Research in Education

According to Mason;

a philosophical research gives an insight into the nature of man rendering and reminding us of aspects otherwise forgotten, underestimated or totally neglected, persuading us to look at the philosopher in certain ways as a result of which we treat him in a particular way. Because he is not content with “what is” but what “ought to be”. (Mason, 2008)

In the light of the above submission, one could say that it is a trite fact that researches are naturally fired or driven by curiosity, which is aimed at producing or breaking new grounds of knowledge or to reconstruct existing knowledge for the overall good of man and the society.

The Analytic Method

Analysis can be considered as the:

Separation into components or subjecting a thing to a close examination, assessment or the process of analysing or synthesizing qualitatively or quantitatively. Again analytic is pertaining to analysis, obtaining differences in meaning by the use of additional words rather than by inflections (Ntui, 2008)

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his book *the Tractatus*, posits that; “analytic philosophy aims at making thoughts clearer”. Bertrand Russell once reported that when the analytical philosopher is confronted with a statement, his first question is usually concerned not with its truth or falsehood but with its meaning. (Russell, B. 1977). For example if one asks the question; are all university teachers in Nigeria professionally trained? The analytic philosopher of education would be concerned with what follows from the given question as well as the preceding history or circumstances. He would be concerned with how the issues related to the question can be verified or falsified and ultimately how the concepts in which the question is involved can be suitably defined, and expressed in some more or less formalized language and so on.

Modern analytical philosophers regard themselves as philosophical revolutionaries wiping the slate clean of earlier philosophies and laying the foundation for something entirely new: “a self critical, strictly scientific philosophy”. (Ntui, 2013) As far as we can see, this belief of the logical atomists and positivists like Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, Moritz Schlick and other adherents of the *Vienna Circle* has always been a flattering illusion. According to Ozumba, philosophical analysis is nothing new. We can trace it back to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and reflections of an analytical character can be found in the works of nearly all the great philosophers. (Ozumba, 1998) Again, Ayer and Bertrand Russell are of the view that;

what has happened in modern philosophy is not the advent of something radically new, but the development and intensification of something which was always there. (Russell, 1971)

In this study we agree that new realms of thought have been subjected to analysis, and new methods of analysis have been created. Hence many contemporary schools of analysis are not new but have joined in a discussion, which has sharpened criticism and stimulated the imagination to explore the scope of analysis further. Scheffler in his book, *The Language of Education* reported that:

Analysis tries to avoid ambiguity and explores meanings of basic concepts used in the study of education with philosophical tools for clarity. (Scheffler, 1960)

Scheffler's proposition is of concern to this study.

The Prescriptive Method

The prescriptive method can also be called normative philosophy which according to Paul Swiss,

is the most prominent division of ethics since the time of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, that seeks to establish norms, standards of guidelines for the conduct of human affairs. (Swiss, 1956)

This method attempts to discover some acceptable and rationally defensible views concerning what kind of values or things that are good or desirable to aim at in human actions, and what kinds of acts are right and why we admit that they are right. Thus normative philosophy is concerned with the norms and standards or principles of human behaviour. Philosophers of education employ this method when aims of education vis-à-vis the values and goals of education in the society are put into consideration. For example if one says that 'Measuring up in education implies raising standards, the statement is value-laden and its implications far-reaching. For Frankena as quoted in Rich, J.N., a normative philosopher of education will attempt a tripartite approach in dealing with any educational problem. He will consider what dispositions are Excellencies and worthy of cultivation, he will show why these dispositions are Excellencies, and he may also need to discuss how these Excellencies are to be cultivated. (Ntui, 2013)

The quality of teaching in our universities today poses a moral question to all stakeholders particularly educators, teachers, parents and so on. This is because there are possibilities that a university teacher could be a cheat and not a teacher while teaching could still be cheating and not teaching or vice-versa. Since these seem to be the most viable tools for guaranteed excellence in the school system, the prescriptive method of educational philosophy may attempt to recommend "socially desirable" practices in teaching and condemn the seemingly undesirable practices in teaching as observed in our schools today.

The Speculative Method

Speculative philosophy deals with man's existence as well as fundamental or metaphysical issues that defy scientific investigations. It asks questions like 'what is the purpose of life?' 'Is man free?' 'Does God exist?' 'What are the ends of education?' and so on. The speculative method of philosophical research in education can be determined by the relationship which education has with philosophy. One may say that in Nigeria, philosophy is taken to be a determiner of the constituents of a worthy way of life while education then becomes a means to develop that worthy way of life. In other words philosophy determines the ends, goals or aims of life and education is an attempt to realize these goals. But it is again difficult to define concretely as to what constitutes a worthy way of life. As Henderson puts it:

Educational aims cannot be determined apart from the ends and aims of life itself for educational aims grow out of life's aims. To determine what constitutes worth living is through speculation and it has been one of the chief tasks of philosophy. (Handerson, 1947)

Earlier T.P. Nunn also had reported that: "educational aims are correlative to ideals of life. (Nunn, T. P. 1920) Ideals of life vary and educational aims vary correspondingly. Philosophers study all the available

information about man and the universe in which he lives and with this knowledge as his starting point, speculates about the nature, origin, purpose and destiny of man. He interprets the available knowledge in the light of his perceptions and draws his own conclusions about the goals of individual and social life. The educator enables the learner to realize both personal and social goals in education. This is why philosophy is said to be the contemplative or speculative side and education the dynamic or active side of life. (O'Connor, 1957). For Ross;

Education is the active aspect of philosophical speculations, the practical means of realising ideals of life. (Ross, 1958)

Here we consider education as a testing ground of ideas about the goals of life as regards their practicability to education. The key concepts of teaching and quality can generate endless metaphysical questions concerning the purpose of teaching. What “*ought to be*” or “*what is*” the nature of university education? What is quality teaching? and so on. These questions obviously cannot provide answers like scientific experimentation because they are concerned with man and his ideals and values, which cannot be quantitatively studied. Employing scientific methods in studying man and his values in the society would be grossly inappropriate because human values are outside the quantitative attributes of science. Hence the speculative approach seeks to study and comprehend the whole of reality by examining its distinct parts. In educational philosophy, the method of speculation can aid one to see theories in education as a guide to practice and also that practice offers correctives to theory.

Concept of education and its implication to praxis

Education today is not, and should not be seen as an instrument facilitating merely the integration of the young generation to the present social system, and reinforce conformity. As the needs of our times and milieus constantly evolve, it becomes imperative that aims, objectives and goals of education, like in Nigeria are defined by the National Policy of Education and it is dynamic. In Nigeria today, men and women are increasingly being empowered through education to deal critically and creatively with the world, and to continually discover how to participate and partake in its transformation. This is because educational processes are rooted in and are defined by, philosophical thoughts and traditions as well as social realities; it is therefore necessary for educators to better comprehend the complexities associated with the concept of education. Apart from its etymological conception as ‘*to lead out or bring forth*’ and ‘*to train or to form*’; it implies that the primary aim of the teacher should be that of a midwife to help or aid the learner ‘*bring out*’ what is innate in the learner. For Plato quoted in Schofield, education is;

...the training which is given by suitable habits to first instincts of virtue in children; - when pleasure, and friendship, and pain, and hatred are rightly implanted in souls not yet capable of understanding the nature of them, and who find them, after they have attained reason, to be in harmony with her. This harmony of the soul, taken as a whole, is virtue; but the particular training in respect of pleasure and pain, which leads you always to hate what you ought to hate, and love what you ought to love from the beginning of life to the end... is called education. (Schofield, H 1982)

Again, one can say that the concept of education eludes a universally acceptable definition because education studies are understandably multifocal and the concept of education is in itself polymorphous. The focus of its study at a given time, to a large extent, depends on the definition which we give to the concepts. A definition of education can be descriptive as in Jeffreys,

Education is nothing other than the whole life of a community from the point of view of learning to lead that life (Jeffreys, 1972)

This definition to a large extent fits the practice of traditional, especially pre-colonial African education. The definition of education can also be stipulative as in:

All education can be regarded as a form of socialization in so far as it involves initiation into public traditions which are articulated in forms of thought (Peters, 1972)

A definition can also be programmatic that is, it takes on a moral dimension in stating what it should do to benefit society. An example is, '*Education should prepare its beneficiaries to be of good behaviour*'. Granted that we can have several perspectives to the definition of, education Ira Steinberg painted this utilitarian picture of education.

People have aims and purposes. Education is not a person; it is not a thing. However like a thing it has its uses. The purposes of education are the uses that people would have for education.

He went further to submit that we can give several uses of education at a time but that we cannot give a true meaning of the concept, and we should not seek to give one meaning for it, so he concluded:

Education has no more true meaning than it has true purposes. And it has no true purpose.
(Steinberg, 1968)

One would have ended the discussion on the meaning of education here if philosophical studies on education were subject to gerontocratic positions. (Ntui, 2013) Philosophy and philosophy of education are exceptions to this rule. Therefore the position of Steinberg and other philosophers of education as well as ancient philosophers in their attempt to define education can be seen as footnotes which are celebrated because they have continued to fan the embers of philosophical dialectical tradition and keep aglow the intellectual admiration and awe of the discipline up to our contemporary times.

Plato for instance, sees education as the initial acquisition of virtue by the child when the feelings of pleasure and affection, pain and hatred that well up in his soul are channeled in the right courses before he can understand the reason why. This is similar to the Biblical injunction that we should *train up a child in the way he should go and when he is grown he will not depart from it.* (Proverbs 22:6)

Education is derived from the root word *educare* which means to draw out, to lead out and to form or train respectively. Education cannot be carried out without bearing in mind the aims of education. It is the aims of education that determine the contents and process of education. As Achibong and Ejue (2009) have opined that:

the task of education is mainly to guide the total growth and development of young people so that they will be competent, well adjusted and sociable citizens of their community.

One may say that aims of education also feature either as objectives, purposes or goals of education. It is seen in its cultural matrix, social economic and political contexts, and as a personal function. In Nigeria some of the aims of education as depicted in the National Policy on Education include:

1. As a means of eradicating ignorance and imbuing knowledge which is requisite for fruitful role as citizens.
2. For national integration. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation. The aim of education is to educate the citizens to achieve sympathetic and harmonious relationship among the people of diverse ethnic groups that make up Nigeria.
3. To foster unity, love and patriotism among Nigerians,
4. To achieve the aim of self-realization and self-actualization
5. Education aims at fostering the spirit of science and technology so as to enable us cultivate and appropriate the benefits of science and technology.
6. To inculcate self-discipline. It is believed that a properly educated man is more likely to be temperate than the uneducated.

7. for the promotion of democratic, ideals of freedom, liberty, equality, and justice.
8. for the transformation of consciousness. For example, national integration during emergencies like wars, famines and so on. The government may through education direct the minds of the people to be ready to make sacrifices.
9. the cardinal aim of Nigerian educational policy is for the total development of the individual so that he or she can exploit his or her potentials as a human being. Again the purpose of education is the promotion of innovative attitudes, techniques and skills in the citizens. (Federal Government of Nigeria NPE, 2004)

There are intrinsic and extrinsic aims of education. Education is intrinsically good because it imbues confidence, ability to communicate with others and affords the facility which enables its processor to keep abreast with the goings-on in his society and in the world at large. We may not have been able to have the time and space in this study to exhaust all the definitions, meanings and interpretations of education as given by philosophers and other scholars of education, however, we conclude that the concept of education seen as the acquisition of knowledge's, preparation for life, growth, schooling, transmission of culture and so on suggest that these diverse meanings correspond to the many functions of education.

Nigeria's national policy on education

The National Policy on Education was nursed in 1969, fashioned out in 1977 and officially given the Federal Government seal in 1981. In 1969 the Philosophy of Education for Nigeria received official recognition. Part of the recommendations issued by the participants at the National Conference on Curriculum Development held between 8th and 12th September 1969 was that the five national objectives of the second National Development Plan should be made the official philosophical base for Nigerian education. After years of incubation this recommended educational philosophy was officially promulgated as the National Policy on Education in 1981. The policy states the main objectives of education as:

1. A free and democratic society.
2. A just and egalitarian society
3. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of full and bright opportunities for all citizens.

Deriving from this, the aims of Nigerian education at all levels include the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society, shared responsibility for the common good of the society; respect for the dignity of labour.

A cursory look at the objectives shows that though they are laudable and reassuring, they nevertheless are beset with problems. One of the problems is that most of them are ambiguous and hence in dire need of clarification. Again there is a lack of statement of what each of them is supposed to achieve for Nigeria and why it is thought that it will evolve into such an achievement. Perhaps, an evaluation of each of these objectives will have expose these problems, but this study does not have the time and space for such analysis.

The policy is clear on the aims of education at all levels. At the primary level, the aims and objectives are;

1. to help the child to realize himself;
2. to help the child to relate to others in an atmosphere of mutual understanding;
3. to promote self and national economic efficiency;
4. to promote affective citizenship through civil responsibility;
5. to facilitate national consciousness in the area of national unity and survival;

6. to promote social and political awakening;
7. to create scientific and technological awareness;
9. to ensure character and moral training and sound attitude development.

The purposes of secondary education include:

1. education for self-realization;
2. education for human relationship;
3. education for self and national efficiency;
4. education for effective citizenship and civic responsibility;
5. education for national consciousness;
6. education for national unity;
7. education for social and political progress;
8. education for scientific and technological awareness.,

Although there is not much difference between purposes of education at primary and secondary levels, the curriculum is diversified to take care of the differences in natural endowments, opportunities and roles possessed after graduation, and that students should be inspired with a desire for achievement and self-empowerment. However, it is clear from the purposes of primary and secondary education adumbrated above that the overriding principle is the emphasis on the necessity to create national consciousness and solidarity through education. One may argue that any system we adopt must in addition be able to cater adequately for the educational abilities and aptitudes of every child.

According to the policy, higher education includes universities, polytechnics and colleges. The aims of these institutions include the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate the environment, the acquisition of intellectual and physical skills which will help the individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of broad and objective view of the local and external environment. All these can be realized through:

1. Teaching: The imparting of knowledge.
2. Research: The pursuit of knowledge.
3. Dissemination: Contribution to national international dialogue and criticism,
4. Service Orientation in community service and professional training of the national high-level and intermediate manpower needs. According to the policy, admission of students and recruitment of staff into institutions of higher learning would be on a broad national basis. It is also expected that there would be teacher and student exchange programmes to enhance inter-varsity communication and improve knowledge in the country. The curriculum would be geared toward producing practical persons, while the course content would reflect national needs and local environment and so on. The above exposition shows that the policy has been and is still a promising blueprint for education in Nigeria. However, looking at the Nigerian educational sector today, it will be overstressing the obvious to state that the country is still far away from achieving these laudable objectives and ideals and the reasons for this is a subject of volumes.

Conclusion

Different cultures have their different areas of concern in education depending on what is crucial in each culture. It is untenable to talk of an ultimate philosophy of education which is all embracing, universal and culture-unlimited. For Nigeria, the seeming under achievement of the educational goals seen in the context of the neglect of the role of philosophy of education relates to the situation in which internal conditions necessary for the optimum achievement of educational goals fall below a certain minimum. These internal conditions range from the overall philosophy which guides policies, programmes, practices, beliefs, curricular content and methodologies, to their actual implementation within the system.

A constellation of these considerations include but is not limited to inappropriate curricular, poor teacher quality and attitude, student teacher relation, the aims of education amidst cultural diversity and heterogeneous concerns. Their overwhelming presence in Nigeria's educational environment results in considerable waste in the perspective of the gross under utilization of the potential abilities of all but few. From the foregoing, we posit that expert teaching needs to be emphasized at all levels of the Nigerian education. Attitudes of all stakeholders in education needs to change since quality teaching and learning alone does not guarantee development but that 'willfulness' to learning to pay the prize of development on the part of government and all stakeholders, can significantly propel the country to Eldorado. This approach can check the tensions arising from our educational experiences, for the advantages of philosophy; it is these maladjustments that necessitate the function of philosophy in the experience of our culture. The question of why's and how and what's cannot be avoided if Nigerians wants to overcome these problems, for it is these questions that will bring about a sense of direction in solving these problems and guarantee Nigeria's place on the path of progress as well as measuring up to contemporary challenges of development.

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Thinking Education through Object-Oriented Philosophy: A triple pedagogical movement

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Abstract:

A historic shift is taking place in present-day continental philosophy. In this paper I will take the measure of some of the implications of this dramatic shift for educational theory and pedagogical practice. The shift involves an explicit and renewed call for realism. One of the most salient features of this development is a revitalised interest in ontological questions. Within the confines of this paper, I will particularly focus on Graham Harman's object-oriented ontology (OOO) as part of this overall trend towards realist and materialist ontologies in current continental thinking. Harman's object-oriented philosophy is a new and robust approach to metaphysics and ontology that provides an invigorating account of objects and invites us to go against the grain of present-day philosophical approaches to the reality of the world and the things in it. In order to come to terms with this new approach to reality, I suggest education be defined as the process of thematic engagement on many different levels with reality understood in the Harmanian idiom. Formal schooling tends to eschew what Harman calls 'the carnival of life.' The impressively rich and dynamic texture of life is ignored in favour of a static and dull cognition that is stripped of the bizarre enigma of our world. Such an approach to reality is then used to structure an impoverished learning experience for students with an eye towards control and predictability through increasingly aggressive forms of measurement rather than genuine encounters with the dramatic experience of the carnival of things.

Keywords: objects, object-oriented philosophy, new realism, phenomenology, interiority

Introduction

A historic shift is taking place in present-day continental philosophy (Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman, 2011). In this paper I will take the measure of some of the implications of this dramatic shift for educational theory and pedagogical practice. The shift involves an explicit and renewed call for *realism*. This might sound alarming for some people since continental philosophy is known for its anti-realism, which maintains the untenability of knowledge of a reality independent of thought. Yet thinkers in Anglophone continental philosophy today proudly proclaim their new and varied versions of materialism and realism. As the editors of the volume, *The speculative turn* (2011), indicate

[i]t has long been commonplace within continental philosophy to focus on discourse, text, culture, consciousness, power, or ideas as what constitutes reality. But despite the vaunted anti-humanism of many of the thinkers identified with these trends, what they give us is less a critique of humanity's place in the world, than a sweeping critique of the self-enclosed Cartesian subject. Humanity remains at the center of these works, and reality appears in philosophy only as the correlate of human thought. In this respect phenomenology, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and postmodernism have all been perfect exemplars of the anti-realist trend in continental philosophy (Bryant et al., 2011, pp. 2-3).

As opposed to this anti-realist trend, what Harman (2007) calls different modalities of "weird realism"¹ have come to the fore. Especially through the work of Ray Brassier (2007), Iain Hamilton Grant (2006), Quentin Meillassoux (2008), and Graham Harman (2002; 2005)—the original group of speculative realists—"The

Speculative Turn,” as a deliberate counterpoint to the now tiresome “Linguistic Turn” (Bryant et al., 2011, p. 1) in philosophy has been taken.

One of the most salient features of this turn is a renewed interest in ontological questions. Thanks to thinkers like Deleuze (1994) and Badiou (2005), a rejuvenation of ontology has been under way. Within the confines of this paper, I will particularly focus on Graham Harman’s object-oriented ontology (OOO) as part of this overall trend towards realist and materialist ontologies in current continental thinking. Harman (2011) develops a model of objects that have a fourfold structure—the quadruple object—based on his reinvigorating and somewhat unconventional readings of Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology. He aims to challenge once and for all the fundamental assumptions of what he calls ‘the philosophies of human access,’ according to which the post-Kantian continental thought have been completely ‘unconcerned with the reality of things outside their accessibility to consciousness’ (Harman, 2010, p. 3).

Rejecting the post-Kantian obsession with a single relational gap between people and objects, I hold that the interaction between cotton and fire belongs on the same footing as human interaction with both cotton and fire (Harman, 2011, p. 6).

Despite his aversion towards ‘the philosophies of human access,’ however, Harman is no stranger to the very tradition he sharply criticizes. He is very well-versed in the Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology, and his approach can be considered a radicalization of the latter rather than their outright repudiation. There is a lot that need to be retained in the phenomenological tradition. As a matter of fact, it is hard, if not impossible, to imagine a speculative realist movement emerging without a healthy dispute with the phenomenological insights.

Inspired by Harman’s fruitful confrontation with the phenomenological thinking, I would like to make a case for a pedagogical movement comprised of three phases: pre-phenomenological, phenomenological, and post-phenomenological moments, which form themselves, in that order, into an overarching movement. These three moments correspond to states of being that can be characterized within the stance of, respectively, naïve realism, correlationism, and weird realism. The main thesis of the paper can thus be put in the following manner: education, as the process of thematic engagement on many different levels with reality, is best served by undergoing the pedagogical movement elaborated here. That is, starting out within the stance of naïve realism, and then, being compelled to engage the correlationist moment, and finally questioning the latter to reach the state of weird realism. The end point of this movement is the ability to engage reality with increasing intensity and joy.

A brief exposition of the three moments of the pedagogical movement and the corresponding stances involved will be followed by an attempt to make a case for all three moments to be considered as integral parts of an overall pedagogical movement in education. In the first part of the essay, I will elaborate on these three moments. Then, I will focus my attention on Harman’s theory of objects. In closing I will discuss the educational implications of such a pedagogical movement.

The Three Moments

To begin with, very basically put, we find ourselves within the milieu of the pre-phenomenological engagement with the world in a state of naïve realism. Given an appropriate impetus—usually a crisis of meaning of some form—we move on to the next moment, which is of the phenomenological engagement whereby our initial and unthematic absorption within the world of everyday life is questioned and rejected. Finally, the phenomenological moment itself is questioned and experienced to be insufficiently radical, and a return to the world with a renewed sense of its inscrutable reality and contingency is achieved.

Not surprisingly, the movement described above is inspired by the famous Zen aphorism in the context of the three stages of enlightenment, which can be paraphrased as follows:

Before I studied phenomenology (Zen), mountains were mountains, and water was water. After studying phenomenology for some time, mountains were no longer mountains, and water was no

longer water. But now, after studying phenomenology longer, mountains are just mountains, and water is just water.²

In the pre-phenomenological phase of the movement, mountains are mountains and water is water. That is, in a state of naïve realism, we are unthematically (pre-reflectively) immersed in our everyday involvement with the people and things in our workaday life in which, what Husserl calls ‘the natural attitude,’ prevails.

Within the natural standpoint (or natural attitude, as Husserl actually calls it) the ‘world’ is tacitly accepted as ‘real,’ as having its ‘being *out there*, and as being reliable enough for all ordinary pursuits (Natanson, 1973, p. 20, emphasis original).

In the state of being characterized by naïve realism, we go about our daily life in an unquestioning attitude ‘accepting the existence and givenness of the world in its usual temporal course’ (Moran, 2012, p. 25). In other words, we are primarily focused on the objects around us rather than the active role our own consciousness plays in positing them as objects of consciousness. In the natural attitude, the world is ‘simply there for me, spread out in space and time’ (Moran, 2012, p. 60)—mountains are mountains and water is water. For Husserl, the sense that an object exists ‘in-itself’ in the world out there needs to be confronted by a critical-reflective attitude on our part to expose the way this sense of being an object is constituted in consciousness through intentionality. Put differently, the natural attitude needs to be transcended and the everyday naïveté left behind so that ‘the nature of the world as an achievement of subjectivity’ (Moran, 2012, p. 60) is realized.

This is the first moment of pedagogical importance.³ As we suspend the natural attitude and reflectively focus on the constitutive role played by our own subjectivity, a new unsuspected realm of experience opens up for us. This is the realm of the Husserlian transcendental phenomenology wherein mountains are no longer mountains, and water is no longer water. This, of course, should not be taken to mean that, all of a sudden, mountains and water disappear, or are obliterated, replaced by something else instead. Nothing really happens to the mountains or water. Rather, something happens to us: we confront the problem of *constitution*—that is, our relation to objectivity. As Alweiss (2003) points out, ‘[t]o *constitute* here means to disclose, to bring forth, to make manifest, or to reveal—not to create or construct’ (p. 182, emphasis original). For Husserl,

[t]he question is not ‘How do we impose subjective forms onto an objective reality?’ or ‘How do objects appear within our mind?’ but ‘How do subjective acts *instantiate*, or, *constitute*, objective ideal laws of logic or meanings which are true and exist in themselves, independent of our thinking about them?’ By addressing the problem in this manner Husserl does not reduce objectivity to subjective experience; rather, the reverse is true: he describes our relation to objectivity (Alweiss, 2003, p. 5, emphasis original).

Carrying out a substantial analysis of transcendental phenomenology here is far too big an undertaking for the purposes of this paper. Suffice it to say that the discovery of the transcendental field of consciousness—the constitutive role played by the *I* of subjectivity—is pedagogically transformative. Once you successfully go through it, you come out a different person on the other side. The world is now understood to be a correlate of transcendental subjectivity. We are no longer naïve about the reality of the world. Mountains are not merely mountains; they are mountains to the extent that they are mountains for us.

To what extent we should relax into the second moment of the pedagogical movement, that is, engage the phenomenological moment, is complicated by the complex history of arguably the greatest philosophical school of thought in the 20th century inaugurated by Husserl and developed and radicalized by Heidegger. The tension and the interaction between these two and their adherents are ongoing and very productive. Phenomenology is a vibrant tradition and out of its dark and rich soil, many approaches and figures (e.g. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, Patočka, and so on) have blossomed. Engaging these thinkers is an utterly rewarding experience. Despite the allure of this moment—the intoxicating experience of Husserlian transcendental project, or of *being* in Heidegger’s sense—however, we need to go back to the world with a renewed sense of its reality and contingency for having spent enough time in the realm of transcendental subjectivity and the ensuing ‘repetitive continental focus on texts, discourse, social practices, and human finitude’ (Bryant et al., 2011, p. 3),

we now are ready to turn toward reality itself and speculate ‘once more about the nature of reality independently of thought and of humanity more generally’ (Bryant et al., 2011, p. 3).

The third moment of the movement therefore emerges out of healthy immersion into what Meillassoux (2008) calls ‘correlationism,’ the name he gives ‘to the contemporary opponent of any realism’ (Brassier, Grant, Harman, and Meillassoux, 2007, p. 408).

Correlationism rests on an argument as simple as it is powerful, and which can be formulated in the following way: No X without givenness of X, and no theory about X without a positing of X. If you speak about something, you speak about something that is given to you, and posited by you. Consequently, the sentence: ‘X is’, means: ‘X is the correlate of thinking’ in a Cartesian sense. That is: X is the correlate of an affection, or a perception, or a conception, or of any subjective act. To be is to be a correlate, a term of a correlation (Meillassoux in Brassier et al, 2007, p. 409).

The second moment of pedagogical importance is achieved when the correlationist moment itself is confronted. As a result of this confrontation, we move beyond the correlationist breakthrough and return to the beginning, but a beginning informed now by the insights gained through correlationism: mountains are just mountains, and water is just water. Mountains and water have reality that can neither be reduced to their common sense everyday meaning (first moment) nor to the structure of consciousness, Dasein, or language (second moment). Mountains are just mountains: they have autonomous reality independent of their ‘accidents, qualities, relations, and moments’ (Harman, 2011, p. 19). This brings us squarely to Harman’s ontology of objects, a form of weird realism.

Harman’s Objects

The starting point for Harman’s ontology is neither the really tiny subatomic particles or strings or quanta of information or mathematical structures nor some sort of majestic holistic unity supplied by divine or human consciousness, Anaxagoras’ *aperion*, or Heraclitean flux, but the so-called mid-sized objects such as the Shard, the architect who’s designed it, a London telephone box, my beloved iPhone, a steel mill, the Arf invariant of a quadratic form in characteristic 2, Doc Martin, antimatter, the Minotaur, French fries, liquid nitrogen, Texas A&M University, the Arab Spring, dolphins, Jungian archetypes, a chrysanthemum, fuzzy set theory, hyenas, Eyjafjallajökull—the unpronounceable Icelandic volcano that wreaked havoc on international air travel in 2010, and so on. All of these are objects simply because they all have an inscrutable inner core that is completely withdrawn from any relationship whatsoever; in other words, they withdraw from all access, human or otherwise; they cannot be touched: they are *real*. Mountains are just mountains, irrespective of any relationship they enter (or are pushed) into.

If objects reside in an inaccessible core impervious to contact with one another, how on earth do any two objects influence and interact with each other then for it is patently obvious that they do? Well, through what Harman (2007) calls ‘vicarious causation.’

My claim is that two entities influence one another only by meeting on the *interior* of a third, where they exist side-by-side until something happens that allows them to interact. In this sense, the theory of vicarious causation is a theory of the molten inner core of objects – a sort of plate tectonics of ontology (Harman, 2007, p. 190, emphasis added).

Despite its strangeness, Harman uses this concept as ‘the launching pad for a rigorous post-Heideggerian philosophy, and a fitting revival of the venerable problem of communication between substances’ (Harman, 2007, p. 187). So at its core, object-oriented ontology problematizes the tension between objects and relations. ‘The term “object” as I use it means anything that exists. The term “relation” means any interaction between these objects. I hold that such interaction is always a kind of translation or distortion, even at the level of inanimate things’ (Harman, 2010, p. 2). This suggests that objects (say, two billiard balls, or a billiard ball and Ronnie O’Sullivan, the world snooker champion) never encounter each other fully, rather they do so only as translations or caricatures of each other.

Based on this, Harman postulates two polarizations that occur in the matrix of reality: ‘one between the real and the sensual, and the other between objects and their qualities’ (Harman, 2012, p. 4).

One [polarization] involves a ‘vertical’ gap, as found in Heidegger, for whom real objects forever withdraw behind their accessible, sensual presence to us. The other is a subtler ‘horizontal’ gap, as found in Husserl, whose denial of a real world beyond all consciousness still leaves room for a powerful tension between the relatively durable objects of our perception and their swirling kaleidoscope of shifting properties. Once we note that the world contains both withdrawn real objects with both real and sensual qualities and fully accessible sensual objects that are also linked with both real and sensual qualities, we find ourselves with four basic tensions or gaps in the world. These gaps are the major subject matter of object-oriented philosophy (Harman, 2012, pp. 4-5).

So, according to Harman, real and sensual objects and their real and sensual qualities make up the fabric of the whole cosmos. In order to substantiate this claim, but at the risk of oversimplification, I will attempt to provide a sketch of the quadruple object with an example⁴. The account that follows will necessarily be incomplete for it is beyond the limits of this paper to provide a full exposition here, and also because Harman’s account itself is in the process of development and refinement. My goal is a modest one of providing a glimpse of his content and style.

So let’s take the infamous Icelandic volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, as the object of choice. To begin with, Eyjafjallajökull is a *real* object in the sense that it withdraws ‘into a subterranean background, enacting [its] reality in the cosmos without appearing in the least’ (Harman, 2011, p. 35). At no point is the being of Eyjafjallajökull completely present to consciousness or to anything else. The reality of this object cannot be exhaustively identified with its presence in human consciousness, or in anything else. It recedes into a private interior that no-thing can touch. Put differently, it is ‘autonomous from whatever encounters it’ (Harman, 2011, p. 48). The being of Eyjafjallajökull is withdrawn from all access, human or otherwise.

According to Harman (2011), this bizarre sounding conclusion is derived from an intensification of (some might say, violence to) Heidegger’s famous and respected tool-analysis provided in *Being and Time*, and constitutes the core of Heidegger’s philosophy. It is Heidegger’s ‘insistence on an obscure subterranean depth that haunts all accessible entities’ (Harman, 2011, p. 96) that marks him out as the major philosopher of the twentieth century. Heidegger’s core insight (in Harman’s interpretation) suggests that the reality of objects exceeds their presence to a conscious observer; it also exceeds the workings of tacit human praxis, as well as their presence within a causal chain of events. In other words, Heidegger’s tool-analysis makes a case against *relationality* per se, and a case for autonomous and inaccessible things (Harman, 2010, p. 3).

In the case of Eyjafjallajökull, before it became conspicuously present to us in the form of a massive disruption to the entire worldwide air transportation network when it erupted, we had been quietly relying on its silent subterranean life. It was absent in the sense that we took it for granted. It was in the background silently executing its reality unbeknownst to us. Then, in an unexpected shooting of lava and ash cloud, it made itself known. It became present. It appeared before us. For the farmers living at the foot of Eyjafjallajökull, the volcano is not grasped thematically as a present-at-hand object floating in the clouds. Rather, it is in the background disappearing in favor of some purpose it serves; for instance, the myths and legends that have become a part of their communal understanding of the landscape they inhabit. Eyjafjallajökull does not exist as an isolated entity. As ready-to-hand, it dissolves into an overall structure of references we unthematically experience to be meaningful. Yet by virtue of the inscrutable depths of its being, Eyjafjallajökull cannot be reduced to any system of meaning. Its reality always exceeds any and all systems of thematic grasp. It always retains its ability to surprise.

When Kate Humble, the presenter of a BBC documentary about Eyjafjallajökull (Ausden, 2012), faces the volcano, what she sees is a *sensual* object that can only be encountered within the intentional sphere of her consciousness. She does not see the *real* volcano for the latter lies beyond the intentional sphere and constantly eludes her and recedes into the inscrutable depths of its being. When the topic of discussion is the intentional

sphere, the figure we need to reckon with is undoubtedly Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. For Husserl, according to Harman's interpretation, objects do not have 'autonomous reality apart from being the objects of actual or potential observation. They are granted no secret life or inherent causal power, but are "real" only insofar as they might now or someday appear to consciousness' (Harman, 2011, p. 22). In short, objects reside in an immanent mental sphere, closed off to the world outside the mind. Nevertheless, within the intentional sphere Husserl carves out, he discovers an unexpected drama between objects and their qualities (Harman, 2011, p. 22).

As Kate Humble circles around the Eyjafjallajökull volcano from above in a helicopter ride, the volcano constantly shows different profiles (*adumbrations* in Husserlian terms). It is impossible to see all the sides of the volcano all at once from all angles. Each moment of perception through which the volcano is made manifest is different from the others and yet the volcano remains the same volcano, the same unified object. It does not become a new volcano every time Kate Humble shifts her vantage point.

A point worth stressing is that the intentional object is no bundle of adumbrations. We do not grasp a tree or mailbox by seeing it from every possible side—which is physically, mentally, and perhaps logically impossible. The object is attained not by adding up its possible appearances to us, but by *subtracting* these adumbrations. That dog on the horizon need not have its hind leg raised exactly as it now does, nor does it cease to be the same dog if it stops growling and wags its tail in a spirit of welcome. Intentional objects always appear in more specific fashion than necessary, frosted over with accidental features that can be removed without the object itself changing identity for us (Harman, 2011, pp. 24-25, emphasis original).

So the sensual object—the unified intentional object—retains its unity despite being in tension with its ever-shifting sensual qualities of myriad colours and shapes and whatnot. Eyjafjallajökull is the same volcano present to us whether it is 'benign, beautiful, great, shining, pure white glacier' (Humble's description of the dormant volcano seen from above in a chopper), or it spews out 'untold amounts of ash' causing massive disruptions to air travel. Eyjafjallajökull cannot be reduced to a set of its sensual qualities. Neither can it be reduced to a set of its real qualities, 'which the object desperately needs in order to be what it is' (Harman, 2011, p. 27). Being an opening that channels molten magma towards the surface of the Earth's crust, for instance, is not an accidental shifting sensual quality of Eyjafjallajökull. It is an essential quality without which the volcano will not be what it is. Yet this does not mean that we have a total grasp of the reality of these essential qualities either. What it means to hold and channel magma up towards Earth's atmosphere will always elude us no matter how precise a scientific description we might come up with for knowing the essential qualities of a volcano is never the same as being one. The reality of the quality in question will always elude us. It will remain inaccessible to us.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, 'two entities make contact only on the interior of a third' (Harman, 2010, p. 12). Hopefully, we can now make more sense of this statement having had an initial understanding of what real and sensual objects are all about. When Kate Humble encounters Eyjafjallajökull, Kate, a *real* object, confronts the volcano, a *sensual* object, since, as has been established by now, a real object cannot encounter another real object for they constantly withdraw from mutual contact. Instead a real object encounters a sensual object on the *interior* of a third object. The third object in this case is the intentional relation between Kate and Eyjafjallajökull, which is a unified object on its own. Kate and the volcano are components of this new object, which is equally inexhaustible in terms of its reality since it now enjoys a life of its own. No matter how deeply and widely we analyse this intentional relationship between Kate and the volcano, we will never exhaust it.

Educational Implications

The implications for education of the triple pedagogical movement discussed here can be tremendous and far-reaching if, by education, we understand the open-ended process of thematic engagement on many different levels with reality, now understood in its weird sense. Engaging with reality is an infinite task and has no goal other than the freedom to further enrich and intensify such engagement. The movement from naïve realism to anti-realism to weird realism then is a pedagogical movement of increasing freedom for the individual

undergoing it. When properly engaged, it is transformative. The absence of such movement, that is, the opposite of increasing freedom, is increasing ossification. Alternatively then, education can be defined as the process of keeping the *bodymind* dynamic against ossification. The latter can take many different forms: physical, mental, emotional, social, and political ossification. The pedagogical rule of thumb is that against all forms of ossification, the bodymind needs to be simultaneously exercised on many different levels. These exercises, or curriculum processes if you will, can come in many different patterns and styles. Here I will only hint at some of them. I do not mean to be prescriptive in the least in my suggestions.

If we take the two moments of pedagogical importance—suspending the natural attitude in the phenomenological phase and engaging Harman’s ontology of objects (as one example) in the post-phenomenological phase—seriously (and I think we should), cultivating what I would like to call ‘the pedagogy of interiority’ becomes imperative. Thanks to the excesses of scientific realism—an overly narrow positivist outlook in all areas of life—reality has been stripped of the enigma of interiority. The phenomenological tradition, with a most eloquent account of interiority, that is, the account of the field of transcendental subjectivity, has done its bit to counter the ossifying effects of the natural attitude. Furthermore, as one of the foremost representatives of the speculative realist movement, Harman has argued (indisputably in my estimation) that objects have inscrutable interiors that cannot be eliminated or conquered in any way or form, and that therefore they always are ready to surprise us with novelty. The ability to surprise and be surprised, in other words, the ability to have a sense of awe and wonder in the face of reality, is what we look for in a well-educated person, a person who loves interiors.

The pedagogy of interiority, for the duration of the phenomenological phase, entails cultivation of the art of slowing down. The realization that mountains are not mountains and water is not water is not just one-click away. As a matter of fact, we might do well to just say goodbye to clicking altogether since the sense of slowness required to cultivate this phase of the movement is not conducive to the 21st century habit of clicking anyway. Instead, I would suggest, in no way a prescriptive manner, exercising the muscles of the bodymind, ideally simultaneously, in the five threads (one or more from each) given below:

- Philosophical/existential thread (focused and earnest study of phenomenology, existentialism, Mahayana Buddhism, or some tradition equally compelling)
- Body arts thread (any form of dancing, martial arts, t’ai chi, archery, yoga, and so on)
- Crafts/fine arts thread (drawing, calligraphy, pottery, ceramics, sculpture, carpentry, metal work, playing an instrument, and so on)
- Stillness thread (sitting meditation, tea ceremony, origami, breathing, cooking, gardening, praying, and so on)
- Nature thread (walking, hiking, climbing, birdwatching, and so on)

At the risk of sounding utopian, I would like to point out the obvious that such exercises should be integral components of the curriculum of any form and level of formal schooling.

For the post-phenomenological phase, the pedagogy of interiority involves engaging the inscrutable interiority of objects and all the drama that takes place therein. Lamenting the near universal dominance of the constructivist ideas on learning that basically reduce teaching, in a lopsided way, to ‘nothing more than just the facilitation of learning or the creation of learning environments’ (Biesta, 2013, p. 459) and therefore ignoring the irreducible role of teachers as those that bring something radically new to the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and learner, Biesta argues that teaching ‘needs to carry with it a certain notion of *transcendence*’ (p. 459, emphasis added). Opposed to the Socratic approach to education as *maieutics*, that is, ‘bringing out what is already there’ (ibid., p. 452), Biesta defines transcendence, following Levinas, ‘as something that comes from the outside and *adds* rather than that it just confirms what is already there’ (ibid., p.

453, emphasis original). He further claims that ‘the very point of education is precisely *not* to repeat what is already there but to bring something new to the scene’ (ibid., p. 452, emphasis original).

I couldn’t agree more—with a twist though. Surprisingly, the transcendence, or the radical exteriority, Biesta is after issues from within the autonomous depths of objects. The inscrutable interiority of objects is the Great Outside! The exteriority Harman elaborates is not relative to consciousness, language, history, being-in-the-world, the Other, or reflection. Rather, it is relative to the *reality* of the interiority of objects, which is relative to nothing. In other words, the source of novelty, which is arguably the most essential thing for education to unfold, lies within the depth of objects, which can neither be grasped nor therefore be measured in advance.

The pedagogical imperative of teaching therefore is to provide the impetus for our students to engage the phenomenological and post-phenomenological moments of the pedagogical movement, which are not readily given. They need to be chosen.

Conclusion

When asked whether there is a place where poetry and philosophy meet (Beckett, 2011), Harman answers in the following way:

At times I wonder if they are different at all. This statement causes outrage for scientific philosophy, with its insipid model opposing real facts outside the mind to arbitrary, decorative, poetic fictions inside the mind. I reject this scientific model not for the ‘postmodernist’ reason that everything is a poetic fiction inside the mind, but rather because everything is a poetic reality *outside* the mind. In other words, I don’t see the real world as the brutal collision of physical chunks monitored by tough-minded researchers in white coats, cheered on by their philosophical sycophants. Instead, I see the physical world as riddled with cracks and fissures of the same sort that is generated by poets, and the great scientists know this as well. There is obviously something quite poetic about the ideas of Einstein and Bohr, for example.

In this paper I have made an attempt to address the implications for education of the speculative turn in continental philosophy. In particular, I focused on Graham Harman’s object-oriented philosophy to see what might be done with his assertion that ‘everything is a poetic reality *outside* the mind.’ Formal schooling sooner or later tends to turn into a static and dull engagement with a terrain of easily manipulable pre-given objects that have been stripped of the bizarre (or poetic) enigma of our world. The Great Outside ‘riddled with cracks and fissures’ is ignored. I have argued based on the formulation of the triple phase pedagogical movement inspired by the famous Zen aphorism that to interact with the Great Outside, we need to go through the Great Inside first. Our schooling experience has to be restructured in such a way that the impetus to engage the field of transcendental subjectivity and then the inscrutable interiority of objects is provided. As Biesta (2013) argues, the role of the teacher is still central in this endeavor since it is the activity of teaching that provides that impetus.

Notes

1. As Harman (2007), in his usual colourful manner, describes, ‘[i]nstead of the dull realism of mindless atoms and billiard balls that is usually invoked to spoil all the fun in philosophy, I will defend a weird realism. This model features a world packed full of ghostly real objects signaling to each other from inscrutable depths, unable to touch one another fully’ (p. 187).
2. The original aphorism, which can be found in many different forms in Zen literature, esp. the Ox-Herding Pictures, is taken from Garfield and Priest (2009).
3. The majority of people, left to their own devices, would not bother taking this step. They are content that ‘mountains are mountains, and water is water.’ However, some form of a crisis of meaning might

trigger the process of thoroughly questioning the stance of naïve realism and finding it problematic. Usually (but not necessarily), presence of a teacher who has undergone the movement himself/herself is required to provide the impetus to get the transition under way.

4. In this example, we will closely follow the account of objects provided by Harman (2011).

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Measuring Manliness: Education and the boarding school novel

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Abstract

After the boarding school's ascendancy in the 19th Century, its popularity declined somewhat in the 20th Century, partly over concerns that children were being turned into adults too soon. Prolonged adolescence had become the dominant trend, which required education at half pace – the model of day school, where pupils attend school without leaving the family home.

However, the boarding type of education remained a powerful source of inspiration among novelists: even when day schools were becoming predominant, writers were still drawn to a type of education that enabled them to depict not only the brightness and promise of innocent adventures in the classroom, but also the dark, nocturnal side of micro societies ruled by boys on their own. In an ambience of masculinist ideology that influenced other literary genres – and also other arts of the time – the boarding schoolboy novel allowed the expression of strong gender considerations and original proposals for educational policies rooted in sexual segregation, raising such subjects as male friendships, an uneasy but popular topic.

In this paper, the fortunes of the educational model implied by the boarding solution and the conventions of the literary genre it originated are examined, with a focus on the Portuguese-speaking world, as part of a broader project on the schoolboy as cultural hero in prose narratives of Brazil and Portugal.

Keywords: boarding school, masculinism, literature, boyhood, Portugal, Brazil.

A vanishing educational model?

Although the boarding school system was meant to produce gentlemen, not novels, this form of education left an outstanding legacy in literature. The boarding school is indeed a literary myth, and also a sociological one: a complex combination of narratives encompassing themes of utopian vision, social engineering, power relations, burgeoning sexuality and individual boldness. Debate may go on about its peculiarities; here we consider the ideology and ethics behind the pedagogical practice of boarding schools and the way they are reflected in literature.

Boarding schools have rich historical roots; in his *A History of Education in Antiquity*, Henri-Irenée Marrou (1982) predictably mentions their Spartan ancestry, the ἀγωγή, where 'boarding school' meant the military barracks of the youth in arms: 'The whole system of education was thus collective: children were simply torn from their families and made to live in community. (...) [A]t the age of twelve the "adolescent" – πάμπαις – had to be made tougher, and was obliged to leave home and go to a boarding school – i.e., the barracks' (Marrou, 1982, 20-21); the arts too, as well as warfare, were imparted in residence in Ancient Greece, since Marrou also refers to young ladies' boarding schools where again a sort of 'community life' was in place, taking 'the form of a religious fellowship, θίασος'. Such was the case, among other examples, of the arts school led by Sappho, the poetess and educationist from the island of Lesbos (Marrou, 1982, 34-35). In 19th Century Europe, where Classics were such an important part of education, these ancient models certainly played a role in the fashioning of the boarding school ideal as part of a classical revival.

During the High Middle Ages in Europe, the Church also created boarding schools both for the priesthood and for laypeople, mostly attached to monasteries. Immersion, seclusion from the outside and segregation from family and household were the prerequisites for an efficient education, and boarding had become an obvious need, given how widely the population in semi-rural areas were scattered. Besides the Church's educational initiatives, royal patronage also created boarding schools, sometimes to prepare the elite for the highest offices, and elsewhere to care for the poor in institutions meant for orphans or neglected children. The boarding paradigm was so universal that it extended to the very different situation of non-schooled youths, like apprentices, who boarded at their master's house – an educational system that has shown a remarkable resilience to changes: by Late Modernity it *'was really rejected as a training method only under the modern external pressures of universal education and a raised standard of living'* (Lane, 1996, 211).

Still, it took an entire chapter of Philippe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* ('From Day-School to Boarding-School') to illustrate the rise of the 19th Century's boarding school trend because, despite being a 'comeback' of something deeply rooted in universal educational experience, it was also a newly shaped, post-Jesuit, *bourgeois* institution that constituted in many ways a novelty for its civilian, secularist and rigidly classist approach.

Combining residence with teaching, boarding schools stand for an alternative home, being at the opposite pole from home schooling – a solution which, in the 19th Century, became ever more limited to royals and aristocrats. Boarding schools also differ substantially from joint residence with the teacher, like the above-mentioned apprentices who boarded in the house of their masters exclusively for professional training. In fact, the most striking specific feature of this system is the joint residence with peers. The vision of a monosexual society, where boys ruled over other boys, which could hardly be sustained in the outside world, was indeed the utopian appeal of the boarding school system, resulting in an intricate mixture of guardians and bullies, camaraderie and tyranny, order and chaos.

As the Western educational heritage became thoroughly contested during the 20th Century, complete and permanent education came to be perceived as turning children into adults too soon. Nowadays, the time for families to dream about sending their young to the legendary Swiss boarding schools seems long-gone. Adolescence turned fashionable and the dominating trend became to prolong it beyond any possible age limits, a tendency that was to favour the half-pace education of day school, in which the pupils attend school without really leaving home; this solution was more in line with the raising of mothers' standing within households and their propensity to resist the emancipation of youth, their wish to keep 'their children' under a 'protective wing'.

To this new trend, others were added during the 20th Century: co-education counteracted the monosexual creed of this educational model – it was rarely thought to combine harmoniously with the constraints of boarding and accounted only for a residual number of schools – and compulsory schooling, which was the death blow to apprenticeship. In the process, families were also encouraged to intervene more in schooling matters and the young have now been bound physically and psychologically to the family's symbolic and material space, no matter how much they resent being overprotected.

The rising popularity of the day school paradigm from the 1960s onwards affected mostly the mentioned civilian and secularist, private-owned institutions mentioned above, which have become scarce. However, other types of boarding schools seemed better positioned to resist decline:

1. A few elite-exclusive, status-focused, mostly single-sex traditional boarding schools continue to attract their own public, now in some cases from across the globalized world;
2. Some ethnically oriented boarding schools assert their right to existence as ways of cultural resistance in a world tending to uniformity: e.g., African American boarding schools in the USA and Māori boarding schools in New Zealand;
3. The Church and Army, remnants of the medieval priestly and warrior orders that sustained the pre-bourgeois boarding school, managed to maintain a few complete education institutions, pleasing

families in religious terms and/or providing the discipline and rigour that are allegedly unfashionable in the mainstream system;

4. And far more visible in foreign literature are the boarding schools with a strong vocational component operated by welfare authorities to accommodate and instruct the destitute (being these real orphans or ‘orphans of living parents’). Here public imagination, helped by ultrarealistic novels, had a tendency to picture these schools as unhappy heirs of the infamous orphanage depicted in Charles Dickens’ 1838 feuilleton novel *Oliver Twist*. Today, they remain a recurrent target of negative attention in the media.

In Portugal and Brazil, the boarding schools belonging to the Church never faced concurrency from local elite-oriented ones so typical of other cultures. The priesthood-gearred boarding schools directly run by the dioceses were called *seminários*, where poor boys had a hope of social promotion through instruction, but often left with no wish to embrace a religious career. Still active, despite facing increasing desertion from the 1970s due to the decline in numbers of aspirant priests, they left a sizeable mark in Brazilian and Portuguese literature. The Church also put in place a number of the welfare type of institutions.

The Army, too, retained its boarding schools, catering primarily, but not exclusively, to the families of officers and accepting others enamoured of a military style of education; they are enjoying a slight gain in enrolments these days, perhaps due to widespread militarism: ‘*From their heyday of more than 900 military schools between 1783 and 1914, approximately 40 remain. While the choice of attending military board schools has always existed, the option has recently experienced a minor resurgence*’ (Shane, Maldonado, Lacey and Thompson, 2008, p. 181). While institutions of this type were the setting in Austria of Robert Musil’s landmark novella *The Confusions of Young Törless* (1906), they did not receive a great deal of literary attention in Portuguese literature outside memoirs by former soldiers (Raul Brandão and Júlio Dantas among the most prominent of these memoirists).

Not only the controversial type of welfare institutions, but also the other surviving boarding school types in Portugal are either under the fire of persistent harsh media campaigns targeting them over court scandals or suffer the pressure of government disaffection. The combined forces of mainstream indifference or hostility, growing parental control and pressure for uniformity give apparently scant hope for their expansion in the near future, despite the signs of slight recovery from elsewhere: for the time being, the boarding school model, religious or secular, military or civilian, public or private, monosexual or co-educational, tends to be ever more confined to the few niches listed above.

Literature goes to school: the literary conventions of the boarding school novel

As for the novels inspired by boarding life, aiming at both young and adult readers, they appeared as the relics of a forgotten past and their demise mirrored the decay of the institution itself. In the late 20th Century, boarding schools were to be found more in the memoirs of now elderly old boys than as favourite settings for newly written popular novels, until the surprising worldwide success of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007): despite their plots being about fantasy and not realistic school life, these stories set at a boarding school proved the universal and enduring appeal of the boarding myth itself.

In Portuguese-speaking literature, the upper class group of boarding schools was only featured in narratives imported from abroad, translated or recreated; the ethnic kind of schools was absent both from the educational map and the literary one; the same applies to the institutions for the deprived: school subjects were not favoured by the social critics of the 19th Century, the so-called ‘realists’, and were ignored by those of the 20th Century, who preferred unschooled, slave-working youths for heroes of their novels centred in adolescence. Therefore, Portuguese-speaking boarding school novels and memoirs focus on establishments intended for middle to lower-middle class youth, either Church run or secular and private owned.

A school novel is easily identifiable by its conspicuous school theme, and the presence of a main set of conventions traceable back to the folk tale: from an initial conflict (usually with family), the hero journeys far

on a mission 'to grow'; feeling abandoned by his parents, he has to fight fearful enemies, rivals and other distracters from the assigned mission; he tries to befriend prospective allies; meanwhile he discovers the problematical nature of society and its willing agent, the school; he overcomes (*or not*) the challenges, either joining his invincible enemy (accepting a more or less comfortable place among the society once detested so vigorously) or remaining at a distance from it, as an 'artist'; finally, the once misfit adolescent is co-opted by society, losing the innocence and beatitude of the pre-school stage, together with the rebelliousness of youth. Only by surrender is he able to accomplish the ascribed mission.

The *peripetia* and characters of the typical narrative structure include: the first day at school (and occasionally the last); excursions to the outside world; contrasting personality types; discipline and bullying; sports and team rivalry – mostly in the English-speaking novels since team sports faced strong official resistance and therefore were introduced late in Portuguese education (for different reasons, resistance to British sports came from nationalists in Portugal and from left-oriented writers in Brazil)²⁵; contrast between daylight behaviour and the dormitory night moods; lack of nourishment (as in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*); loyalties, jealousies and treachery by untrustworthy friends; episodes of daring and punishment, physical and/or psychological; the eruption and repercussions of erotic tensions with troubling results for the individual and the group, sometimes with the breaking of anti-sexual rules among pupils or staff, or with an occasional, disturbing feminine presence; growing distrust of the adult world (intergenerational conflict presumably extensive to the pupil's family, parents or their substitutes); consequent disbelief in education (and possibly in God, when the Church is in charge of the school); and detailed moral portraits of teachers (e.g. the friendly or weak teacher versus the tyrannical and unfair one).

These episodes and twists may not be found in each and every novel, but they certainly are the most commonly featured.

The trouble with boarding: friendships and manliness

New Zealand author Hugh Walpole (1884-1941) proposed his own inventory of boarding school novel components:

All the conventional things are there, the football, the fights, the bullying, the friendships, and the rest. It is a true story and not, I think, sentimental (Walpole, 1927).

Since the main topics are listed here so concisely, Walpole's reader may think that the subgenre is nothing more, in fact, than a series of clichés. But Walpole was to detail what he meant by 'the friendships': the young and immature male friendships, the real cornerstone of the schoolboy novel:

No one has yet written in English an account of a boy's friendship that does not appear either too emotional or too unemotional to be true. Tom Brown's protection of Arthur still appears to me a beautiful and true thing... (Walpole, 1927).

The problem with this matter, he argues, is that it is plagued with taboos – and here truth is only possible *within wise limits*:

The fact is that boys are both little beasts and little heroes, that the age of puberty is the terror of parents and headmasters, and that no one dares to speak frankly, even in these frank days, of what everyone knows to be true. However, these are dangerous matters. I didn't write in Jeremy at Crale the school-story that I would like to have written, but I did, I think, tell the truth so far as I thought wise (Walpole, 1927).

²⁵ - In Brazilian boarding school novel *O Ateneu* (1888), a series of traditional games is described.

In his famous 1910 essay on Hölderlin, Wilhelm Dilthey called these passionate friendships ‘*a kinship of souls*’ and highlighted their subversive potential:

A kinship of souls which can no longer be obstructed by conventions, a striving for the development of our full potential, which will no longer allow itself to be suppressed, the awareness of personal dignity – all this came into conflict with the social order and, in the end, with the very nature of things (Dilthey, 1985, p. 337).

The powerful boys’ exalted, romantic friendships, although short-lived, had the potential of raising awareness of individual aims opposed to society’s designs and to ‘the nature of things’.

The second problem, closely linked to the first, is the question of manliness, a most praised virtue in the 19th Century and the early 20th Century. Authors needed to be extremely gender-conscious while striving to achieve the right measure of *masculine* virtues in their characters: not lacking and not exceeding the virtuous middle, avoiding both the traps of unmanliness and those of ‘overmanliness’. Accordingly, Walpole criticized *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* author, Thomas Hughes, for being ‘*almost too manly in his admiration of British virtues*’.

According to Walpole, at the junction of these two main problems – employing the right dosage of manliness and rendering the immaturity of ‘*beautiful and true*’ tender hearts –, arose the most delicate and elusive subject of ‘*a boy’s friendship*’ that made boyhood emotional life ‘*very dangerous and difficult for analysis*’: it required a challenging balance between *emotional* passion and *unemotional* manliness. To Walpole, a sensible rendering of male bonding was the key to safely write within a genre where the passionate infatuations of boyhood, inherently perplexing and disconcerting, struggled to safely progress into crystal-clear manliness.

In the late 19th Century, a resurgence of the masculine ideals (Corbin, 2011) made manliness a subject many seemed fervent about. That was a time when thinkers like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Weininger indicted feminine characteristics and disapproved of cultural feminisation, which they linked to moral decay and vital weakening.

This masculinist ideology was pervasive at the time and can be found in various types of novels, be they school themed or of adventure – historical, colonial, war, westerns, picaresque, etc. Besides being centred on the young male protagonist, they also required a male authorship to attract a male audience seeking realistic psychological characters for a complicity based on the male experience. Their distinctive male monosexual flavour made them intended for the enjoyment of a predominantly, if not exclusively, male audience: ‘*...my boys, you whom I want to get for readers...*’ (Hughes, 1911, p. 16). That is why many boarding school narratives adopt a conveniently matching misogynistic tone, that of a *male-oriented novel*, because they are expected to reflect the span of life when the boy is separating from everything motherly or feminine in order to acquire his highly-valued male identity.

Ramalho Ortigão (1836-1915) was among those representing this tendency in Portugal. At the famous boarding school Colégio da Lapa in Oporto, he was the teacher of French and the lifelong friend of the much celebrated writer Eça de Queiroz (1845-1900). He travelled in Europe for years and wrote books and essays about The Netherlands, England and France, advancing his own theories on manliness adapted to Portuguese culture; like Queiroz, he was an admirer of the new educational fashions.

One of the main points Ortigão wanted to make is the need for mothers to step back from sons when the boys reach puberty, something he thought most mothers were not prepared to do. Such was the case of the Portuguese Queen Maria Pia (1847-1911) towards her son, Prince Carlos (1863-1908). In June 1883, when the Prince was aged 19, Ortigão reacted with outrage to the news he read in a newspaper: ‘*Her Majesty the Queen is willing to take at her care, following daily, with great discernment and extreme caution, the education of her*

[two] sons'. In a public letter to the Prince that he publishes in his political magazine (co-published with Queiroz) *As Farpas*, he asserts boldly: '*Such an intervention is deplorable, Your Most Serene Highness, deeply deplorable*'.²⁶

Unfolding his argument, Ortigão states that

the mission of the mother in the education of a man ends when he reaches the fourteenth year. (...) The psychoses, as well as the anatomic outbursts and the physiologic functions belonging to puberty, hold secrets that no mother has the right to access in a boy's education (...) Any mother who intervenes to restrict the legitimate intellectual curiosities of a young male offends equally his decorum and hers.²⁷

Ortigão points out that it is because of the influence of such a mother that the Prince is attending the Holy Mass too much, instead of befriending a companion and a comrade:

Because your Highness did not have until today a [male] companion and a friend, you keep virgin one of the main tools of human activity, your heart, and in it, useless and unproductive, lay buried the precious capital of your affections.²⁸

Of course, royals had their private tutors; they did not attend bourgeois boarding schools but it was the idea of preserving sons from the damaging influence of mothers that was likewise implied in the mental climate that made the monosexual boarding school with its anti-familial penchant so successful.

At the core of wide social upheavals, the reputation of the boarding school was doomed to decline when the balance swung toward families and females: against all warnings of the 19th Century masculinists, mothers started to have a say in boys' education. Day school was preferred for providing for the unprepared, immature youths who would depend on families for longer, while boarding schools were designed to cater for more readily functional and independent youth, as fathers were more likely to wish for: in Portuguese-speaking boarding school novels it is always fathers who want to board their sons precisely to liberate them from the influence of female relatives and maids.

In the typical masculinist novel the main dialogue and interaction occurs among males. Females are excluded from the deuteragonist role, usually reserved for a male companion, and they are not the target of romantic investment: often they are limited to the roles of mothers (or motherly figures) or prostitutes, both of them providers of services and care. Coherently, the male characters usually show strong abhorrence of sex and females, who '*are not even considered to be desirable sexual partners*' (Viola, 1997, p. 164); the heroes are defiant of their influence (*'the boy's inaptitude for female guidance'*: Hughes, 1911, p. 27) and they use them merely as commodities, albeit resenting them as an obstacle to their free male lives: as in Rudyard Kipling's boy hero Kim's famous formulation, '*How can a man follow the Way or the Great Game when he is eternally pestered by women?*' (Kipling, 1902, p. 420).

²⁶ - "'Sua magestade a rainha quiz especialmente tomar a seu cuidado seguir dia a dia com grande discernimento, e extremado cuidado a educação dos seus filhos". Deplorável, serenissimo senhor, profundamente deploravel, similhante intervenção!' (Ortigão, 1883, p. 62).

²⁷ - 'A missão da mãe na educação do homem termina quando este chega aos quatorze annos. (...) As psychoses, assim como as manifestações anathomicas e as funcções physiologicas, caracteristicas da puberdade, encerram segredos que nenhuma mãe tem direito de devassar na educação de um rapaz. (...) Toda a mãe que intervem fiscalmente nas legitimas curiosidades intellectuaes de um mancebo offende egualmente o pudor d'elle e o d'ella' (Ortigão, 1883, p. 63).

²⁸ - 'Vossa alteza, que ate hoje não teve ainda um companheiro e um amigo, conserva em folha um dos principaes instrumentos da actividade humana, o seu coracao, e n'elle, improdutivo e inutil, o capital precioso dos seus affectos desempregados' (Ortigão, 1883, p. 61).

In the boarding school novel by Portuguese writer José Régio (1901-1969), which was the first instalment of the *The Old House* cycle,²⁹ the type of the prostitute makes its brutal appearance unmasked, in a sordid night encounter with the young pupil in the vice quarter of the town; in the after-school times depicted in the second instalment, a variant of the prostitute's character – the lascivious woman – is presented as the unscrupulous girlfriend of prefect Senhor Bento Adalberto. Females are therefore chiefly associated, either as mothers (Ortigão) or as prostitutes (Régio), with the concept of *decadence* as synonym of feminization, one of the main fears of the time.

The voiceless adolescent

... a knowledge of that peculiar species of human beings, the boarding-school boy... (Bangs, 1895, p. 32).

It is fascinating how the subject of school life interested a wide adult readership. Perhaps one of the major assets of the adult boarding school novel lay in the ambiguity of a child's or a youth's actions and thoughts being conveyed by an adult writer to an adult readership. Walpole has crystallised this paradox:

Jeremy at Crale has been my single attempt at a school-story. The genre is not an easy one for the very simple reason that a school-story can be only truly written by a boy who is still at school (... so) we await the schoolboy of genius who will tell us what things are really like!' (Walpole, 1927).

Besides being written in a period of life already far from school days, these novels are the work of authors who have really not fitted in – due to *their* peculiarities more than to the peculiarities of a given school. The novels were possibly a masochistic return to situations and events that had shaped their personalities: in Portuguese-speaking literature, the protagonist of the boarding school novel is never the sadistic bully or the athletic type, nor the pliable, submissive young boy, but the bookish, perhaps shy, definitely intellectual and certainly conscious and rebellious character one imagines will turn into a writer. Generally, he is acutely aware of the traps that lure both sides of a power relationship, and this susceptibility is usually rooted in miscommunication with his father, the biographical root of many schoolboy novels in Portuguese.³⁰ After all, 'in school it was power, and power alone that mattered' (Lawrence, 1921, p. 356).

As remarked by Walpole, the schoolboy novel marks the (temporary) silence of the schoolboy writer himself, who needs to take years to write his own story: the precondition seems being no longer a boy, nor a pupil at school.³¹ So the only remedy to the silent boy are old boys turned into writers, even if they 'all recall the same things' (Walpole, 1927), arguably an articulate set of similar experiences giving some unity to the subgenre across cultures. If 'infancy' means 'not yet being able to speak properly' (Isidorus, 2006, p. 241),³² adolescence turns out to be 'not yet being able to write his own story'. The adolescent has had many authors writing in his name but he is denied his own version. This is ironic, since the school novel asserts the emergence of adolescence as an autonomous and valued topic.

²⁹ - Published in 5 instalments between 1945 and 1966.

³⁰ - And of a significant part of Portuguese literature as well, as highlighted by Phillip Rothwell in his *A Canon of Empty Fathers – Paternity in Portuguese Narrative* (2007).

³¹ - Argus Cirino (1984), who is among the last Portuguese speaking boarding school novel writers, stated in the prologue of his book that he actually wrote it while still at school. This must be a fictitious claim since boys of sixteen years are not expected to have the required skills to write a coherent novel.

³² - Isidorus, XI, 2, 9: '[D]ictus autem infans quia adhuc fari nescit, id est loqui non potest': A human being of the first age is called an infant (infans); it is called an infant, because it does not yet know how to speak (in-, "not"; fari, present participle fans, "speaking"), that is, it cannot talk.

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Measured Policy: Competence to teach Māori students

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Abstract

This paper explores how trends towards measurement and accountability are reflected in Māori education policy by comparing a current policy document, 'Tātaiako: cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners', against an equivalent text, 'Māori children and the teacher', from 40 years earlier. This approach rests on the belief that the philosophy of a policy text can be perceived through close attention to the language and ideas in the text. The comparison shows similarities between the overall aims and perspectives behind both documents, but whereas the older policy explained Māori under-achievement in terms of sociolinguistic differences, Tātaiako contains no discussion of Māori educational disparity, instead presenting five key words to encapsulate the concept of 'Māori potential' while suggesting the success of Māori 'as Māori' depends on 'relationships'. Tātaiako ignores the role of wider socio-historical processes, leaving teacher competence as the most 'visible' explanation of Māori under-achievement available to contemporary educational policy. In purporting to measure teacher competency, Tātaiako helps shift accountability for Māori student achievement away from national education systems and goals, and onto the shoulders of individual classroom teachers.

Keywords: Deficit thinking, Māori education policy, policy discourse analysis, restricted language code.

Introduction

Māori education is characterised by significant statistical disparity that has proved stubborn to shift, despite decades of targeted policy strategies and reform efforts. Given its importance, this 'gap' is so widely acknowledged that support for its existence from the literature seems superfluous. Most people who grow up in New Zealand are aware of this disparity, but for the last two decades and more it has been central in my life, as a parent of a Māori boy (and aunty to many other Māori children), a school teacher in English- and Māori-medium schools in Auckland and Whangarei, a contracted developer of materials for school qualifications, curriculum statements and classroom resources, and a researcher in Māori education, first at community level, and later through doctoral study and beyond.

This paper analyses a current Māori education policy text by comparing it with another policy on the same subject, from 40 years earlier. This approach rests on the belief that the philosophy of education underpinning a policy text can be perceived by paying close attention to the language and ideas present (and absent) in that text. Below I use close reading methods of critical discourse analysis to analyse and compare these two policies. The title of the current text is 'Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners' (Tātaiako). The older text is titled 'Māori children and the teacher', abbreviated below as 'MCT'. Though published four decades apart, these two policy texts have similar titles, and apparently much the same purpose: 'This handbook has been published primarily for the use of those directly concerned in teaching Māori children' (MCT, p. v). Both texts focus on teacher knowledge of the history and culture of Māori students in their classrooms, and on relationships between teachers and their Māori students, parents and communities.

Comparing these two documents highlights how Māori education policy has changed during those 40 years, reflecting the changes in Māori life in schools and in wider society. The older policy text throws into relief the characteristics and implications of Tātaiako, helping illuminate the thinking behind the contemporary approach to Māori education policy. Firstly the old text is reviewed below, noting intersections with Tātaiako. Next, the

Tātaiako policy text is described, highlighting its differences from MCT. The final section contains a discussion and conclusion.

1971: Māori children and the teacher (MCT)

MCT is based on deficit thinking about Māori in the sense of starting from the premise that Māori people are other than normal, in terms of classroom relationships between teachers and students, their parents, families and communities. ‘Deficit thinking’ is a key concept in Māori education policy, often used as code for racism. Current policy, such as Tātaiako, has an expressed aim of eliminating deficit thinking, but in the process, the full meaning of the concept, and its relevance for Māori, has been obscured. Replaying the argument of MCT provides a chance to examine and clarify this concept.

MCT must be understood in terms of the major social and policy changes of its age, when widespread Māori urbanization after the end of WWII resulted in rapid increases in the number of Māori children attending ‘Board’ or mainstream primary schools, and correspondingly fewer children in the rural ‘Māori schools’, as they were then known. Against the wishes of many Māori communities, who believed Māori schools catered better for Māori children, the Native School system was finally abolished in 1969, two years before MCT appeared. When this policy was written, an international ‘ethnic revival’ was underway, partly explained as a reaction to the horrors of extreme ethnocentrism and Nazi philosophies of Aryanism in World War II. Post-war prosperity also supported tolerance and heightened ethical sensitivity towards marginalised groups in society, renewing the reputation of Aotearoa New Zealand for having ‘the best race relations in the world’.

By 1971, official policy had abandoned the earlier Victorian science explanations of ‘natives’ as ‘less evolved/intelligent’. The following opening sentences from MCT remain respectable today, though the use of ‘he’ to stand for all teachers gives away the text’s age (also the singularity of the phrase ‘the modern Māori’):

If a teacher is to work successfully and happily with Māori children and their parents, he must know something about [Māori] heritage and appreciate its reality for the modern Māori. He needs also to know something about the history of relationships between Māori and Pākehā.

This policy text is an essay of approximately 15,000 words, ‘based on material written by Miss Myrtle Simpson, previously Senior Inspector of Primary Schools in Christchurch, and editor of the Department’s series of infant readers, *Ready to Read*’. The research Simpson undertook for writing MCT is described as ethnographic observations, interviews with teachers, focus group meetings, and literature review (p. vi). Today, MCT is still readable and erudite, though it is necessary to take account of the dated stylistic characteristics, such as those pointed out in the above quote. The Introduction includes the following politically robust statements:

The teacher who appreciates the characteristic expression of [Māori] vitality and puts it to positive use – who does not respond to differences as if they were deficiencies – begins by drawing on an inestimable resource... [The Māori new entrant] will have to adapt to the institution but the institution will have to bend towards him.

Every teacher of Māori children should be in some degree a self-effacing student of Māori history and culture (p. xi).

These lines would not be out of place in a contemporary policy, such as Tātaiako, and emphasise MCT’s stance that teachers have the power to act to bring about success in teaching Māori children. MCT argued that Māori as a population had undergone extreme, rapid cultural change over the previous century, and that teachers were responsible for providing Māori children with learning opportunities to allow them to succeed scholastically:

The teacher has a delicate task, and success depends upon winning the [Māori] child’s confidence and drawing out his particular store of experience to establish and strengthen communication.

Once [the Māori child] has experienced success, he will go to any lengths to maintain progress, but only if he feels that his progress is important to the teacher.

The ideas in these statements about the potential for success of Māori students, and the importance of the student-teacher relationship, are also remarkably similar to the central concepts of Tātaiako.

MCT argues that since Māori had undergone social and cultural transformation so rapidly, Māori children had characteristic difficulties in English-medium classrooms arising from linguistic differences between school and home - over and above problems caused by cultural difference:

It is the spiritual quality of *Māoritanga*, of the characteristic 'Māori way of life', which binds up the present with the past and future, which gives strength to the individual and his community and reconciles them with their environment. To appreciate this quality requires a self-effacement in the observer - an escape from egocentric and ethnocentric preoccupations - which will distinguish him from the merely actively curious (p. xi, original emphasis).

As these quotes show, this text admits no innate disadvantage of Māori students that cannot be overcome by good teaching. Nor does it homogenise Māori: 'Māori homes are as diverse as the homes of the rest of the community' (p. 15). Nevertheless MCT identifies a disadvantage in classrooms suffered by many Māori children when it comes to 'language requirements':

Learning at school requires thought processes which cannot be achieved by a child whose only language is a restricted code. Speakers of 'Māori English' will have increasing difficulty with their classwork unless the school is successful in teaching them a more elaborate language (p. 34).

The concepts used here of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' language codes are drawn from the work of Basil Bernstein (MCT, p. 22), who was a senior scholar in the recent field of sociology of education, described as 'one of the most inventive modern thinkers in the social sciences'. But Bernstein meant the term 'elaborate' as a verb, not an adjective, and by 'restricted' meant 'symbolic' or 'tacit' rather than 'limited' or 'inferior'. Reviewing the history of general misunderstanding of these terms, Rob Moore laments that Bernstein 'made a bad mistake in choosing those particular terms' since the widespread confusion resulted in Bernstein's 'relative marginalization' (p. 59).

Bernstein should be properly understood as using 'elaborate' in the verb sense and 'restricted' as in circumscribed... Restricted code came to be interpreted as an inferior (limited) version of elaborated code (complicated) and as a 'deficit model' of working class (or Black) [or Māori] speech. In fact, in Bernstein's argument, these two things are not simply higher and lower versions of the same thing but things radically different *in kind*.

MCT clearly mis-applied Bernstein's terms:

The language used in many Māori homes is a dialect form of English... a very restricted form of the English language.

MCT notes such a 'restricted code' is both normal and 'satisfactory for day-to-day affairs' then goes on:

It is a drawback to a child at school, however, if he is restricted to this as his sole language, limiting his vocabulary and his speech patterns. Poverty of language is not the only drawback. A restricted code limits the ability of the child to form concepts, recognise relationships, choose from alternatives, and follow logical processes. As the development of these abilities is closely involved in the process of education, any factor that prevents a child from acquiring them limits his capacity to learn at school (p. 22).

The same approach as above of 'reading past' the outdated conventions of MCT may be applied to this discussion, which uses the terms 'restricted' and 'elaborate' language codes to refer to that which today would

usually be termed lower and higher levels of ‘literate cultural capital’. The 1971 text replaced the older ‘deficit theory’ about Māori as genetically inferior with this new ‘deficit theory’ about Māori students being disadvantaged at school because of their ‘inferior’ home language experience, requiring specific teaching approaches. MCT asserts these difficulties can be overcome with good teaching, however, which is not ‘deficit theory’ as dressed-up racism, which is how the term is mostly understood today in relation to Māori education. (In passing, note the reference to ‘relationships’ in the above quote, though here the word seems to be used as Bernstein meant it, in his ideas about what kind of curriculum and pedagogy can break the inter-generational link between low socio-economic status and educational underachievement. Although MCT, like many other academic texts, incorrectly applied Bernstein’s theories, this does not in itself invalidate the argument, and its wider implications:

The way [Māori] children are reared determines their language patterns; these patterns make it difficult for them to learn at school; their failure at school prevents them from improving their social and economic position; the next generation receives the same language patterns and the difficulties persist. So far, the schools have found it difficult to intervene in this cycle (p. 23).

The first sentence specifies the role of schooling in the inter-generational cycle that maintains socioeconomic privilege and lack of privilege, and powers the increasing polarization between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in our communities. The latter sentence admits the failure by schools to uphold the meritocratic ethos at the heart of the education system of this country for most of its history.

Ethnic sociolinguistic differences are inter-related with, but not reducible to, the types of distorted thinking that inform prejudices, including judgements sometimes made by middle-class Pākehā teachers about Māori families from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as the view that Māori parents ‘don’t value’ education. Such prejudices may well be based on lack of teacher knowledge about the scale of economic difficulty faced by parents, or the inter-generational memories of childhood experience of schools as dangerous places of violence and despair. Linguistic differences, on the other hand, are due not to teacher racism or ignorance, but to a different language heritage: they go hand-in-hand with Māori identity that is different from Pākehā: ‘when [a Māori child] comes to school he enters an institution (and very likely meets a teacher) developed from a perspective different from his’. This statement is characteristically true for Māori people born before about 1960 in rural areas, for whom going to school meant entry into the English-speaking world.

A language is a system with rules of meaning and structure that together forms a body of knowledge, mastery of which is known today as ‘literacy’. MCT based its advice for teachers on the well-established fact that Māori children had different literacy knowledge compared with what was then considered ‘normal’ in primary classrooms. From a purely linguistic perspective, native speakers of Māori who learned English at school were not linguistically disadvantaged, since all languages are considered linguistically equal. But native Māori speakers were clearly educationally disadvantaged in a monocultural English-only school system, and hence left at a permanent socio-economic disadvantage. Wary of passing on the disadvantage they had suffered, such native speakers often chose to speak only in their second language (i.e. English) to their children, thereby feeding the ‘cycle’ of disadvantage described in the above quote, which continues to characterise Māori education at a statistical level.

This 40-year-old policy thus explicates the vital link between literacy education and Māori education policy. The nature of Māori linguistic history still impacts at a statistical level on today’s Māori school entrants, as pointed out in recent research:

It is a fact, not a theory, that Māori children and children from low-income backgrounds typically begin school with considerably lower levels of literate cultural capital than middle-class children. (Tunmer & Prochnow, 2009, p. 182)

It is time to fast-forward four decades, to examine how these issues are reflected in contemporary policy for Māori education.

2011: Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners

Tātaiako comes under the umbrella of the Māori education strategy, *Ka Hikitia* (see www.minedu.govt.nz/kahikitia), named on the inside front cover of the booklet, with the key policy message, ‘Māori achieving education success as Māori’. This stirring but opaque phrase is central to the ‘Māori potential’ policy approach that seeks to overcome deficit theory. But deficit theory is not the same as ‘negativity’, and to delete from policy all negative references to Māori education has consequences, which are not always in the interests of Māori students. Not only does this misguided attempt to eliminate ‘deficit theory’ cause problems, but a policy message as open to interpretation as ‘Māori achieving educational success as Māori’ introduces problems of its own.

Tātaiako is much briefer than MCT, totalling 19 pages, with the front cover counted as the first two of those. The Foreword on page 3 and the introduction on page 4 contain the only prose text, with the remainder consisting mostly of lists of bullet points. The Tātaiako Foreword is by Hon. Dr. Pita Sharples, who is a prominent Māori educationalist, one of the founders of Kura Kaupapa Māori, and more recently a Māori political leader (founding co-Leader of the Māori Party, which forms part of the current National-led coalition Government), currently serving as Minister of Māori Affairs. In this Foreword, Sharples acknowledges the history of Māori educational disadvantage:

For too many generations, a significant proportion of Māori learners have not achieved well; have left school young, without worthwhile qualifications, and without any real options for work... we must make the education system work better for Māori.

The meaning and intent of this statement is clear. But the next sentence signals a change of policy direction:

We are shifting the emphasis away from Māori students being responsible for under-achieving in our compulsory education programmes, to look at how education can be delivered in the context of the vibrant contemporary Māori values and norms, reflecting the cultural milieu in which Māori students live (p. 3).

A policy’s worth is not erased by a poorly-chosen word or two, but the intriguing phrase ‘vibrant contemporary Māori values and norms’ lacks clarity, and warrants further explanation. Furthermore, suggesting Māori students are not responsible for their own achievement is dubious, and at odds with the central messages of *Ka Hikitia*. Tātaiako contains no further references to negative educational statistics or to the existence of disparity in Māori school achievement, but the resulting silence is so resounding, in the sense of its distance from the everyday reality of Māori educational experience, that it becomes the proverbial ‘elephant in the room’. The effect of this amnesia is discussed below. Reading Tātaiako entails reading many variations of the same few statements, all echoing the theme of ‘teachers are responsible for the educational outcomes of Māori learners’, slightly rephrased and refocused each time. The brevity, sparseness, generality and repetitiousness of the Tātaiako text sits in strong contrast to the detailed exposition of ideas, coherent argument and robust advice to teachers, contained in MCT.

The Tātaiako policy is based on five ‘competencies’ to be used for the purpose of assessing the cultural competence of teachers who teach Māori learners. Each competency begins with a Māori word, and these five key Māori words are presented in a full-page circular graphic, surrounding the central message, ‘Māori learners achieving education success as Māori’. The following list gives the meaning of each word/competency as shown on this graphic, followed in brackets by the alternate definitions given on the facing page:

- **Ako** – practice in the classroom and beyond (taking responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners).
- **Manaakitanga** – values-integrity, trust, sincerity, equity (showing integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture).

- **Tangata Whenuatanga** – place-based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge (affirming Māori learners as Māori. Providing contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed).
- **Wānanga** – communication, problem-solving, innovation (participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners' achievement).
- **Whanaungatanga** – relationships (students, school-wide, community) with high expectations (actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, iwi and the Māori community).

The same schematic appears again towards the end of the booklet, with each of the five 'competencies' matched to one or more of the New Zealand Teacher Council Graduating Teacher Standards for provisionally registered teachers, and Registered Teacher Criteria for fully registered teachers (see www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz). Though Tātaiako states it is 'designed for teachers... [and] will support your work' (p. 4), it contains no explanation of how to use the competencies, simply referring the reader to guidance for schools and early childhood centres available on the Teachers Council website. The policy comprises a series of lists of bullet points relating to the five key words, describing ways teachers might be expected to demonstrate competence to teach Māori students:

The behavioural indicators are not exhaustive and can be developed further by schools/ECE [early childhood education] services together with iwi to include expectations relevant to the local context (Tātaiako, p. 4).

The lists of 'behavioural indicators' are arranged in four columns, corresponding to stages in a teaching career: 'Teachers will need to ensure they have the competencies of all stages up to their current level' (p. 4). The four 'stages' – entry to initial teacher education, graduating teacher, registered teacher, and leader – imply a progression by which increasing levels of competence might be assessed. But the competencies (see above list) are based on values and awareness more than identified knowledge or skills, so are unsuited to this 'checklist' approach; and the claim to define progressions of measurable indicators is tenuous at best. Tātaiako declares itself to be 'an important resource for teachers, boards of trustees, educational leaders, and providers' even though 'the competencies are not formal standards or criteria' (p. 4). But the claim to be a resource *for* teachers sits at odds with being an assessment *of* teachers, especially given the brevity and generic language of the text.

The five key words in Tātaiako originate from pre-European Māori language, each one immensely rich in cultural meaning and symbolic power. No doubt starting off with a set of culturally-significant terms from traditional Māori language is done in order better to align with the 'success as Māori' part of the key message. To base national education policy on Māori traditional terms is innovative, and could be interpreted as respecting and incorporating Māori language, knowledge and culture. But the result is that these five words have been cut from their cultural, linguistic and discursive roots, and have in the text of Tātaiako become cultural caricatures. Each of the five words has been patched onto phrases and values couched in the institutional language of schooling. Knowledge of Māori language and culture makes apparent the extent to which the Tātaiako definitions distort the traditional meanings of these five key terms.

Another innovative feature of Tātaiako as a policy is its inclusion of the New Zealand Teachers Council registration criteria, which apply to individual teachers, within Māori education policy. As noted above, Māori education has been a longstanding challenge for schooling in this country, heretofore seen as a national responsibility. On one hand, the Tātaiako descriptors of practice for a competent teacher of Māori learners are vaguer and less stringent than the requirements laid out 40 years earlier in MCT. On the other hand, by including the official registration criteria, Tātaiako shifts responsibility away from the Ministry, and towards classroom teachers being individually accountable for the achievement of the Māori students they teach.

What are the effects of these features of Tātaiako, combined with the above-mentioned amnesia about sociolinguistic history and context? It appears that in a misguided quest to eliminate 'deficit theory', all

‘negative facts’ concerning Māori education have been suppressed in Tātaiako. William Tunmer and Jane Prochnow point out this same confusion in their chapter on the links between literacy policy and Māori education policy (cited on page 46 above). The resulting amnesia about its history and social context presents Māori education as if free-floating, with no obvious explanation left available but that of teacher competence. Tātaiako casts the ‘potential’ of Māori learners in the hold-all concept of ‘relationships’, using these generalised, unexplained words in ways that obscure meaning and allow for multiple interpretations.

The (over-)emphasis on individual teacher responsibility for ameliorating the longstanding Māori disparity rests largely on the meta-analysis by John Hattie, which found that teacher competence had the largest effect on student achievement, and has been used to resource the policy mantra of ‘effective teaching’ across education, not only in Tātaiako and Ka Hikitia. Since Hattie’s study eliminated non-school factors, however, it is impossible for teacher competence alone to eliminate Māori educational disparity. (This is not to say that teacher competence needs no improvement, nor that improved teacher competence would not make a statistically significant difference to Māori learner outcomes.)

As described above, Tātaiako renders culturally significant items as ‘cultural competencies’ that ‘effective teachers’ ought to demonstrate in teaching Māori learners. It is claimed that in so doing, teachers will unlock ‘success as Māori’ for the Māori students they teach. Tātaiako reiterates some obvious concepts and attitudes outlined in MCT, which amount to affirming that Māori culture and people are of equal value to any others: ideas that ‘go without saying’ in contemporary social science. Tātaiako represents a starting point, but no more, for a teacher who wishes to teach Māori students more successfully. So far the competencies that make up the Tātaiako policy are ‘not formal’ (Tātaiako, p.4), but they could possibly be formalised at some future date. The intent of Tātaiako matches that of MCT: helping teachers improve their classroom practice with Māori students. Both texts have the same starting point, the old text advising that ‘every teacher of Māori children should be in some degree a self-effacing student of Māori history and culture’ (p. xi). Tātaiako asks: ‘How much do the teachers know of their students’ history, tikanga and worldview?’. But whereas the old policy explicitly linked this ‘self-effacing observer’ approach to a teacher’s classroom literacy practice, in Tātaiako the argument stalls at ‘relationships’, a word repeated 22 times in the brief text, while the word ‘literacy’ does not appear at all.

Conclusion

There is always a gap between the intended aims of a policy text, and how it becomes implemented over time. It is easy to see how the ‘deficit’ language of MCT may have impeded its acceptance, and hence its effectiveness to guide teacher literacy practice. At a national level, the MCT advice to focus on teacher-directed code-focused literacy instruction for Māori school entrants, in order to overcome their characteristic lack of literate cultural capital, was not followed. Whole-language approaches, which work well for new entrants with high literate cultural capital, but not for those with limited literate cultural capital, have dominated national policy for ‘effective literacy practice’ for well over 10 years now. Equity has been reduced to equality, meaning everyone gets what works for the children of the elite. The introduction of National Standards has renewed emphasis on these approaches.

There is a disconnection between literacy and Māori education policy, highlighted by this comparison. Whole-language literacy pedagogy, which does not address the literate cultural capital disadvantages suffered by low socio-economic, Māori and Pacific children on entry to school, has been enforced in all primary classrooms, while in Māori education policy, teachers have increasingly come to be held personally responsible for statistical disparities in educational outcomes for Māori learners. Tātaiako claims to provide a tool to ‘measure’ the cultural competence of teachers, but in fact does little other than provide vague support for the fallacious policy notion that classroom teachers, not wider social and historical processes, are responsible for ongoing poor educational outcomes for Māori students. As long as this disconnection between policies remains in place, aided by the confusion between ‘deficit theory’ and ‘negative facts’, little improvement for Māori outcomes can be expected.

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Measurement, Metaphor, and Marks on the Page

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Abstract:

This paper takes 'measurement' as a will to determine or fix space and time, which allows for a comparison of ontological models of space and time from Western and Māori traditions. The spirit of 'measurement' is concomitantly one of fixing meaning, which is suggested as the essence of the growth of the scientific genre of language that has taken place alongside the growth of science itself, since the European Enlightenment. The Periodic Table is an exemplar of the ideals of the deterministic philosophy of measurement, which underpins both modern English and the philosophy of science. The paper explores how such a philosophy is embedded within modern English, including the language of education, by comparing characteristics of English and Māori language, especially in relation to ideas of measurement, precision, space and time.

Keywords: language of science, language relativity, left-brain/right-brain thinking

Introduction: Mendeleev's dream and the language of science

I saw in a dream a table where all the elements fell into place as required. Awakening, I immediately wrote it down on a piece of paper - Dmitri Mendeleev, 17 February 1869.

One of my favourite stories from science is that of Mendeleev, working through a wintry night in rural Russia. His dream-inspired Periodic Table would become the central concept marking the coming of age of chemistry as a discipline - joining Newton's mechanics for physics, and Darwin's evolution for biology. Mendeleev's original insight left gaps in his table for elements that had not yet been discovered. Mendeleev's 'dream' is an example of literacy of the highest order - an act of pattern-seeking with a complex and incomplete array of words and numerals - that allowed him to 'read' the very blueprint of matter, inaugurating the modern understanding of atomic structure. Mendeleev's genius demonstrates the closely intertwined nature of literacy and science, a connection obscured by recent educational trends to separate 'literacy' from 'language' in the notion of 'literatecies'. The resulting Periodic Table is an exemplar of the manifestation in language and science discourse of what might be termed the 'deterministic philosophy of measurement'. This term reflects the contemporary concept of 'measurement', which ultimately comes down to an exact determination of some aspect of material reality, or space and time, which can be numerically or categorically represented. Here the words 'space and time' (or space-time) represent the physical world in which we live.

Mendeleev's dream is part of the larger story of the development of the language of science, which is a key aspect of the overall development of modern science to its position today as the most powerful form of knowledge ever known to humanity, and a global network of complex social and technological systems and structures. According to Foucault's notion of discourse, the real-world power of science lends symbolic power to the word 'science', which thus becomes a potent ideological item of significant political interest. This symbolic power is somewhat unrelated to science itself - it takes on a life of its own, referred to as 'discursive power', which explains why the word 'science' is so widely used in an honorific sense.

Over time, the inter-related development of science and modernity in post-Enlightenment Europe embedded this deterministic philosophy of measurement within language, especially English, which, for historically-contingent reasons, has become globally dominant both as a world language and as a language of science. The

language of science has been influential in all spheres including the development of systematic approaches to education, and of sub-disciplines including curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These recent fields are emerging at a time when educational discourses are dominated by a cluster of related concepts including evidence, standards, outcomes and accountability. These concepts share this underlying deterministic notion of 'measurement' as a fixing or specifying of some aspect of the phenomenon in question. The facile assumption that standardised testing is an objective 'scientific' way to 'measure' education reflects the influence of neo-liberalism on education policy. Thirty years of neo-liberal re-shaping of national public policy and institutions has entrenched a culture of managerialism and technocratic approaches towards quality assurance, among other basic functions, in education systems. Given the totalizing nature of this neoliberal discourse, non-Western traditions such as Māori offer alternative visions and philosophies of what education, literacy, quality and equity might entail.

Binary models of thought

Debate continues about what is uniquely 'Māori' about 'Māori knowledge' as understood within the contemporary education sector, especially in Māori-medium education. A bipolar debate concerning 'Māori science', and related questions, features in the literatures on which educational research draws for its base of philosophy and theory. For example, the classical Anthropological debate about 'rationality' posited science against indigenous knowledge, in efforts to clarify what science actually is, and how it works. Secondly, the ongoing 'science wars' centre on the 'two cultures' in the academy, represented by the question of the status of social science, including education, as science. Thirdly, in work that was influential to educational thought of recent times, Jerome Bruner posited two basic modes of thought: 'narrative' and 'logico-scientific'. Whether the split is made by discipline, culture, gender, politics, or any one of a number of other defining criteria, there are clearly two basic modes of thinking.

The problem with most such models of thinking is the tendency to assign logic to one side of the binary, thereby leaving it out of the other. Anthropology showed that logical coherence is characteristic of all cultural knowledge bases, Western and indigenous alike. Yet, although Eurocentrism has been officially expelled from the academy, the association of science with modern Western culture as 'proof' that Euro-Americans are more 'advanced' and 'intelligent' than 'primitive races' remains a powerful subterranean message in social discourse, hence retaining influence even within academic circles. It makes little sense to assign logic to 'scientific' thought since narrative power also depends upon logical coherence. It is important, however, to uncouple logic from naturalism, to which science, but not narrative, is committed.

The two modes of thought are perhaps better known today as 'left-brain' and 'right-brain' thinking. Given its universal applicability as part of the biological heritage of humans, the left-brain/right-brain model of thinking is more useful than Bruner's in domains such as science education, where Bruner's influence, one step away from Eurocentric, is still evident in the dominant pedagogical metaphor that 'science is a special way of thinking'. Cognitive science and brain medicine have established that left-brain thinking is analytical in nature, while right-brain thinking is holistic (in most healthy human brains). These two modes of thought are reflected in the two basic modes of language that can be termed 'measurement' and 'metaphor'. This view understands logic as inherent both modes of thinking, and therefore in both modes of language. Not involving logic in the criteria by which to categorize thought eases the longstanding debates about rationality, including multicultural science education research, epistemological diversity and incommensurability.

The link between knowledge, culture and language has been known since the 1930s as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Though best known for his work on Hopi and other indigenous American languages, Benjamin Whorf was a chemist by training. His interest in what he called 'configurative linguistics' was fuelled by his work as an industrial insurance assessor, finding that the meanings understood by words such as 'empty' sometimes explained why workplace accidents occurred. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was later sub-divided into 'weak' and 'strong' versions (also called W1 and W2, respectively) by Joshua Fishman. Strong Sapir-Whorf is the idea that language determines thought, i.e., language determinism, a concept that has been thoroughly investigated and rejected, along with the emergence of the notion of a 'universal grammar'. So-called 'weak Sapir-Whorf' (or W1) is the idea that language and knowledge are inter-related and influence each other, termed

‘language relativity’. Whorf’s idea of language relativity was a forerunner of the concept of ‘world-view’, and his approach to languages and cultures has been recognised as an early form of poststructuralism.

Scientific English is a form of language that reflects the development of the modernist, deterministic philosophy of science. Research into the language of science has identified certain ‘syndromes’ of characteristics in scientific English, in particular the combination of a syntactical feature called ‘grammatical metaphor’ along with a much higher lexical density than everyday language, measured by the number of lexical words per sentence. These syndromes developed and became characteristic of scientific English in the era following the switch from Latin to English (and other European languages, but for simplicity this discussion refers only to English) as language medium of science, which took place in the post-Enlightenment period. The purpose of these characteristics of scientific English was to allow for the delineation of a step-by-step argument or chain of reasoning.

As developments in technology continue to enable measurement to become more and more precise, so the lexicon of science expands correspondingly. More significantly, the syntactical change to allow the step-by-step reasoning of science discourse occurred quickly in the Enlightenment period, once English became a language of science. Both specialised vocabulary and step-by-step chains of argumentation reflect the basic ‘measurement’ mode of the scientific genre of English. In science language, word and sentence meanings are precise and stable, adhering to the universalist commitment that time and space are always and everywhere the same, with only one meaning being possible. The language of chemistry demonstrates this powerful precision, whereby internationally-agreed rules of nomenclature provide unique names for each of the many thousands of organic chemical substances, even down to unique names for the so-called left- and right-handed pair of substances that differ only in their effect on polarised light, a difference produced by changing the *order* of the four bonds from a key carbon atom in the molecular structure to four different chemical species.

Science discourse requires that words and sentences have unambiguous meanings. Thus, though rich, messy stories from the history of science are preserved within science words, such as the names of the elements, in operation science language is profoundly non-metaphorical: nouns, verbs and adjectives have stable, precisely-defined meanings; and statements are intended to be understood literally, not metaphorically. Scientific English sacrifices richness of meaning in favour of precision: words and statements have single-layered meanings (which is not to be confused with the idea of simple vs. complex meanings).

Te reo Māori: favouring right-brain thinking?

Speakers of Māori will immediately recognise that the above language descriptions are foreign if not antithetical to the workings of te reo Māori. In contrast to scientific English, te reo Māori can be characterised as a language in which even very small words carry many levels and nuances of meaning, within an overall worldview built from the large tropes and metaphors of traditional Māori culture. The term ‘worldview’ is understood as a personal-cultural ontological, epistemological and ethical paradigm. Using in-depth investigations of both traditions and language features, Anne Salmond characterised the traditional Māori worldview as structured by a series of large interlocking bipolar opposites at many levels, from psychological to cosmic.

Not only are Māori words and phrases multi-levelled in meaning, but a great deal of the meaning of Māori words and statements rests in exactly *how* they are said by the speaker. Thus oratory is far more important in Māori culture than in modern Western culture. Sacrificing precision for richness of meaning is associated with this performativity aspect of language in te reo Māori, which is absent from modern scientific English. The need to modernise te reo Māori for its survival has led to many arbitrary decisions in recent decades, ‘fixing’ the meaning of certain traditional Māori words by aligning them to English words, in ways that reflect dominant contemporary understandings, sometimes obscuring the original richness of imprecision. One way this ‘richness of imprecision’ works is when a Māori word takes two meanings seen in English as opposites, such as the example commonly cited in education: the word ‘ako’ can mean either ‘to teach’ and ‘to learn’. However the ‘mainstream’ version of this idea is that ako means both at once, when in reality the context (including non-linguistic features such as performativity) determined which meaning was being invoked in a speech act. These differences and richness in meaning are not conveyed by the written words alone.

Perhaps traditional Māori language reflects a culture operating as much or more by metaphorical right-brain thinking as the precise analytical left-brain mode. Modern English is influenced by the scientific genre, reflecting the dominance and leadership of analytical left-brain thinking, using precise, stable, literal meanings, which can be represented in written form without loss of content. In traditional Māori language, however, lexical words play a far lesser role in carrying meaning, which has more to do with how lexical words are arranged along with many other small words. Over and above the words themselves, much of the meaning of a Māori utterance rests in the pacing and emphasis each word is given, along with facial expression, gesture, and the use of other language devices, such as repetition, or extra non-lexical words added in for emphasis.

It is widely accepted that Western and Indigenous worldviews tend to be characterised by opposing binaries, but this does not make these ways of thinking mutually exclusive, in the sense of unable to be understood by someone brought up within the other culture or way of thinking. Worldview is a more up-to-date expression of the idea expressed as weak Sapir-Whorf, W1 or language relativity. Drawing these links helps explain why bilingualism, including Kaupapa Māori education, draws fire from ‘social realists’ such as Elizabeth Rata. Bilingualism is necessarily committed to some degree of philosophical relativism, but Rata understands the postcolonial Māori *critique* of universalism as *denial* of universalism.

From the perspective of the modern scientific worldview, Māori knowledge has no explanatory power about the natural world, and therefore no value. The scientific view is that Māori knowledge does exist in some scientific domains such as astronomy and taxonomy, arising from ‘detailed observations’ of nature, but that this knowledge is a mere shadow of modern science knowledge in those areas. Science considers Māori knowledge to be underpinned not by working models of reality, but by ‘stories’. The question of whether or not Māori knowledge is science (or a science, or anti-science) is really a question about how the word ‘science’ is being understood – Māori knowledge is merely the ‘provocateur’ in this version or iteration of the old debate over what counts as science. The dramatic answer is to say that Māori knowledge *is* a science, a claim that is usually justified by pointing out all the ‘true’ information that traditional Māori knowledge includes about the natural world. Rebuttals invariably focus on the obvious flaws in this claim. Following the above argument, however, the value of Māori knowledge (assuming there is such a thing) lies in it being different from science.

Might the concept of worldview, and the claims about epistemological diversity, be explainable in terms of (among other things) relative balance between these two modes of thinking, left-brain and right-brain thinking, which could, for this discussion, be re-labelled ‘measurement vs. metaphor thinking’? This idea follows Sydney Lamb, who maps ‘left-brain’ and ‘right-brain’ thinking to ‘philosophical differences’ he terms ‘splitter-thinking’ (associated with absolutism, universalism and reductionism) and ‘lumper-thinking’ (associated with relativism and holism), respectively. One of the key concepts of Māori knowledge, namely ‘whakapapa’, may be used to explore this distinction. The dictionary translation of this important Māori word is ‘genealogy’ or ‘family tree’, but whakapapa is far more than this: it is a central trope in Māori cosmology, thought and knowledge, termed a ‘cognitive gestalt’; a ‘way of thinking’ (p.59), a value and a concept, ‘both a noun and a verb’. Māori knowledge and worldview are considered as being intrinsic within te reo Māori, a position that accepts language relativity, while paying due regard to the limitations of relativism. Anne Salmond identified this approach, taking Māori language as the key to understanding Māori worldview and Māori knowledge, as key in semantic anthropology: it is also aligned with Kaupapa Māori research principles, and with the ‘diffraction methodology’ approach of reading two traditions ‘through’ each other, in the sense of seeking explanations that ‘work’ from both a Māori and a scientific perspective.

Amongst its other uses, the whakapapa concept is also a record of the passage of time, based on the imprecise unit of a generation. In a society organised along communal kinship lines, knowledge of whakapapa was of both social and economic value. Whakapapa is usually portrayed diagrammatically using ‘descending vertical lines’, but Salmond’s research showed that in traditional Māori thought, whakapapa was graphically represented in carvings ‘as a double spiral marked by chevrons to show successive epochs’. If whakapapa measured time, the spiral representation of whakapapa reflects a Māori notion of time as cyclic, rather than the Western concept of linear time. A cyclic concept of time (such as the Mayan wheel of time) is a well-established

characteristic that distinguishes indigenous from Western (or ancient from modern) thought. In the case of Māori notions of space-time, the cosmological dualities are like the spokes of time's wheel.

Like whakapapa, the Periodic Table is also conventionally represented in linear form, comprising straight lines dividing the array of elements into rows and columns. Yet prior to Mendeleev's dream, in 1862 the French geologist Alexandre-Émile Béguyer de Chancourtois proposed the Telluric Helix model in which the elements were arranged in a continuous spiral around a cylinder. Spiral representations of the Periodic Table abound, though not in science education. These two pairs of linear/spiral forms are possible examples of left-brain/right-brain representations. They form a suggestive link with 'Kaplan's Contrastive Rhetoric Doodles', a diagram first published in 1966 by Robert Kaplan that was 'intended to demonstrate a variety of paragraph movements that exist in writing in different languages' in a paper for teachers, titled 'Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education'. The Doodles diagram showed the patterns of English as a straight line, Oriental as a spiral. The word 'rhetoric' in the diagram's title seems to mean something very like what would today be termed 'discourse'.

Conclusion

Thinking about recording the Periodic Table, or whakapapa, in a spiral, rather than linear form, is like a heuristic thought experiment for better understanding the difference between left- and right-brain ways of structurally conceptualizing complex arrays of information. We can 'understand' how either representational form works; but on the other hand, not many of us would independently think of transforming the conventional form of the Periodic Table, or common written forms of whakapapa, into a spiral-form representation. This paper has attempted to advance the philosophical argument presented in , where the relevance of Sapir-Whorf and Kaplan's Doodles to the 'Māori science' debate was suggested in terms of epistemological diversity at the level of discourse.

Cognitively speaking, the straight line and the spiral form another cosmological duality, but one that is overcome by changing perspective – zoom in up close on one part of the spiral and you will see a straight line. Lamb (2004) is interested in mapping the working of each hemisphere of the brain to the various language functions taken care of by each side. This paper applies Lamb's idea to the question of how left- and right-brain modes of thinking may work together, or in opposition, in representations of science – both in the characteristics of scientific English, and in 'school science' (i.e. curriculum representations of the nature of science). The development of scientific English in the period of the European Enlightenment is likely to have reflected an increased relative importance of left-brain or 'measurement' thinking, taking advantage of burgeoning new technologies to observe nature to previously unimaginable levels of detail and precision, and a concomitant relative decrease in language performativity and other language functions aligned more closely with right-brain or 'metaphor' thinking.

In practice, of course, working science is highly diverse and multilingual; it relies on reciprocal relationships between metaphor and measurement, and on the engagement of all available cognitive resources. Scientific thinking cannot therefore be equated with left-brain thinking, but this paper suggests that science discourse, especially as presented in the school curriculum, may reflect a different relative balance, with more emphasis on left-brain and less on right-brain thinking, by comparison with the indigenous discourse of a non-Western culture such as Māori. It seems reasonable to suggest that this difference may contribute to the documented alienating effect of secondary science education on Māori and other indigenous students, to an even greater extent than students in general. In school science education and beyond, the characteristics of left-brain thinking (as described by Lamb, above) have invalidly come to be associated with the nature of science, in a way that supports forms of scientism (i.e. ideological distortions of science) including the claims made by neoliberal economics to include 'scientific' approaches to social policy. The imbalance between 'measurement' and 'metaphor' modes of thinking and language seems characteristic of neoliberal discourse – lots of information but no wisdom, a checklist approach that misses the 'bigger picture'.

The discourses, worldviews and epistemologies associated with indigenous cultural cosmologies, and the languages in which they are expressed, may differ most importantly from those of modern Western science in

terms of this balance between the two great psychological modes of operation. This model supports the assertion of a coherent form of epistemological difference between 'Māori knowledge' and (say) traditional curricular knowledge, while also clearly showing continuity between the two, and a way of explaining how the differences are not captured in language by single words, but at the level of the paragraph, central metaphor or discourse. The ideas brought together in this paper suggest new approaches to future investigations into the role of language in multicultural education, and interculturalism more widely.

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The University of Wisdom – Exploring the role of wisdom for secondary and tertiary education

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Abstract

We live in an age of measurement and accountability. Emphasis is given to supposedly easily assessable skills, such as reading, writing and maths. In such an environment some humanistic aspects of education seem to get lost in the wider scheme of politics, policies and assessments. Among these are concepts such as Bildung, spirituality and wisdom. This article will explore the notion of wisdom in relation to other terms of educational relevance, such as Bildung, knowledge, character, spirituality and practical wisdom. Further, Eastern and Western philosophical approaches to the concept of wisdom will be taken into account in an attempt to comprehensively explore its meaning and dimensions. In this context, philosophers like Lauxmann (2004), Schwartz & Sharpe (2010), de Mello (1992), Maxwell (2012), Lau (2009), Tucker (2003), Laozi (n.d./1993) and others will be drawn on. The role of wisdom in and for education will be discussed in light of a review of possible aims and ends in education. The practical focus of this discussion will be placed mainly on secondary and tertiary educational settings.

Introduction

This article has been inspired, among others, by a text from Frieder Lauxmann called *Die Universität des Nichtwissens* [The university of non-knowing]¹, which has been published in Lauxmann's (2004) book *Die Philosophie der Weisheit* [The philosophy of wisdom]. Among others, Lauxmann argues for a reevaluation of the emphasis on scientific/disciplinary knowledge in today's (western) societies and education systems. The relevance of wisdom for educationists is its great potential, more so than plain knowledge, to lead to a good and beautiful life. The development of an art of living, which might lead to a good and beautiful life, however, has been argued for to be a fundamental aim of education (Teschers, 2013).

In the course of this article, I will explore the relations between wisdom and other notions of educational relevance, such as knowledge, Bildung, character formation, practical wisdom and spirituality. The intention is to give the notion of wisdom a more tangible appearance and to propose a possible place for it within schools and universities. The claim of wisdom being an important aim of education in itself is hardly new: *philosophia* – the love of wisdom – has been highly valued by the ancient Greeks, Romans and other civilisations already. However, the connection between philosophy and wisdom as well as its value for a good and well lived life seems to have been forgotten – at least where school curricula and outcomes are concerned (Lauxmann, 2004).

John Ozolins (2012) explores the rise and fall of general education since the 19th century and traces the causes for the neglect of wisdom in education today to economical, political and ideological changes beginning in the mid 1970s. This period could be identified as the turn from the Keynesian welfare state to neo-liberal ideas of individual freedom and minimal state interference, which led to a strong economical influence on educational policy and curricula. However, Ozolins argues, with reference to Codd (1999), that educational models based on economic agenda are bound to fail, as they neglect the social aspect and behaviour of human beings. Ozolins (2012) continues that human beings cannot be reduced to a mere commodity for economy – a human resource – and that a reduction of educational aims to prepare for economy and industry is ‘simplistic and ignores the complexity of human needs and aspiration’ (Ozolins, p. 2). Drawing on the examples of America and Australia, Ozolins concludes that traditional educational values, such as enlightenment or personal growth, are threatened by economic pressures and aims of productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Lauxmann (2004), as mentioned above, explored the idea of wisdom as well and came to similar conclusions about how economic and modern beliefs have devalued the idea of wisdom and corrupted modern education systems. His main position is that a thriving modern society needs both *a flourishing economy and people who are able to think beyond* (p. 17). He argues that this conflicting situation is needed for a society not only to develop, but also to survive at all. A single-minded focus on economy, as is increasingly the case today, will lead to the desolation of society.

Lauxmann interprets wisdom as ‘knowledge without knowledge’ (p. 24). According to Lauxmann, ‘wisdom manifests in the not provable, not pre-formed and often not comprehensible truth’ (ibid.), which cannot be found in a textbook or the Internet, but which is of a very different nature. Wisdom cannot be taught, but a teacher can be wise and teach in this manner. Lauxmann proclaims that one cannot possess wisdom, but wisdom ‘happens, it shows itself, it takes place’ (ibid). His main critique of modern schooling and education systems is the increased focus on scientific and facts knowledge and a lack of space and time for leisure, contemplation and *falling in love with the world*, which is, according to Lauxmann (2004, pp. 25-29), the only way to find wisdom. This is also the reason for wisdom being rarely popular in current school settings: it is not measurable or assessable, and it is not easy to come by. However, wisdom has a connection to truth, which is of a very different quality than anything knowledge can provide: wisdom brings forth the good for the one who is wise and for his or her surroundings. Therefore, striving for wisdom, in school as well as outside of formalised learning situations, is important and rewarding not only for individuals, but also for society as a whole.

If current proclaimed values of a democratic society, active citizenship and personal autonomy are more than empty phrases, more is needed than an economical driven curriculum. A pursuit of wisdom could be one answer to fill this gap.

For the purpose of this article, wisdom will be presented as part of a continuum, which spans from disciplinary knowledge, life-knowledge, *Bildung*, practical wisdom, to wisdom itself and to spirituality. As the German concept of *Bildung* encompasses the aspects of knowledge, self-formation and practical wisdom, the next section will discuss this concept in more detail to point out the distinctions to wisdom, as it will be discussed here, and also provide some examples how it can be supported in school settings.

Bildung

According to Liebau (1999), Bildung is one of the three central concepts of education: Erziehung [upbringing], Bildung [self-cultivation], Entfaltung [flourishing]. Bildung has its origin in the German Idealism: in contrast to the notion of achievement, it is ‘the life-long labour on the perfection of one’s own person [that] lies at the heart of the classical concept of Bildung’ (Liebau, 1999, p. 28). It is the development and cultivation of one’s own self that takes precedence, as it is believed that through the perfection of individuals the development and perfection of humankind in total will come to pass. This relation, according to Liebau, has two consequences: the healthy self-interest of the individual to further one’s own Bildung is to be encouraged as it is in the best interest of society, and each individual has a responsibility to pursue Bildung for the same reason (pp. 28-33).

The concept of *Bildung*, as it is understood today, has been strongly influenced by Wilhelm von Humboldt at the end of the 18th century, who connected scientific and humanistic approaches to conceiving the world with the notion of aesthetics. Therefore, *Bildung* is closely linked with art, music and theatre, but it also refers to the beauty from within: ‘this one has Bildung, who orients oneself to the standard of aesthetic and moral perfection, and who strives to shape one’s own self accordingly’ (Liebau, 1999, p. 29). In the end, it is the development and perfection of humankind that is of concern to the German Idealists, and, therefore, they take the economy and governments to be of lesser importance and merely as supportive institutions that are necessary to allow citizens to pursue *Bildung* and their own perfection. *Bildung* is also one of the key aspects of Schmid’s (2000) concept of the art of living, and, according to Schmid, necessary for living a good and beautiful life as he understands itⁱⁱ.

As *Bildung* is a life-long process, the role of schooling to support *Bildung* is to provide the foundation for each individual to be able to engage in a continuous process of self-*bildung*. Instead of focusing on facts or disciplinary knowledge, learning how to learn needs to be emphasised, not to acquire advanced technical skills and qualifications, but to enable life-long humanistic learning. It also needs to be pointed out that this level of learning needs to be accessible and achievable for all individuals as, despite ‘all the inequality in society, it is

the equality of humans as human beings that forms the basis for the concept of public *Bildung*' (Liebau, 1999, p. 31).

There are three aspects to *Bildung*: knowledge, self-formation and practical wisdom. To impart knowledge, especially disciplinary knowledge, is a genuine task of schooling. However, general knowledge about life and the world seems to be considered of less importance of late, as they are seldom assessed in national standard exams nor are part of international OECD comparative tests, such as PISAⁱⁱⁱ. Nevertheless, general knowledge is important not only to live a good life, but also to be successful in life.

Rarely taken into account, partly due to its difficult and non-assessable nature, is what Schmid (2000, pp. 297-303) calls *life-knowledge*: it is not knowledge about life, but applied knowledge that is gained through hermeneutics *from life for life*. It is practical knowledge gained through experience, perceptions, sensations and hermeneutically processed disciplinary knowledge, among others, and it is applicable to real life situations. This aspect distinguishes life-knowledge from more theoretical scientific or facts knowledge, which is predominant in most curricula. Life-knowledge is mostly dependent on experiences, either through educational games and settings, as can be found in outdoor, adventure and experience education^{iv}, or through real life experiences by visiting as many different environments as possible. This might include, but is not limited to, visiting theatres, zoos, planetaria, sea-life aquariums, and various sorts of workplaces, including universities, during one's time of compulsory formal education.

Life-knowledge, though related to practical wisdom, is not the same. *Practical wisdom*, as the second aspect of *Bildung*, has a normative quality of right and wrong. It is not only important to know *how* to do something, but rather to know *what* to do in a certain situation from a *practical, moral and social* perspective. Practical wisdom is not pure reasoning; it includes an emotional aspect, a 'gut-feeling' of what is right and wrong. In this, it is more practical than pure reasoning, as it is much harder to think through all possible consequences of ones proposed actions and filter them through Kant's categorical imperative than to develop a *feeling* for what might be right or wrong in a certain situation and be guided, more or less instantly, by this feeling.

Schwartz & Sharpe (2010, pp. 25-26) characterise practical wisdom as (i) knowledge of what is proper in a certain situation and the desire to follow this course; (ii) the ability to improvise and balance conflicting aims; (iii) being perceptive and able to manoeuvre in social contexts; (iv) being able to see a situation from another person's perspective; (v) being able to align emotion and reason and be guided by emotional signals to make proper decisions; and, finally, as experience.

Therefore, practical wisdom combines certain kinds of knowledge (facts knowledge, practical life-knowledge, knowledge about expectations) with improvisation, perception, empathy, emotions and experience. The key for developing practical wisdom, according to Schwartz & Sharpe, is experience. They claim, by referring back to Aristotle, that practical wisdom is a craft that can be learned by experiencing and repeatedly exercising it. This requires teachers who themselves can exercise practical wisdom or who can provide encounters with people who are good at exercising it. In this context, knowing one's own limitations is an important quality for educationists.

The third aspect of *Bildung*, *self-formation* or *self-cultivation*, is, in the end, up to the student. Teachers and educationists need to be very cautious not to direct students in a way that will lead to manipulation and external formation of their characters. However, this does not mean to absent from any influence, as this would be quite impossible in any case. The key is to help students to develop critical thinking, reflection and self-reflection skills. This will allow students to filter external values and norms, put them into context and build their own set of norms, based on their beliefs and values.

Finally, students need to be able to increase their level of *Bildung* on their own; the German word for this is *Selbstbildung* [self-*bildung*]. This includes the ability for life-long learning (accumulating knowledge in proposed areas), being able to increase one's hermeneutical skills, and deepening one's level of practical wisdom. These faculties will enable a student to shape and care for his or her own self and his or her own life.

In this section, the definition of how disciplinary knowledge, life-knowledge, practical wisdom, self-cultivation and *Bildung* are understood in this article has been given and the relationship of the earlier notions to the German concept of *Bildung*, which encompasses most of them to a certain extent, has been explained. With

this understanding in mind we can now move on to explore the concept of wisdom and its relation to *Bildung* on the one side and spirituality on the other.

Wisdom

Wisdom and practical wisdom are, as the terms indicate, quite closely related. However, some differences can be discerned. Generally speaking, practical wisdom is an aspect of wisdom, applied to everyday life. As described above, it allows for a broader understanding of a situation, takes into account the people (and other agencies, such as animals or the environment) connected with this situation and helps to identify the morally and socially right course of action. *Wisdom*, on the other hand, is often described as a broader concept that implies the ability for practical wisdom, but reaches beyond: it entails high levels of self-knowledge and humbleness; a good feel for one's role in the world; the ability and practice of 'deep' thoughts (i.e. thinking a topic through on many levels); a deeper understanding of the world; and further insights, such as an acceptance of one's own insignificance in the broader picture of the world and universe.

However, there are many different descriptions and interpretations of wisdom: ancient philosophy (Aristotle, Socrates, Diogenes), current philosophy (Lauxmann, 2004; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010), educational and psychological interpretations, religious perspectives (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism) and cultural definitions (Confucius, Daoism). The borders between practical wisdom and wisdom, and wisdom and spirituality are somewhat blurred; however, wisdom seems to fill the room between practical wisdom and spirituality to some extent.

One interpretation of wisdom can be found in descriptions of wise men in Eastern texts from Confucianism, the *Dao De Jing* and Buddhism (de Mello, 1992; Laozi, 1993; Lau, 2009; Nakagawa, 2009; Tucker, 2003). There, men of wisdom are often characterised as calm; non-violent; free from hatred and fear; righteous; just; knowing themselves and mastering themselves; and carefully discerning between right and wrong. However, it needs to be noted here that the understanding of wisdom between these Eastern traditions are not the same. Unfortunately, the scope of this paper does not allow to explore the divergences in more detail.

Interestingly, being knowledgeable is not a necessary part of being wise. Peter Roberts (2012, pp. 9-10) points out, referring to the *Dao De Jing*, that certain kinds of knowledge can even hinder wisdom and living a good life. He also refers to Dostoevsky, who emphasises the qualities of intuitive knowledge (wisdom) over science (ibid). Other philosophers who argue along these lines are Frieder Lauxmann (2004) and Nicholas Maxwell (2012). Lauxmann (2004), for example, states in the context of, as he claims, the changed relationship of philosophy to wisdom that when reading recent philosophical texts, it is hard to experience 'enjoyment, which exceeds the joy through the experience of wine and music' (p. 12). His point is, that philosophers today have moved away from exploring wisdom with their hearts and moved towards an overemphasis of rational analysing with their minds. For Lauxmann, wisdom is not limited to people with knowledge, but everyone who 'has an open heart for the intellectual and material beauties of the world' (ibid.) can find it.

Therefore, Lauxmann critiques not only the relationship between current philosophy and wisdom, but also indicates that wisdom is more dependent on appreciation than on knowledge. Similar to Maxwell (2007), he critiques further the increasing dominance of science in education and academia due to the demands of industry and economy, which might lead to a decline in creativity and social innovation, as these are areas of the arts and humanities, not science.

In terms of the relationship between wisdom and education, Maxwell (2012) argues for a shift in educational and academic practice from *knowledge-inquiry* to *wisdom-inquiry*. As reasons for this reformatory shift, he claims that most of today's human made problems – such as 'modern warfare and terrorism, vast inequalities in wealth and standards of living between first and third worlds, rapid population growth, environmental damage' (p. 665) among others – are a direct consequence of applied scientific knowledge without wisdom. He states that 'wisdom *can* be taught in schools and universities. It *must* be so learned and taught. Wisdom is indeed the proper fundamental objective for the whole of the academic enterprise: to help humanity learn how to nurture and create a wiser world' (p. 666).

At this point it needs to be said that Maxwell's interpretation of wisdom is different from Lauxmann's understanding. Maxwell (2007, p.79) seems to have a more practical understanding of wisdom, which is closer to the side of practical wisdom: for him, wisdom is the desire to discover and achieve what adds value to life, which includes knowledge, perception and understanding of value as well as the ability to develop these faculties through knowledge, technology and understanding. Maxwell understands rationality as a way to wisdom, whereas Lauxmann's (2004) definition goes more in the direction of the spiritual end of wisdom: 'Wisdom is a way of thinking that evolves through falling in love with the world' (p. 26). He describes four factors that loosely encompass the way of thinking that can help wisdom to flourish: (i) wisdom cannot be stored, it happens; (ii) it is not systematic and cannot be taught through fixed rules; (iii) it flourishes through love for the world; and (iv) it brings forth what is good (ibid).

When comparing this understanding with the notion of wisdom proposed earlier in the context of Eastern philosophy, some overlap can be seen here, and the distinction to Maxwell's understanding becomes apparent. However, both interpretations have value and can provide guidance for education. Maxwell's call for a reform of academic enquiry is as important as Lauxmann's idea of wisdom for living a better life. In fact, both seem to aim at the same goal: helping humanity to become more fully human, helping people to live better lives and bringing forth the good in and for the world we are living in.

To sum up this section, wisdom can and should be part of formal education. Educationists should strive not only for bare knowledge, but also for wisdom, which goes hand in hand with developing an art of living and living a good life. Similar aims and directions can be found in various religions and value system in many parts of the world. As argued above, wisdom seems to border on spirituality and to develop wisdom at the level Lauxmann envisions, aspects and techniques of spirituality can be of much help. The next section will therefore engage with these aspects of human life and their implications for education.

Spirituality and Education

In this article, spirituality is understood as an engagement in questions beyond the sensational perceivable reality. One does not have to follow an established faith or religion; one only has to engage with the idea of going beyond what one can perceive with one's common five senses. To strive to engage with what is 'beyond' in any way is to engage in spirituality. Spiritual practice has various positive effects for the individual, such as increased levels of well-being, happiness and health, as well as reducing the ageing process of one's brain – through meditation, for example (Lau, 2009).

Spirituality is also the combining notion behind most, if not all, religions past and present. Religious beliefs vary in overall direction and detail, but most of them concern themselves with the divine (god, transcendence), or at least with a realm beyond perceived reality (nirvana). One could argue that the notion of spirituality is the encompassing quality human beings strive for when engaging in religion and religious practice. One could further say that this striving for spirituality, which is often paired with the search for meaning in life, is indeed one expression of the holistic strive of human beings for what Aristotle calls *eudaimonia* [happiness] or for living a good life.

With this understanding of spirituality in mind, it is now possible to discuss the relationship between education and spirituality. Marian de Souza (2009, p. 677) claims that most western societies have moved beyond the question of increasing richness and towards the question of how to make use of our current high standard of living to increase the well-being of people instead of further driving economy. This claim emphasises the importance of a good and beautiful life, not only for each individual, but also on a broader scale: 'a flourishing society' (ibid). De Souza offers spirituality as one possible answer to this question and links spirituality not only with the well-being of individuals, but also with local communities and a healthy, flourishing society. This approach, which is quite related to Confucian ways of thinking, provides a strong argument for giving spirituality a place in schools – provided that the well-being of citizens and a flourishing society is the goal of a country, other than solely trying to increase its wealth, which has been proven to be non-beneficial for people in terms of happiness and well-being (Seligman, 2010; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; Csikszentmihalyi, 2008).

Beyond the possible increase of well-being for the individual and the positive outcome for a society, spirituality, as understood in this paper, is also an important way of gaining self-knowledge, finding out about one's own beliefs, values, hopes and desires, and, subsequently, of developing an own art of living. Also, as wisdom is strongly related to values and the feeling for what is right and wrong, spirituality can help to develop these aspects and support the development of wisdom. Although it might not be necessary to live an artful and beautiful life, developing one's own spirituality can be most helpful in finding one's own way in life and, therefore, should be part of any (holistic) educational model.

Building on this notion, Lau (2009) promotes spirituality as part of an 'holistic education', and he points out that spiritual exercises and meditation about concepts, such as mindfulness and compassion, have also very immediate (even measurable) benefits: the cultivation of attention and increased concentration; reduction of stress and more positive feelings in and towards school and learning; better connection of mind, body and spirit; increasing intuitive knowledge, insight and creativity; and, drawing on Gardner's (2006) book *Five minds for the future*, increased capabilities for good leadership.

Awareness – An Example of Teaching Wisdom through Spirituality

To find examples of how to teach spirituality – and not only to teach *about* it – one can look towards spiritual leaders of various cultures and/or religions. One of these spiritual teachers, who tried to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western spirituality and religion is Anthony de Mello. De Mello was an internationally well-known Jesuit priest and spiritual teacher; he published various books, held spiritual conferences and founded the Sadhana Institute of Pastoral Counselling in Poona, India. Although he studied psychology, theology and philosophy, his public writings are not of academic nature but rather have a spiritually guiding quality and could be considered as works of wisdom. Some of the key points of his teachings are: the role of awareness; the impact of attachments on happiness and well-being; the power of one's own beliefs and convictions; and the role of external and internal experiences.

The following citation is an example of his teaching-style, and also meant as an example of possible teaching methods in terms of wisdom and spirituality. According to de Mello's friend J. Francis Stroud, this is what de Mello said about his work (and his friend) at an occasion when he was asked to describe what he was doing:

A man found an eagle's egg and put it in a nest of a barnyard hen. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life the eagle did what the barnyard chicks did, thinking he was a barnyard chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a [... magnificent] bird above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. "Who's that?" he asked.

"That's the eagle, the king of the birds," said his neighbor. "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth – we're chickens." So the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that's what he thought he was. (de Mello, 1992, p. 3)

With this story, de Mello wanted to tell his friend that he believed him to be 'a "golden eagle," unaware of the heights to which [... he] could soar' (ibid.); he also tried to show his friend what he (the friend) was thinking about himself. De Mello tried to make people *aware*, to wake them up and connect them with their spirituality. He describes people who are not in touch with their spirituality and wisdom – which are most people – as asleep and driven; he urged people to wake up and become aware of their own beliefs and expectations that make them suffer. In this notion of the power of the mind and one's own beliefs, one can find strong Buddhist influences. One of the techniques he was using, and can be seen in the example above, is the short story. This technique of

telling educational stories, stories which try to convey an insight about life or aspects of life, has been commonly used by spiritual guides, wise gurus and western novelists alike^v.

Coming back to de Mello's philosophy, he places awareness, similar to Buddhism, at the centre of the spiritual journey to enlightenment, wisdom or 'waking up' (p. 6). He also emphasises that it is not the teacher (or anyone else) who will be able to help someone to follow the path to awakening or to living a good life; only the individual can move into this direction through the practice of awareness and self-reflection, the same as each individual is responsible for his or her own experiences, feelings and thinking (pp. 7-8).

As indicated above, attachments and expectations are two major reasons for people's suffering. Berlant (2011, pp. 23-24), in her book *Cruel Optimism*, argues in a similar direction when she states that attachments to something (an object of desire) can have a potential negative impact on one's flourishing and well-being. De Mello (1992, p. 17) states in this context that there are only two ways out of this misery of attachments: suffering so much in life that one decides at some point that it is enough and to let go of all attachments and expectations that led to disappointments and hurt in the past (which he describes as 'waking up'); or listening to the truth – in the deeper meaning of the truth of wisdom, not disciplinary knowledge – which comes to pass through awareness and leads to awakening as well.

The underlying assumption of de Mello's philosophy, which has its origin in Buddhist thinking, can be quite difficult to accept, but it is also liberating at the same time: everybody is responsible for their own experiences – for their own feelings of pleasure, happiness and hurt – and this also means that everyone is able to change the influence external circumstances have on their internal experiences and the way they perceive reality. *Spirituality is the ability to alter the quality of one's experiences in the world.* The external circumstances might not have changed, but the internal perception can change and lead to a different experience of the world and reality. As mentioned above, this idea is closely related to what Roger (1998) describes in the context of stress and strategies of stress avoidance. It also has parallels with the concept of the hermeneutic circle, as described previously. Likewise, Csikszentmihalyi (2008, p. 43) points out that the one strategy that is most likely successful to improve one's quality of life is to change one's own expectations and inner experiences through exercising control over one's consciousness.

However, as mentioned above, spirituality is not a necessity to live a good and beautiful life. Still, according to de Mello (1992, pp. 16-19), spirituality is nothing else than to chance upon wisdom through the practice of awareness. Moreover, control over one's own mind, beliefs and consciousness^{vi} can alter one's perception of life and the feelings attached with experiences made. Therefore, and for the reasons mentioned in the section above, a holistic educational approach should offer opportunities for students to engage with their own spirituality and to practise awareness and mindfulness.

Conclusion

In this article, the concept of wisdom has been explored from multiple angles and placed in a continuum that spans loosely from disciplinary knowledge over *Bildung* to spirituality. It has been shown that the concept of wisdom has various interpretations but is overall understood in a way that situates it between the concept of *Bildung*, on the one side, and spirituality, on the other. An overlap on both sides with neighbouring concepts has been pointed out as well. Further, an argument has been made that all three major concept discussed in this article – *Bildung*, wisdom and spirituality – should have their place in today's curricula and school systems. Drawing on Lauxmann and de Souza, wisdom and spirituality are both important for the well-being of individuals as well as for a healthy and flourishing society. Moreover, as wisdom is hardly possible to teach directly, an effort needs to be made to support the development of students' *Bildung* and self-formation, as well as spirituality. Through the development of these two aspects of personal growths, one's view and understanding of the world can be broadened and hopefully provide a chance for 'falling in love with the world', which would, according to Lauxmann, more than anything else support wisdom to happen.

Democratic societies that value personal autonomy, active citizenship, a healthy and flourishing community, the happiness and well-being of their people, and an innovative and thriving economy need to look further than just to educational policies that are driven by miss-informed economical pressure and a short-sighted outcome and assessment ideology. An education for life (Teschers, in press) that supports the development of a student's

own art of living, self-cultivation and strive for personal growths and wisdom would be a suitable answer to this development.

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1. All translations of material from Lauxmann are my own.
 2. See Teschers (2013 & in press) for more details about Schmid's concept of the art of living and interpretation of a good life.
 3. See <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>.
 4. See *Kurt Hahn* by Röhrs & Tunstall-Behrens (1970) for an philosophical introduction, and <http://www.outwardbound.org/> or <http://www.salem-net.de/> (Salem schools) as examples of implementing outdoor and experience education in schools and other educational settings.
 5. Compare the tradition of the German Bildungsroman or certain kinds of poetry and novellas, as well as Jesus' way of teaching as described in the Christian Bible.
 6. Compare Csikszentmihalyi (2008) in terms of the connections between control over consciousness, the experience of enjoyments and one's personal well-being.

Slow Maths: Challenging the metaphor of education as a race

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Abstract

Metaphors shape the way we think and act. They are not mere words, but rather they are concepts that deeply affect how we view the world and the ways we interact with the world. In this paper I will briefly discuss some metaphors for education that have become prominent in educational discourse and focus on one—education as a race ('to the top', 'to be in the top 5')—that I argue has become dominant in the current political rhetoric. I discuss how this positions the curriculum as a one-dimensional track, assessment as the generation of a single number that is valued above all else, teachers as coaches detached from the participants, and students as runners striving to reach the only end-point that matters.

I will describe the beginnings of the slow movement as a protest to the one-size-fits-all approach of fast food, and suggest the generative metaphor of education as slow food. This has the potential to reposition curriculum, assessment, teachers and students as constituents and actors in a process and product steeped in history and culture, and in which diversity is an attribute to be valued rather than minimised. I apply this metaphor to the specific activity of school mathematics and show how it might generate an approach that positions school mathematics as an activity intimately connected to life, culture and the discipline of mathematics itself.

Keywords: education; mathematics; culture; slow; curriculum

Metaphors of Education

Metaphors shape the way we think and act (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They are not mere words, but rather they are concepts that deeply affect how we view the world and the ways we interact with the world. They have both a reflective and generative quality; they hide certain aspects of a concept and highlight others, in the process creating roles and realities that shape the way we act.

How we think metaphorically matters. It can determine questions of war and peace, economic policy, and legal decisions, as well as the mundane choices of everyday life...Because we reason in terms of metaphor, the metaphors we use determine a great deal about how we live our lives. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 216-217)

Yet the role of metaphor is largely unexamined in educational discourse. In the school environment metaphor is most often studied within poetry or literature studies as a language device that is largely decorative or ornamental (Postman, 2011). Rarely are metaphors viewed as interactive, shaping the way that we see the world and structure reality. It is equally rare to see the role of metaphor examined in the discourse about education where its role in shaping teachers' and, more generally, society's views of the goals of education is seldom examined. Yet metaphors profoundly affect aspects of education such as policy, pedagogy, the role of the teacher and student, the nature and purpose of curriculum and the nature of the school as an educational institution (Botha, 2009).

Arguably the two dominant root metaphors of education since the advent of compulsory schooling have been the metaphors of education as production and education as a cure (Cook-Sather, 2003). To these I add the relatively recent metaphor of education as a race. Each of these metaphors generates a set of associated metaphors that together ascribe particular roles to teachers and students, purposes to the curriculum and overarching goals for schooling. As I argue below, despite their apparent differences, each of these root

metaphors is underpinned by a common set of values and assumptions that dehumanises students and teachers, relegating them to receivers and implementers of an external agenda.

The education as production metaphor casts schools as factories, a conception that has dominated much educational discourse since the mid nineteenth century, and remains prevalent today (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008). Within the school as factory students are conveyed from one site of production to another, in the primary school setting at the end of each year, and in the secondary school setting often at the end of each 50-minute period. In the secondary setting the school timetable is, by and large, sacrosanct, with the efficient operation of the school relying on strict adherence to times. Within the school as factory teachers are workers or managers, students are products and the curriculum is the common production line along which students are progressed. Efficiency, compliance and quality control, exercised in the form of standardised tests of achievement, are valued, while diversity, critique and initiative are marginalised.

The education as a cure metaphor casts schools as clinics that cure not only the ills of children, but through that the ills of society. Its initial conception was in the very first religious schools that aimed to cure the innately sinful and depraved nature of humanity (Cook-Sather, 2003), particularly among children from the lower classes of colonial society. The school as clinic focuses on identifying the individual needs of each child as she moves towards a state of health captured by an idealised image of the educated person. The curriculum becomes a prescription, differentiated for each patient on the basis of diagnostic testing by the teacher, who is both diagnostician and therapist. Contemporary educational research is dominated by evaluation of the effectiveness of various interventions as measured by their effect-size (Hattie, 2008), a construct borrowed primarily from the psychological literature. In the Australian context the education as a cure metaphor is most obvious in the view of teacher education at the University of Melbourne, in which prospective teachers are taught to embrace teaching as a clinical practice profession. ‘There is growing recognition that teachers need to be able to “diagnose” individual student learning and provide appropriate “prescriptions” for improvement i.e., to be clinical, evidence-based, interventionist practitioners in the manner of health professionals’ (Dinham, 2012, p. 4).

Every metaphor has the potential to highlight or obscure aspects of the concept it seeks to illuminate. The education as production metaphor highlights efficiency, while the education as a cure metaphor highlights effectiveness. Both efficiency and effectiveness are worthy characteristics, but they offer no space to question philosophical bases of education, nor to ask why or whether rather than how. Furthermore, as Cook-Sather (2003) argues, both obscure the individual subjectivity of the people that matter most in education—students. While the education as a cure metaphor appears, at face value, to add a human dimension to the education as production metaphor, ‘their underlying premises—that students are quantifiable products to be packaged or diseased beings in need of remedy—...disable and control those within their constructs’ (Cook-Sather, 2003, p. 947). Hence students are dependent on the factory worker or clinician in their journey towards a common standard or state of health, rather than creating their own destiny within a culture where diversity is valued not feared.

Yet another metaphor for education has, of course, appeared in the above sentence—that of education as a journey. Indeed, it is hard to write about education without using a journey metaphor. Students *progress* through levels of schooling where they may be assigned to different *tracks* according to whether they are *ahead* or *behind* their peers. Indeed, the very terms *curriculum* and *course* have their origins in the Latin verb *currere*, meaning ‘to run’. Like the production and race metaphors of education, the journey metaphor highlights worthwhile aspects of education, but it offers equally little space to question the value or goals of the journey itself.

Taken to its extreme the journey metaphor becomes a metaphor of education as a race, which I suggest has become dominant in the political rhetoric in the Western world. In this metaphor what matters above all else is where a student or an entire education system is placed relative to others and being left behind is to be avoided at all costs. In the United States the Bush administration’s *No Child Left Behind* legislation (Bush, 2001) was replaced by the Obama administration’s *Race to the Top* agenda (Shear & Anderson 2009). Although one focuses on students and the other on the system, they are flip sides of the same root metaphor of education as a

race. Similarly in Australia former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples undertook to 'halve the *widening gap* in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous Australians' (Australian Government, 2008, italics added), while former Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, warned that Australia was 'in danger of *losing the education race*' (Franklin, 2012, italics added) and introduced reforms that aimed to see Australia 'back in the *top five* by 2025' (Tovey & McNeilage, 2012, italics added).

Like the production and cure metaphors for education, the race metaphor effectively silences any discussion of whether or not the race is worth competing in or how winners or losers will be determined. In a race there is no time to stop and admire the scenery or to take a diversion to somewhere that might be more interesting. There is no opportunity for the runners (students) or their coaches (teachers) to question the course to be run (curriculum) or to determine an alternative destination. I argue, therefore, that we need alternative metaphors for education that reaffirm students as active participants not only in the process of learning but also in the process of deciding what to learn. These are 'life affirming metaphors that cast [teachers] but also, and more importantly, students as active creators not only of their education but also...of themselves' (Cook-Sather, 2003, p. 952). One such metaphor that directly challenges the metaphor of education as a race is that of education as 'slow food' preparation. Slowness emphasises connectedness to history, culture and traditions, strives for diversity rather than uniformity and has an ethical dimension in that qualities such as elegance and simplicity are valued more than mere correctness.

Slowness and education

In 1986 a McDonald's restaurant was opened at the Piazza di Spagna in Rome. Journalist Carlo Petrini wondered why, if there was fast food, there could not also be slow food, and organized a demonstration in which he and his followers brandished bowls of penne as weapons of protest (Honoré, 2004). This was the start of an international Slow Food Movement, which has since spawned offshoots such as slow travel, slow living, slow cities, slow books, and slow parenting.

Despite its name, the Slow Movement is not, first and foremost, a movement against speed itself. Rather, it is a philosophy that rejects the one-size-fits-all approach to life that emphasises uniformity, predictability and measurability. A core philosophy of this one-size-fits-all approach is the rejection of product variability. Rather than expecting people who operate their business to reinvent the wheel, the company simply expects them to 'make it turn faster' (McDonalds, 2011). To maintain quality and uniformity, each restaurant in the chain must follow set formulas and specifications for menu items, set methods of operation, inventory control, bookkeeping, accounting and marketing, and set concepts for restaurant design and layout. These philosophies typify *fast*. 'Fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity-over-quality' (Honoré, 2004, p. 14).

Contrast this with the philosophy of Quay, a well-known and highly regarded Sydney restaurant:

This philosophy and passion for the rare and unusual has taken [the chef] all over Australia sourcing unique and exquisite ingredients...The result is a spectacularly innovative cuisine which celebrates the diversity of nature, and which describes and explores the contrasts and harmonies in textures and flavours one finds there. (Quay Restaurant, n.d.).

Although not advertising itself as a slow restaurant, Quay epitomises a *slow* philosophy. 'Slow is... calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity. It is about making real and meaningful connections—with people, culture, work, food, everything' (Honoré, 2004, p. 14).

To elaborate further upon the concept of slowness it is helpful to look at the key principles that underpin the slow food movement.

First, it expresses a definite *philosophical position*—that life is about more than rushed meals. Second, it draws upon tradition and character—eating well means respecting culinary knowledge and recognizing that eating is a social activity that brings its own benefits. A respect for tradition

also *honours complexity*—most sauces have familiar ingredients, but how they are combined and cooked vitally influences the result. And third, slow food is about *moral choices*—it is better to have laws that allow rare varieties of cheese to be produced, it is better to take time to judge, to digest, and to reflect upon the nature of ‘quiet material pleasure’ and how everyone can pursue it. (Holt, 2002, p. 267, emphases in original)

I would add to these two further principles: that uncertainty is inherent in the process of creation; and that variability is a quality to be treasured rather than feared.

One could substitute the word ‘education’ for each of the words pertaining to food in the above description, and the paragraph would make almost perfect sense. A slow education, then, has a clearly articulated philosophical basis; it values culture and tradition; it blends established techniques and fresh ideas in an environment where uncertainty is encouraged; it values variability rather than uniformity; and it has an ethical dimension with which to judge what is good and worthwhile. It is first and foremost about connections—to people, to culture, to history, to knowledge, to learning, to the world, and to self (Slow Movement, 2013).

In the remainder of this paper I use the concept of slowness to briefly review the formal school mathematics curriculum, and suggest an alternative that puts connection to history, culture and context at the centre of the school mathematics experience.

Slow Maths

Mathematics curriculum documents around the world typically contain three distinct sections. The first is normally a preamble, stating why the study of mathematics is important and listing a small number of specific goals for school mathematics. The second is a statement of the attributes that students are expected to develop through their study of mathematics. While there are relatively minor differences between the ways various curriculum documents describe the goals of school mathematics and the processes of thinking mathematically, the intent is clearly the same. All explicitly emphasise the development of mathematical thinking, problem solving and reasoning as a central goal, all refer to the importance of mathematics in understanding the world, and all, perhaps implicitly, make reference to the value of mathematics in one’s personal and social life. These are undoubtedly worthy goals that resonate with the sentiments of slowness described above, yet they are all too often subverted by the third and most detailed section of the document, a list of content laid out as a developmental sequence of learning.

Despite its avowed intent to focus on a limited number of big ideas at each year level the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2009), actually contains 220 content descriptions organised into 11 distinct year levels. It is little wonder that teachers’ comments in online discussions relating to the new curriculum document focus almost exclusively on issues related to the placement of content rather than passionately debating the purpose or teaching of mathematics in the era of the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* (Atweh, Miller and Thornton, 2012). Clearly there is a strong argument for a dramatic reduction in the number of content descriptions in the school mathematics curriculum.

Yet *Slow Maths* is not simply about taking longer to learn the same set of skills and concepts for the same purposes, although there is ample evidence that students do learn traditional content better by learning it more slowly and deeply (Boaler, 1997). Rather it is about a fundamentally different approach to, and mindset about, school mathematics—one that emphasises connections between the student, the mathematics and the world. In a *Slow Maths* curriculum what matters most is not the description of a set of skills and concepts that might be able to be applied to solve problems, but rather the articulation of a bank of mathematically, personally and contextually connected situations through which skills and concepts are developed. Such a bank might come from several sources:

- Sources in contemporary mathematics such as the ‘living and connected view of mathematics’ described in the Klein Project (Barton, 2008), or applications of mathematics in computer science

transformed into classroom use described in *Computer Science Unplugged* (Bell, Alexander, Freeman, & Grimley, 2009);

- Sources in the history and culture of mathematics such as the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio³³, or those described in the 10th ICMI Study in mathematics education (Fauvel, & van Maanen, 2000) that have the potential to humanise mathematics, make it more interesting, understandable, and approachable, and that give insight into concepts, problems, and problem solving (Povey, 2013); or
- Sources from the world that require mathematics in order for people to become informed and act critically, such as those described in the critical mathematics literature (Gutstein, 2003) and discussions of contemporary applications of mathematics in society (Garfunkel & Malkevitch, 1994).

Such examples are not new. However they typically form an add-on to the curriculum, to be explored after the acquisition of skills and concepts. The premise of *Slow Maths* is that these and similar examples should form the core of the curriculum, and that skills and concepts are taught as needed to enable students to engage effectively in contexts that immerse them in the culture, traditions and contexts of mathematics.

Enacting a curriculum such as this clearly requires time and serious engagement with deep mathematics. Yet the slow, creative problem solving process of mathematicians is hardly ever reflected in school mathematics classrooms. In his seminal reflective paper written just after the turn of the 20th century Poincaré (2000) describes how much of the work of creative problem solving is unconscious, taking place over time. Studies by mathematicians consistently highlight the need for periods of thoughtful orientation and exploration, relaxation to allow the creative mind to work, and rigorous reflection and verification of the solution (Hadamard, 1945; Pólya, 1945). The message is clear—it takes time to think creatively and to solve higher order problems. Such an approach values complexity rather than simplicity, it necessarily involves periods of frustration and confusion, and variability rather than uniformity is an outcome to be valued. It is in stark contract to the one-size-fits-all approach of education as a race embodied in the current content-driven approach to school mathematics.

Conclusion

The factory, clinic and race metaphors of education leave little room for students to develop imaginative and creative ways of thinking and to engage with the world. The careful planning and performance targets presupposed by these metaphors leave little room for uncertainty or the development of a sense of the aesthetic. On the other hand the principles of slowness, which include taking time to think creatively, valuing tradition and culture, embracing variability, and including an aesthetic dimension that allows one to make judgements about what counts, allow creative problem solving to thrive and enable students to come into the world as participants rather than recipients.

The principles of slowness challenge existing views of curriculum and pedagogy in school mathematics. Rather than focusing on a list of content to be covered, a slow mathematics curriculum puts history, culture, and the creative and critical application of mathematics to important problems at the centre. Engaging with such problems takes time—like mathematicians engaged in creative problem solving, students need time to explore, allow ideas to take shape and reflect on the elegance of their solutions. It's time to bring on the Slow Maths Movement!

³³ □ The lack of connection to history or culture in the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics is apparent in that there is no mention of either Fibonacci or Pascal's triangle anywhere in the document, and the only mathematician named is Pythagoras.

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Phronesis as Embodied Professional Knowledge

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Abstract

If one listens to those within the sphere of the OECD who claim to represent education at national levels, we could be excused for believing that education is simply the measuring of certain skills within the narrow confines of functional literacy and numeracy and we might believe that this is all there is to educating. This paper makes a call for the restoration of teaching professionals: teachers who are capable of making decisions and knowing what counts as suitable curricula for their students, teachers capable of making critical and informed judgements and evaluations. This restoration would presuppose that we value a form of embodied knowing termed phronesis, which is practical wisdom that uses experience, disposition, reflection, judgement and ethics. The term originated with Aristotle but is used today in relation to professional knowledge. The Aristotelian notion of Phronesis is that of an embodied social practice which requires interactions with others and which typically involves a judgement through deliberation that is not calculative. Phronesis is distinguished from theoretical knowledge or science, or even technical skills; it is an intellectual virtue. This paper provides examples of the types of practical knowledge and wisdom necessary to evaluate music performances, compositions, arrangements, understanding styles and genres, musical knowledge and aural acuity, not within the confines of simple narrow structures, but through informed ethical judgements which embrace all musical styles, both cultural and subcultural. This kind of practical wisdom requires the know-how and moral commitment to make judgements as phronesis and to shape new kinds of professional knowledge.

Key words: phronesis, practical wisdom, standards-based assessment, virtue

Introduction

New Zealand fell under the sway of neo-liberal thought in the late 1980s and this meant that education began to work towards developing a focus on market-based delivery. In 1987 part of the Treasury brief to the incoming third Labour Government, in line with neo-liberal thought, was as follows.

Education tends to be thought of as a natural sphere for government intervention because it is a social or public good ... In the technical sense used by economists, education is not in fact a 'public good' ... education shares the main characteristics of other commodities traded in the marketplace. (New Zealand Treasury, 1987, p. 33)

Within two years of that statement, the Government had dismantled the Department of Education and restructured it into three key units: policy and curriculum (Ministry of Education), qualifications and examinations (New Zealand Qualifications Authority), and a group designed to carry out audits of schools to ensure the tax payers' money was being spent productively (the Education Review Office). Other aspects of education, such as payroll and property, were contracted out. Everything was in place by the beginning of the 1990s and the Ministry of Education established the Curriculum Framework to ensure consistency of educational product across the country. Meanwhile, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) developed the New Zealand Qualifications Framework to deliver national assessment processes. It is this latter framework that forms the focus for this paper.

Standards-based Assessment

NZQA were lucky to have David Hood as their first Director. He could see the possibilities of setting in place more equitable assessment systems that would allow students to achieve according to their strengths, rather than being lock-stepped into the traditional year-long packages of subjects that had the potential to hinder the progress of almost 50 percent of students in the previous decades. One way Hood sought to achieve this was through competency-based standards, then popular in Australia, and he set in place an assessment design for New Zealand called Unit Standards.

Unit standards were to be pass or fail, often needed demonstrated knowledge and skills, and the theory was that if you were already competent at Level One, then you should go to Level Two or Three and pass those standards. In this way students could progress through senior schooling at their own pace. Level One equates to the first year of senior secondary school (15- to 16-year-olds) but the standards were also flexible enough for members of the community to engage with. Naturally, the notion of pass/fail brought strong criticism from the New Zealand Business Roundtable, who strongly promoted neo-liberal principles across the employment sector, and their opposition was supported by its education arm, the Education Forum, who promoted national year-end examinations and competitive individualism.

It was my privilege to be elected Chairperson of the Music Advisory Group (from 1995 to 2002 when the committee was disbanded) who steered the development of unit standards in music. The 25-member group contained several teachers and various members of the industry in the form of working musicians, composers, techno-buffs, recording engineers, etc. No record company (or similar) was represented, but the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee had a representative to report back on the deviation to assessment quality, which is how the universities saw it. Each unit standard carried a number of credits which were believed to relate to the number of hours of study and practice it would take to pass the standard; one credit equated to ten hours of study. All the standards were internally assessed by the provider, with a percentage being sent each year for national moderation. I was fortunate enough to sit on each expert panel as we developed 55 unit standards in composition, performance, group performance, recording technologies, the music business, music retail, research, etc. What was so stimulating about this process was that the unit standards were designed by practitioners, those with the practical wisdom to professionally deliver in their area of expertise—diverse groups of experts sharing ideas and ‘tricks of the trade’ with each other.

The pressure to abandon unit standards was kept up by Business Roundtable and other groups, including many in government, and especially the Ministry of Education who saw the development of tools for assessment as its role and saw NZQA’s role as becoming mere record-keeper. By this time David Hood had long since stepped down from his role. The Directorship was handled by many who simply were not up to challenging the Ministry and who quite possibly either did not understand or did not believe in the unit standards themselves. Barely any schools were adopting the unit standards—in Music around 60 across the country—and this was mainly due to pressure from both the Education Forum and certain schools viewed as elite, who denigrated the unit standards for not testing a depth of knowledge and understanding. This situation produced a kind of educational fundamentalism which idealised ‘tradition in the traditional sense’ (Giddens as cited in Thwaites, 1997, p. 80). In addition, few tertiary institutions were delivering the higher Levels, 4 to 7, although they were quick to adopt the material to their own ends, putting their institutional stamp on them. This was, after all, a climate of competition and, therefore, various institutions offering the same unit standards was unsustainable. Thus we find, in the 1997/98 financial year, that the government funding for qualifications framework development had dropped from NZ\$3 million to \$700,000, further undermining the confidence of those involved in the process and schools or tertiary institutions who might have been considering adopting unit standards (Thwaites, 1997, p. 79).

Under the government initiative ‘Achievement 2000’, the Ministry introduced Achievement Standards. These standards have three levels of achievement and one of non-achievement (rather than simply pass/fail). The levels of achievement are: Achieved, Merit and Excellence. Achievement standards contain a mix of externally assessed standards (through national examinations) and internally assessed standards. Whether students attain Achieved, Merit or Excellence, they still get the same number of credits for passing the standard, but the grade is noted. As with unit standards, one credit equals, hypothetically, ten hours of study. The

difference between the development of unit standards and achievement standards was that the expert panels (of which I was a permanent member until last year) comprised teachers or teacher educators. Gone were those professionals with the practical wisdom. Many standards remained but were rewritten by the expert panel to better reflect the school setting rather than the industry setting. These standards have undergone several upgrades (the most recent in 2012) and Achieved, Merit and Excellence have now been broken into low achieved, achieved and high achieved, etc. This means that the so-called standard-based assessment is edging perilously close to the old percentage type of marking, although no mention of the norm-curve has yet been made. This in itself suggests that practical wisdom is lacking across the education sector, given the move back to compartmentalised and possibly soon fractionalised marking systems. The wise practitioner can think holistically; the rational calculator cannot. When compared, the unit standards lead to vocations and focus on competency, while the achievement standards lead to qualifications and focus upon performativity.

Both unit standards and the internally assessed achievement standards are moderated nationally and NZQA selects the standards a school must submit each year. The Moderation Team is headed by a National Moderator, a role I took on as the first National Moderator 2000–2007. During my term I had a team of seven moderators working with me. We were all part-time moderators, and my role was to cross check a percentage of the material my team had moderated. I resigned when the role became full-time and this was initially filled by two National Moderators, who shared the role. One was a teacher with long experience and an expert violinist, specialising particularly in Baroque music, and the other also a teacher (Correspondence School) and an opera buff, who enjoyed singing in local productions. This moderator was also very accomplished with the new computer-based technologies. In 2011 a single National Moderator was appointed, accompanied by check moderators. The current National Moderator has musical skills and is an effective classroom music teacher and previously spent several years as Head of Music in a Catholic boys' school known in particular for its outstanding rock bands.

Moderating and Assessing Practical Aspects in Music

It would be fair to say that moderation and assessment in the areas of musical Performance (both as a featured soloist and within a group), Composition and Arrangement are somewhat inconsistent both in schools and within national moderation. If we are to improve the quality of assessment in these practical areas then it becomes apparent that the national assessors (moderators) must first improve themselves with regards to knowledge, skills, understanding and experience. They need to cultivate the abilities, habits, thoughts, technical mastery, musicianship and values of the practice. Not only that, the teachers who both establish and assess standards such as performance and composition need to cultivate the virtues of practical knowledge as wisdom. Understanding assessment in musical performance and composition requires a practical wisdom, what Aristotle called *phronesis*. Practical wisdom goes beyond simply knowing how to apply the assessment tools; it requires a self-knowledge of the practice.

The unit standards are (or were) quite detailed, with generally two to four Elements in each standard and each Element contains from one to four Performance Criteria. Some critics regard the unit standards as atomistic, but in their development the professionals in the field had little problem establishing what kinds of clear competencies would be required to produce the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. In contrast, the achievement standards offer more generic statements that ignore the distinctiveness of subject knowledge, usually one sentence for each grade (A, M, or E), and while the Explanatory Notes offer some guidance, the holistic nature confuses many teachers and professional judgement is desirable, even though not in plentiful supply. The Ministry's aim was to make all achievement standards look as close as possible to each other across disciplines and so the often vague descriptors add to the confusion. I speak as someone who has worked on these for the past 14 years, and trying to fit our professional and practical knowledge in with the Ministry's model has proven most difficult. The problems in assessing the more practical standards lie, for both teachers and moderators, in the fact the neither intuition nor empirical observation is enough to grasp the context.

Clearly, some form of practical wisdom or knowledge is required in order to have the grounding necessary to make reliable and valid judgements. Such claims stretch at least as far back as the Greeks and their notion of phronesis.

Phronesis

Phronesis is generally defined as ‘practical wisdom or knowledge of the proper ends of life’. In Aristotle’s scheme, phronesis is classified as one of several *intellectual virtues* or *excellences of mind* (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 2). Aristotle claims ‘there are three things in the soul controlling action and truth: perception, intellect, and desire’ (Aristotle, trans. 2000, p. 104, Bk VI, Ch. 2). He urges us to assume that there are five ways in which the soul arrives at truth by ‘affirmation or denial; namely, skill, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, wisdom and intellect, adding that supposition and belief can be mistaken’ (p. 105, Bk VI, Ch. 3). Phronesis is, as Aristotle termed it, the practical wisdom that comes from an intimate familiarity with the contingencies and uncertainties of any particular social practice (Schram, 2012, p. 16).

We should remind ourselves that, for Aristotle, *episteme* is characterised as scientific, universal, invariable, context-independent knowledge, usually known today as *epistemology* or *epistemic*; it is knowledge that is abstract and universal. *Techné* is the know-how associated with practising a particular craft; it is usually characterised as context-dependent, pragmatic, variable, craft knowledge and is oriented toward practical instrumental rationality, governed by a conscious goal. Today it might appear as *technique*, *technical*, *technology*. Phronesis, on the other hand, is an intellectual virtue that implies ethics. It involves deliberation that is based on values, concerned with practical judgement and informed by reflection. Kinsella and Pitman’s interpretation of phronesis is pragmatic, variable, context-dependent and oriented toward action (2012, p. 2). In Aristotle’s world the object of intellect was to gain knowledge and, through knowledge, wisdom (*sophia*) and to develop a love for knowledge (*philos*) (p. 3).

For Aristotle, ‘practical wisdom is a virtue and not a skill. And since there are two parts of the soul that possess reason, it will be the virtue of one of them, namely, that which forms beliefs, both belief and practical wisdom being concerned with what can be otherwise’. A state of belief involves reason, ‘such a state can be forgotten, but practical wisdom cannot’ (2000, p. 108, Bk VI, Ch. 5). He suggests that ‘we may grasp what practical wisdom is by considering the sort of people we describe as practically wise... for they have the ability to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself... [and] about what conduces to living well as a whole’ (p. 107, Bk VI, Ch. 5). Practical wisdom is ‘concerned with human affairs, namely, with what we can deliberate about... The person unqualifiedly good at deliberation is the one who tends to aim, in accordance with his calculation, at the best of the goods for a human being that are achievable in action’ (p. 110, Bk VI, Ch. 7).

Phronesis, as practical wisdom, seems to have three aspects: it is content (resource/store of experiential knowledge), a quality of persons (the capacity to acquire and appropriate the practical knowledge) and a form of action (doing, a practice where experiential knowledge is both used and gained) (Flyvbjerg, Landman & Schram, 2012, p. 4). As Aristotle puts it: ‘practical wisdom is concerned also with particular facts, and particulars come to be known from experience’ (Aristotle, 2000, p. 111, Bk VI, Ch. 8). He continues by saying that a young person is not experienced, since experience takes a long time to produce, adding that a boy can become accomplished at mathematics but not in wisdom or natural science. Mathematics is a matter of abstraction, while the first principles of the other two come from experience.

Phronesis is a form of deliberation, such as when doctors and nurses engage in *social practices* where *practical wisdom* is one of the central *virtues* (Stout, in Ellett, 2012, p. 16). Central in this discussion on phronesis is *aporia*—the unresolvable dilemmas and uncertainties. As a characteristic of the work of professional practice, *aporia* needs to be embraced.

Aristotle’s conception of phronesis can be defined through four aspects:

1. Phronesis involves judgement; in this case forming reliable judgements on student performances and compositions which are deliberative but not calculative.

2. Phronesis is a virtue which requires an ethical dimension to determine the proper ends of conduct and of the means of attaining them; in this case we begin by setting aside personal musical tastes so we can make valid judgements.
3. Phronesis is an embodied social practice, both corporeally when our bodily engagement with the world encourages accounts which accommodate our gestures and movements as a significant bodily mediated dimension at play in the reception and interpretation of meanings, and as embedded institutional knowledge sometimes defined as best-practice.
4. Phronesis involves complicated interactions between what is general and considered usual, and what is practical and perceptive.
(based on Ellett, 2012, p. 14)

Making Professional Judgements in Education

In the first half of the twentieth century Dewey (1934) adopted a neo-Aristotelean approach to practical knowledge, acknowledging that phronesis is the intelligent use of practical reason and its concern is with worldly action or *praxis*. Dewey sees all reason as practical reason and, as with Aristotle, intentionality distinguishes intelligent action from mere behaviour. Thinking makes explicit the intelligent element in our experience and makes it possible to act with an end in view, while interpretation exposes the possibilities for some consequence. Deliberation Dewey sees as a part of practical reason, a sort of rehearsal in the imagination, which clears the way to a naturalistic freedom constrained by context. Deliberation requires experimentation through which reason will unconceal a desired value that we then assert into action.

Kemmis posits that ‘our longing for phronesis, for wisdom, is really a longing for praxis. *Praxis* is a particular kind of action. It is action that is *morally committed, and oriented and informed by traditions in a field...* *Praxis* emerges in ‘sayings’, ‘doings’, and ‘relatings’ (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 9). *Praxis* is a *prerequisite* for phronesis and is the centrepiece of a morally committed practice. It is through experience and action—through praxis—that we develop phronesis (Kemmis, 2012, p. 158). To be a person of practical wisdom one must not only know what to do but also know how to act accordingly.

Good *judgement* is considered a virtue, but it is not the same as knowledge. Judgement is not concerned with what is eternal and unchanging but with what someone might puzzle and deliberate about. For this reason ‘it is concerned with the same things as practical wisdom’ (Aristotle, 2000, p. 113, Bk VI, Ch. 10.). Teachers (and moderators) need to have practical wisdom—the ability to exercise sound educational judgement and discernment—as well as the courage to do what they do and have a faith in the system and in themselves and to act accordingly. Phronesis is knowledge that is sensitive to its application and experience is necessary to developing phronesis.

In music education, as teachers and moderators, we can expect our learners, as performers and composers, to arrive with a diverse range of skills, knowledge, musical tastes and abilities that go beyond what might have been covered in class or expected to have been covered generally. Every subject area that requires practical wisdom can expect the same. To act phronetically, therefore, requires us to have an ethical focus and a competence in ethical action.

Practical wisdom contains a corporeal aspect; it is embodied wisdom. It requires us to be in tune with our bodies, to focus on the context and to engage the senses in our professional judgements. All forms of embodied learning need to be related to social learning because phronesis itself is situated and acquired from the community in which performative practical actions are central as well as the modes and conditions for learning (the habitat). Phronesis is the result of habituation which is acquired through deliberate, repetitive and determined effort. It might be regarded as a virtue. It is one thing to promote habits of mind, but phronesis is habits of the body, the hands, the senses and as such is an embodied praxis. Praxis is ethically informed and guided by critical reflections on one’s own practices in relation to the established practice traditions.

Sellman (2012) reminds us that the professionally wise practitioner ‘continually strives to be the best practitioner she or he can be given the constraints under which practice occurs’ (p. 116). To be an effective, professionally wise educator we need our own personal competencies and skills to be in place. Aristotle describes skill as a ‘productive state involving true reason; and its contrary, lack of skill, is a productive state involving false reason’ (2000, p. 106, Bk VI, Ch. 4.). Taking this into account, we should also see that personal competence acts as a precursor for professional phronesis. Authenticity and faithfulness can be addressed through the phronetic approach, since the teacher/moderator’s practical wisdom develops out of his or her expert status.

A characteristic of specific curriculum areas is the use of a body of knowledge which is both characteristic of the discipline and differentiates from other curriculum areas. Professional judgements need to identify both pedagogical knowledge and practical knowledge—the enactment in practice—and to apply this in the service of some good: in the case made in this paper, for valid and reliable assessment to be best practice. The professional educator who applies practical wisdom and reflective judgement demonstrates a disposition characterised by a form of phronesis. If we are to take phronesis seriously, then we must emphasise the cultivation of professional judgement which is grounded in the moral purpose of judging how educators should act for the good of the student.

Conclusion

In the abstract to this paper I make a call for the restoration of *teaching professionals*, professionals who are capable of making decisions and who know what counts as suitable curricula for their students. Professional wisdom, in both pedagogy and specific curriculum areas, would be a requirement, as well as practical wisdom—phronesis—an embodied knowing which uses experience, disposition, reflection, judgement and ethics. Such wisdom has become even more necessary in New Zealand where forms of standards-based assessment are in place and where many standards are internally assessed by the teacher with a sample externally moderated by the national moderation system. Such a system that I propose would demand moderators and teachers who are capable of making critical and informed judgements and evaluations. This would set in place a primacy of practice in which knowing how to do something is the basis for knowing that (Bernstein, 2010, p. 120). This way of knowing would support the transparency of the qualifications framework.

A collaborative phronetic approach was put in place when musical performance and composition were introduced to senior music programmes in New Zealand in 1992. The system used a form of achievement-based assessment, and student videos of performances and recordings of compositions were moderated by two representative six-member teams. This model used an experienced mix of composers and performers who, once benchmarks had been established, operated in pairs to evaluate the material, with each pair changing halfway through the day. This pooled wisdom was invaluable in making reliable and ethical judgements. The model was replaced in 2002 with the current system with cost being claimed as the reason.

In standards-based assessment as it presently exists in New Zealand, it is too easy to rely on single words, assembled to reflect some form of taxonomy of knowledge but which are virtually meaningless when taken in isolation. This vocabulary (for example: convincingly, effectively) enables those with little knowledge of musical performance or composition to make conscious decisions about the content they are evaluating—decisions that are not, however, informed by experience and practical wisdom and as such are unreliable and invalid. Rather than making generalised judgements in a template response that puts a distance between the judgement and the essence of the musical performance or composition, teachers and moderators should strive for what is perceptive and widely considered as valid (musical) practice. They must strive to engage practical wisdom as a central virtue and engage in phronesis as a form of deliberation.

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Locality, Re-localization, Structure-to-Structure Localism and the TOEIC Test: Implications for English language education at tertiary level in Japan

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Abstract

The TOEIC is an English proficiency test popular in universities and businesses in Japan. While ostensibly a standardized test taken by students and office employees, the TOEIC is also an instantiation, enactment and commodification of spatiality and ideology among its Japanese stakeholders. In this paper, I will critically examine different TOEIC-related administrative procedures and practices together with their accompanying artifacts (namely, the question booklet and answer sheet) and how they ultimately enact different aspects of spatiality and ideology, particularly through power-borne ministrations, strategies and institutional behaviors. I will also draw on my lived experience as an EAP teacher to make further observations on how the TOEIC pans out in day-to-day practices within an institutional framework as well as how it mediates dehumanizing structure-to-structure practices within institutional portals. The observations in this paper have a bearing on the teaching and appropriation of the English language in higher education in Japan even as Japanese universities are now increasingly embarking on delivering content courses in English.

Keywords: language, ideology, standardized testing, critical literacy

The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is...based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads [people] to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power. (Freire, 2000, p. 77)

Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another. (Freire, 2000, p. 160)

Introduction

The TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is a proficiency test used in Japanese higher education and business. To prepare for the test, test-takers go to night schools and cram schools. Universities run TOEIC classes to help students score better. Of late, Japanese universities have begun to conduct faculty content courses in English instead of in Japanese (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011) to boost flagging enrolments, strengthening the position of TOEIC as a means of gauging proficiency (Sasaki, 2008). TOEIC results are recognized for employment and promotion. Japanese English teachers typically include their TOEIC scores in their resumes.

While ostensibly a standardized test, my purpose in this paper is to argue the case that the TOEIC is also a commodification and enactment of spatiality, ideology and power among its Japanese stakeholders, accompanied by their implications for conceptualizations of locality, foreignness and Otherness as well as for language teaching and learning in higher education as humanizing activities. To do this, I will examine: (1)

TOEIC-related practices that became part of my lived experience as an English for academic purposes (EAP) teacher at a university in Kanagawa where liberal-arts courses are taught in English, together with (2) their accompanying artifacts (question booklet and answer sheet) and how they enact and reify different aspects of locality, ideology and power. Following this, I will draw on my experience as a Singaporean teacher resident in Japan to make further observations on how the TOEIC pans out in day-to-day work exigencies and how it mediates what McVeigh (2006) calls structure-to-structure practices. In so doing, I follow academic works that tap on teacher-generated narratives as a basis for professional praxis (Lillis, 2003; Tsui, 2007; Stewart & Miyahara, 2011).

To contextualize the discussion, I will first review some background literature. I will also demonstrate that alongside the TOEIC are spatial practices (Pennycook, 2010; Edwards & Usher, 2003; Gulson & Symes, 2007; Thrift, 2008) related to claims on:

- Locality – enactments of the ways TOEIC stakes and marks out local environs;
- Re-localization – enactments of ideologically-motivated reassignment or re-inscription of meanings as seen in particularized testing practices. These happen through the use of ideological tools like naturalization, reification, fragmentation and exclusion (Eagleton, 1991);
- Localism – enactments of hegemony through deeply-entrenched institutional structures and mechanisms.

My discussion is consistent with recent attention to: (1) contextualization in language teaching (e.g. Kubota, 2002; Rivers, 2010; Breckenridge & Erling, 2011); (2) the spatial turn in education and how space implies distribution of power and privilege (Gulson & Symes, 2007; Pennycook, 2010).

Uchi-Soto and the Sociology of Space

Questions of space are not innocuous or innocent (Gulson & Symes, 2007). Ideologies and inequalities in power relations are enacted through instantiations of space. Space can be mobilized for maneuvers of inclusion and exclusion (Massey, 1992; Edwards & Usher, 2003; Gulson & Symes, 2007). Space comes with evocative metaphors and semiotic meanings suggesting regulation, scrutiny and surveillance (Gulson & Symes, 2007) or as Massey (1992) observes, the emergent powers of space to monitor and modify lived practices, symbolic meanings, subsequent histories and distributions of power and privilege. Concerning ‘the sociology of space’, Edwards and Usher (2003) discuss the importance of ‘examining the spatial orderings in specific pedagogic practices and the forms of knowledge, learning and identity they include and exclude’ (p. 2). Matters concerning space and curriculum are linked to power relations: ‘to talk about space in relation to curriculum learning and knowledge production is also to talk about how power is distributed and exercised’ (Edwards & Usher, 2003, p. 3). To gloss over ‘the spatial...contexts of knowledge-making activities in relation of power’ is tantamount to be reductively ‘treating the curriculum as static and despatialized’ (Nespor, 2003, p. 94).

In Japan, space evokes cultural and political meanings. Terms like *uchi* (the inside) and *soto* (the outside) exploit space and proximity to classify, include and exclude people (Makino, 2002). Notions of Japaneseness and foreignness largely involve space. Yamagami and Tollefson (2011) highlight the psyche of Japan’s island status and how politicians speak about stopping the tide of foreign evils at water’s edge. Massey (1992) in her discussion on space and gender speaks about reductionist dualisms where values and attributes are either ‘a’ or ‘not-a’. In such dualisms, the female is often given a ‘not-a’ labeling. Massey (1992) observes that the spatial culture of modern cities is pertinent more to the male than the female. A parallel can be drawn with *uchi* and *soto*, insider and outsider juxtapositions, where the spatial culture of Japanese institutions has been said to disadvantage foreigners and things foreign (e.g. McVeigh, 2006; Rivers, 2010; Makino, 2002; Lie, 2001). Things foreign receive a ‘not-a’ labeling.

Japan, Japanese Space and the English Language

Japan has had its fair share of concerns with the English language. Much of these have had to do with the preservation of Japanese socio-cultural space and how English has been regarded as a threat to Japanese identity (Hashimoto, 2007; Seargeant, 2009; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011; Stewart & Miyahara, 2011). Japanese socio-cultural space is thought to be the reserve of the Yamato people. The Japanese economic miracle was attributed to their exquisitely unique qualities, vividly described in a genre of literature that celebrates Japanese uniqueness – *nihonjinron* literature (Dower, 1999; Befu, 2001; Lie, 2001). In the years of the Pacific War and being the language of the enemy (Oda, 2007), English conjured up the threat of territorial invasion.

While there have been initiatives to expose students to more English (Kubota, 2002; Sakata, 2008 Breckenridge & Erling, 2011), resistance and counter-arguments have accompanied these initiatives (Hashimoto, 2007; Rivers, 2010; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). Such counter-arguments concern struggles with ‘national identity...and problems with Japan’s place in the modern world’ (Stanlaw, 2004, p. 268) including uncomfortable questions about globalization and the growing presence of foreigners on Japanese soil (Kubota & McKay, 2009; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011).

Japan’s struggles with English involve periodic resurgences of nationalism (Hashimoto, 2007). The ‘Prime Minister’s Commission on Japan’s Goals in the 21st Century’ published at the turn of the millennium came with a spatially significant subtitle ‘The Frontier Within’ and its literal translation: ‘Japan’s frontier lies within Japan’ (2007, p. 30). Hashimoto notes that the report treats globalization negatively, observing how:

it suggests that if “the good qualities of Japanese” become “universal,” Japan can solve problems within Japan without seeking help from the outside. In other words, if Japan manages to gain world recognition of the positive qualities of its people and society, Japan can work on its problems within the country without subjecting itself to the powerful forces of globalization. (Hashimoto, 2007, p. 30)

More commonly, discussions about globalization and higher education follow two competing versions: globalization-as-opportunity and globalization-as-threat (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). The former is pitched at attracting overseas students by universities offering content courses in English and promotes the belief that English opens up a brave new world of promising opportunities. The latter, however, tends to attract greater publicity because it has been harnessed by public figures for political ends (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). Globalization-as-threat exploits images of foreigners upsetting Japanese lifestyle with un-Japanese habits, attracting xenophobic comments from politicians fanning fears of cultural erosion (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011; Heimlich, 2013). Its proponents also argue that ‘English takes time away from Japanese language study and citizenship education’ and consequently, ‘national unity and Japanese national identity are being undermined by a focus on English (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011, p. 31).

Japanese Space, Fears of Encroachment and the Politics of Foreignness

Historically, Japan has sought to manage and manicure its socio-cultural spaces (Befu, 2001). While Allied occupiers came with zealous ideals for democratization and demilitarization in 1945, the advent of Cold War politics ultimately thwarted greater openness to new ideas about culture and political change (Caprio & Sugita, 2007). War-time leaders and corporatist mercantilists were de-purged to bulwark a Japan, Inc. under conservative governance (Dower, 1999; Caprio & Sugita, 2007). A Japan where overwhelmingly conservative ideas would prevail and where emancipatory ideas of equality and openness would be systemically repressed through the purging of activists, liberal academics and reformist thinkers, became strategically more useful against the surging tide of Communist ideology (Dower, 1999). Conditions were set for an inward-looking Japan, which would, in the ensuing years of economic prosperity, fuel the narcissistic paranoia of *nihonjinron* (Japanese uniqueness) ideology, while perpetuating the prejudices that came with continued accentuation of *gaijin* (outsider) stereotypes (Befu, 2001; Lie, 2001). Alongside stereotyped renditions of *gaijin* subjectivities, English would be reified as a *sine qua non* of foreignness (McVeigh, 2006). Hence, English native speaker subjectivities continue to be heavily racialized (Kubota, 2002) and determined by an exclusionist cultural politics that polarizes Self and Other. Recalling earlier discussion on space and reductionist dualisms, the foreign English speaker invariably comes under the ‘not-a’ classification (Massey, 1992).

Deconstructing the Locality of TOEIC

The above discussion provides the backdrop to my quest for a deeper understanding of the TOEIC. Towards this end, I sought to triangulate information from two sources available to me. I examined TOEIC-related artifacts (the answer sheet and question booklet) while drawing on observations of TOEIC-related administrative practices that became part of my lived experience as EAP teacher.

The Locality of TOEIC

The TOEIC was started in the late 1970's by a group of local businessmen and bureaucrats (Kubota, 2011). In 2008, it was taken 1.7 million times (McCrostie, 2009). Its very popularity attracts deeper scrutiny over how it carves out a niche for itself given the cultural and ideological dilemmas previously discussed. In this section, I will discuss matters relating to the 'locality' of TOEIC and how it reifies local spaces.

To begin with an analogy, announcements over station loudspeakers create the instance and spatiality of Japanese train stations, instantiating their locality. Such locality is captured and reified in the repetitiveness of warnings to stand behind the yellow line when trains are approaching or remonstrations about not forcing one's way through the closing doors of a departing train. The first realizes the spatial reality that there are no protective panels separating platform and track on many train lines and the second captures the time-space reality that Japanese trains are punctual to the minute in a fast-paced society where three minutes to the next train could mean a difference between lateness and punctuality.

In the same vein, Pennycook (2010) describes how the local is constructed through what people 'do and say' (p. 56) and is created and 'constituted through actions' (Edwards & Usher, 2003, p.7). Locality is a claim on local spaces, not least through maintaining a declaratory presence across public spaces or as described in Pennycook (2010, p. 128), 'everything happens locally' if one looks at 'local ways of knowing', even how the local is 'about change, movement and the production of space, the ways in which...practices...create the space in which they happen' (Pennycook, 2010, p. 128).

Similarly, the TOEIC reifies local spaces with its accompaniment of artifacts, icons and day-to-day practices. TOEIC notices appear in universities and cram schools alike. Besides cyber space, TOEIC advertisements penetrate physical spaces linked to public transport, the overhead compartments of buses and trains, or sign boards on platforms and station precincts. TOEIC handbills instantiate Japanese suburbia as much as weekly special offers at local supermarkets and glossy pizza or realtor advertisements. Within university hallways, seating and room allocations are displayed on notice boards announcing the imminence of TOEIC test day, a case of TOEIC being part of 'proclaiming', 'announcing', instantiating and reifying the locality of the Japanese university campus. Moreover, TOEIC matters take up (and use up) time-space at long-drawn university meetings while TOEIC scores and statistics immanently preoccupy the minds (i.e. the cranial or cerebral spaces) of hard-pressed university administrators.

One interesting and defining aspect of locality is the banal or mundane – the sight of proctors pacing the aisles or TOEIC advertisements in local community newsletters. The banal and mundane are symptomatic of locality (Pennycook, 2010). As will be further described, TOEIC penetrates, infiltrates and constructs the local with its gamut of activities and practices. The relationship between TOEIC and its locality in time and space is a mutually reinforcing one, as time and space become 'part of the doing' of TOEIC and are sustained in its practices (Pennycook, 2010, p. 56).

A Re-Localization of Ideologies in Confines and Controls

The locality of TOEIC is not innocuous or accidental. It is ideological not least because it involves a re-inscription, re-appropriation, reassignment, or otherwise a re-localization of meanings and values, all ascribable

to the working of ideology. To better understand this, I will (1) first explain my approach which follows Thrift's (2008) observations on spatiality and then (2) examine two TOEIC-related artifacts to make a case that power and power relations are 're-localized' through space-related projects and designs, legitimated through the workings of ideology. I will also comment on how such ideologies bear on the cultural politics of Japanese society at large.

My approach in this section is guided by observations on spatiality in Thrift (2008), who in turn draws on perceptions found in Chapters 7 and 8 of de Certeau's (1984) widely-read work, *The Practice of Everyday Life* called 'Walking in the City' (retitled 'Practices of Space' in Blonsky's (1985) edited collection *On Signs*) about the experience of spatial practices in the modern city and 'Railway Navigation and Incarceration' which concerns among other matters, how totalizing regimentation can put people in a state of enforced passivity. Specifically, I will trace two important motifs that Thrift (2008) extrapolates from de Certeau: walking through strategically organized spaces (Chapter 7) and enforced order and 'immobility' (Chapter 8).

Thrift (2008) quotes from de Certeau's description of how, viewed 1,350 feet above from New York's World Trade Center, 'millions of walking bodies'

follow the cursives and strokes of an urban 'text' they write without reading. These practitioners employ spaces that are not self-aware; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of one body for another...The paths that interconnect in this network, strange poems of which each body is an element down by and among many others, elude being read. Everything happens as though some blindness were the hallmark of the process. (de Certeau's 'Practices of Space' as cited in Thrift, 2008, p. 76)

This powerful and almost ethereal stream of (un)consciousness provides a useful starting point from which to 'walk' through two TOEIC-related artifacts: the answer sheet and question booklet. One is reminded that they are used by literally a million test-takers a year, people who willy-nilly help to write the TOEIC 'text' without so much as reading into its spatiality and power-laden ideology. This is what I seek to do here.

Like the millions of bodies weaving through de Certeau's panoptical urban spaces, test-takers are arguably in a virtual state of non-awareness. The spatiality enacted in the answer sheet and question booklet remains strange poems that elude being read – something I hope will no longer be the case by the end of this analysis.

The Answer Sheet

While I want to avoid copyright issues that come with reproducing a copy of the answer sheet, it is nevertheless important that the answer sheet be examined for what it reveals. The version examined is the popular TOEIC (Institutional Program) answer sheet used for the 120-minute test of listening (45 minutes, 100 questions) and reading (75 minutes, 100 questions). The listening section has multiple-choice questions covering picture recognition, conversations, monologues and short talks. The reading section comprises questions on grammar, vocabulary and passages covering different genres (emails, advertisements, news reports). Test-takers indicate their responses by pencil-shading appropriate spaces. The sheets are machine-scored.

Topography of the Answer Sheet

The answer sheet has 2 sides (A and B). Side A has 12 sections asking for personal information (date-of-birth, gender, registration number), institutional information (institutional and department numbers), and survey responses. Test answers are shaded on Side B. Test-takers fill their names 3 times, twice on side A, once on B.

The survey has questions on:

- Matriculation, whether through: the Admissions Office, the Academy Entrance Examination, the Returnee Entrance Examination, Public Recommendation, Qualification or Certification, High School Recommendation, Faculty Entrance Examination, All-Faculties Entrance Examination, the Centralized Examination or Special Society's Examination

- Study major and test-taking history (STEP, TOEFL etc.)
- English language experience: years of study, Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening skill-levels, time spent using English, difficulties with English, experience living overseas and reason for living overseas
- TOEIC experience: number of times, date of last test, reasons for taking test (job application, promotion, graduation requirement, evaluation of program effectiveness, needs diagnosis).

Critiquing Answer Sheet Topography and Ideology

The answer sheet is a facsimile of rows, columns and grids. Its gridded distribution resembles the spatial, particularly mapping, strategies evoked in de Certeau:

Can the vast texturology beneath our gaze be anything but a representation? An optical artifact. The analogue to the facsimile which, through a kind of distancing, produces the space planner, the city planner, or the map-maker. (de Certeau, 1985, p. 124)

The repeated requirement to fill one's name resembles documents of regulation and control like immigration forms at border-crossings, where something as representative of humanity as one's name has to be scribed repetitively within boxed demarcations. Ideologically, this re-localizes the TOEIC as an instrument of regulation.

Calling the answer sheet as such is half a misnomer because it is also a survey form. The survey questions reveal particularized mindsets and ideologies about English and higher education. The question on matriculation surreptitiously naturalizes TOEIC's attachment to higher education, whereas it will be seen (below) that its bit-item format actually runs counter to the dynamics of academic literacy (Lillis, 2003). The question on test-taking experience naturalizes standardized bit-item testing (TOEIC, STEP or TOEFL) as 'routine' and 'normal'. The question on overseas experience insinuates TOEIC as a means to a wide world of opportunities, evoking globalization-as-opportunity ideology (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). The mention of the bespoke 4-skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) positions the TOEIC within extremely particularized TESOL-TEFL conceptualizations of English teaching which Holliday (2005) considers professionally narrow and reductionist.

The way test-takers' responses are compressed into one sheet of grids and boxes suggests conceptual reductionism. For academic literacies scholars, such testing is as disempowering as it is stiflingly monologic. These scholars recognize knowledge and meaning as discursively constructed and negotiated through language (Lillis, 2003; Street, 2003), not apparent within the strictures of bit-item testing where meanings are 'fixed' in right or wrong answers rather than through thoughtful negotiation.

Ironically, the TOEIC is seen (and exculpated) officially as a 'progressive' test. Sasaki (2008), in her seminal piece on 150 years of English assessment in Japan, describes how changes in policy after 2002 have been informed by a 'continuing progress of globalization' leading to the government's 'announcement of *A Strategic Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"*' (p. 76). The one-hundred 'Super English Language High Schools' scheme (Sasaki, 2008, p. 77) was promptly launched where teachers had to attain 730 in TOEIC. The government also persuaded universities to 'replace part of their entrance examinations with commercially based tests (e.g. TOEIC)' (Sasaki, 2008, p. 77). TOEIC became part of millennial initiatives heralding and auguring progress. One is reminded of an astute piece of wisdom by a noted academic literacies writer:

If we want learners to develop and enhance the richness and complexity of literacy practices...we need curricula and assessment that are themselves rich and complex...In order to develop rich and complex curricula and assessment for literacy, we need models of literacy and pedagogy that capture the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices. (Street, 2003, p. 84)

Moreover, De Certeau's observations from above Manhattan bear repetition here because they parallel how teachers and students are subjected to 'follow[ing] the cursives and strokes of an urban 'text' they write without reading. [They] employ spaces that are not self-aware; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of one body for another' (de Certeau, 1984, as cited in Thrift, 2008, p. 76).

The Question Booklet, Processes and Procedures

The previous section uncovered the ideological nature of TOEIC as borne out in the answer sheet. Beginning with observations about the question booklet, this section traces TOEIC's processes and procedures.

Questioning the Sealed Question Booklet

On the booklet cover are boxes designated for test-takers' names and registration numbers. This is despite the rule that nothing should ever be written in it, no notes or scribbling. Having test-takers (once again) write their names and identify themselves on the booklet is therefore contradictory. One reason may be to deter note taking. My own feeling about such regulation is that it demonstrates a tendency towards over-management, indicating structure-to-structure hegemonic practices (discussed later).

The question booklet exemplifies circumscribed or prohibited space. Each booklet is tape-sealed – test-takers undo the seal only when the order to do so is given. Proctors are allowed access to one booklet to monitor the test in case of problems with the sound recording. This booklet is to be marked 'For test-administrator's use', and must be duly returned along with the test-takers' copies, which cannot be taken away for self-study. Proctors are required to account for their exact numbers.

Tracking the Process: Mass Transportation and Incarceration

Before the test, proctors are briefed on a whole choreography of procedures by staff from the university administration. It is ironic how TOEIC, a language test, becomes the manifest concern of office administrators. On test days, a 'control center' is set up in an adjacent room. Bureaucrats from academic-affairs preside somberly over the days' proceedings, up to the final counting of booklets and answer sheets before everything is hurriedly couriered away in sealed boxes for scoring.

On test days, test-takers (and proctors) are spirited into a 120-minute time-space reminiscent of the passive immobility that de Certeau (1984, as cited in Thrift, 2008) observes in people confined within the carriages of mass transportation. Thrift (2008) notes that for de Certeau, 'the train (and the bus)...is a "travelling incarceration" in which human bodies are able to be ordered; though the carriage is mobile, the passengers are immobile' (p. 78):

Only a rationalized cell travels. A bubble of panoptic and classifying power, a module of imprisonment that makes possible the production of an order, a closed and autonomous insularity (de Certeau, 1984, as cited in Thrift, 2008, p. 78)

Thrift (2008) further highlights De Certeau's description of the contrived experience of people inside the carriage (or test, in this case):

There is an immobility of an order...Everything is in its place...Every being is placed there like a piece of printer's type on a page arranged in military order. This order [is] an organization system (de Certeau, 1984, as cited in Thrift, 2008, p. 79).

The incarceration metaphor applies not only to test-takers. Proctors maintain a heightened state of somber vigilance, pacing enclosed areas half the size of an indoor pool. Unfortunately, there was this case of an experienced proctor who tripped over one of the tiers of a lecture hall ending up in hospital with stitches, falling haplessly while literally pacing the spaces of TOEIC.

Re-localized Ideologies

So what is the purpose of putting test-takers through such a surrealistic paranormal (and I would argue, para-educational) experience? Why are test-takers willingly complaint within such a reticulation of contrived arrangements? What hidden secrets and agendas lie behind TOEIC that ratifies its almost mythical status?

English-as-Opportunity Ideology

To answer these questions, an important observation should be made about the workings of ideology. If people are to be herded into compliance, there has to be some fairly powerful magic, ideology or mythology, or in de Certeau's (1985, p. 127) words, 'mythifying' that needs to go on: like how TOEIC opens a wonderful new galaxy of employment opportunities, high salaries and personal self-esteem (Kubota, 2011). Such promises are what de Certeau (1985, p. 127) identifies as 'a finite number of stable and isolatable elements, each articulated to the other' – rationalized, acontextual and unchangeable advantages feeding on each other and on the credulity of people. Paralleling globalization-as-opportunity ideology (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011), the myth is told that life will be great if one takes the TOEIC. Left uncontested, the mythical ideological correlation between TOEIC, glamor, success and overseas living is naturalized as common sense.

TOEIC is re-localized within the trappings of the good life.

English-as-Threat Ideology

Contrasting the good life is a somewhat darker aspect of the matter. In my experience, TOEIC is administered to EAP students as part of their *EAP* grading. Discrete right-or-wrong answers do not match the challenges of using language for academic inquiry (Lillis, 2003). Neither can academic English be found in truncated voiceovers of phone messages, airports announcements or picture descriptions. The fragmenting of language into itemized and atomized bits and the decontextualized nature of the test passages suggest (violent) acts of fragmentation through selection, truncation and censorship, stifling English as a resource for study and sense making (Seargeant, 2009).

What comes across is a feeling that English must be restricted and controlled, its potential as an academic resource, curtailed. The question booklet itself epitomizes over-management and exclusion, from its tape-sealing to the paranoia of its abrupt repossession after the test. TOEIC is re-localized into the spaces of English's foreignness, a language that must be controlled, curtailed and Othered vis-à-vis the incumbency of the Japanese language, not meant to be real or meaningful for the Japanese (Seargeant, 2009). For this very reason, TOEIC has to be caged within the contrived and clinicized confines of pedantic test items, gridded sheets and sealed booklets, besides the crassness and sterility of over-managed procedures. It is as if the Japanese cannot (or actually do not want to) allow English the space it needs to function as an academic language, despite how Japanese universities are now wanting to use it for delivery of content courses (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011)

Thus, TOEIC becomes an enactment and project(ion) of the re-localization of English, a brainchild of Japan, Inc. (McCrostie, 2009) and a corporatized (and deliberately sterilized) expression of what English proficiency is supposedly about in Japanese 'education'. At another level, it is what McNamara and Roever (2006), writing about the social implications of language testing, call a cue of identity, a tool of resistance through ideological acts of exclusion, a mutated form that stifles authentic construction and negotiation of knowledge and meaning (Lillis, 2003). Recalling earlier discussion, *uchi* is said to be 'the space for close, intimate relations', speaking 'of involvement' (Makino, 2002, p. 31). *Soto* on the other hand, represents *terra incognita*, the foreign, the frightening and the unfamiliar (Makino, 2002). TOEIC as a commodity form of Japan, Inc. re-localizes English as both foreign and *soto*. Its choreographed processes and practices dramatize an ideology that relegates English to being an alien language. Viewed as such, TOEIC is a triumph of form over function, both a distractor and decoy for English as a language for academic inquiry, keeping EAP at bay and rendering it dysfunctional.

Ironically, content courses in English are vaunted as a top selling point in university advertising campaigns, very crucial for institutional survival as universities clamber for more enrolments given Japan's bespoken low birthrate (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011).

Structure-to-Structure Localism

Unfortunately, such renegade versions of re-localization reinforce the institutional structures and ideologies that help police them. The outcome is a form of localism that unrelentingly affirms bureaucratic structures. Canagarajah (2005) notes that localism is a consequence of the paranoia of external challenges which drive local concerns to 'retreat further into more stubborn and unreasonable position(s) in...desperate attempt(s) to maintain...independence' (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 12), something reminiscent of the determined drive toward inward frontiers (Hashimoto, 2007). This is also a reminder of 'educational enterprises of fundamentalist circles...developing controlled forms of...schooling' while 'suppressing...critical thinking' (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 12). Canagarajah (2005) acknowledges that such controls are perpetuated to uphold established or traditional structures, but lead unfortunately 'to an extreme form of localism' (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 12). Pernicious and even chauvinistic forms of localism exist where institutional structures, agendas and ideologies (here associated with English and the TOEIC) take priority over emancipatory outcomes like open-mindedness, fairness and humanization (Freire, 2000).

In this connection, the following observation from McVeigh (2006) is very thought-provoking: 'If higher education is an extension of a polity's bureaucratic machinery...then it is all too easy to prioritize administration (structures) over academics...And when academics succumbs to over-administration, it is only a short step to getting caught in the cycle of "from structure back again to structure" and forgetting the original purpose of structures. Strategic visions, plans, and organizational charts begin to take on a reality of their own' (McVeigh, 2006, p. 139).

I have observed such structure-to-structure localism at close call. From student recruitment to the traditional job-hunting exercise some four years later, TOEIC's 'arithmetical particularism' (Carlson & Apple, 1998, p. 9) mediates each stage, in conveyor-belt fashion. Recruitment advertisements and campus open-days are part of the fierce bid for students, given Japan's infamously low birthrate. Recruitment advertisements typically use TOEIC classes as selling point alongside the 'promise' of attaining high scores. Students, once enrolled, are quickly placed on the conveyor-belt of TOEIC tests and classes. Even EAP lesson time, slated supposedly for the engenderment of academic literacies, is portioned out for TOEIC practice. TOEIC scores are factored into students' EAP grade, upending the teaching of academic literacies. EAP students are grouped and streamed according to TOEIC scores. At faculty meetings, TOEIC scores are measured against national and regional averages. Come job-hunting, TOEIC scores are tendered as a testimony of fine English. All of these indicate the tyranny of structure-to-structure localism.

Ironically, despite careful over-management, parents and students may still be confused. Content courses in English, EAP and TOEIC are often conflated – in the mistaken assumption that studying content courses in English automatically leads to higher TOEIC scores, while higher TOEIC scores get mistaken for heightened academic ability. Such confusion viciously reinforces another mistaken assumption that students weak in TOEIC will benefit from studying academic courses in English as a backhandedly roundabout way to higher TOEIC scores, much to the consternation of faculty professors who do not see themselves as surrogate TOEIC teachers. The honest truth, which is that TOEIC, EAP and content courses in English are vastly different in curricular and pedagogical epistemologies, is hidden in the dissimulating nature of ideology and the formidably imposing nature of structure-to-structure relations.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought a deeper understanding of spatial, territorial and hence ideological meanings of the TOEIC test, their enactments and their ramifications in Japanese educational and socio-political spaces. Apart from the dehumanizing aspects of structure-to-structure localism, my analysis has revealed a re-localization of ideologies resulting in seriously misplaced educational priorities, virtually a case of a mis-localization rather than a re-localization of ideologies. Coupled with the fact that TOEIC is a mercantilist entity that derives for itself a voracious marketplace appetite for language testing, the need for critical reflection among educators and policy makers becomes very urgent. Reflexive voices will need to contest and destabilize existing ideologies as well as inequitable and para-credible practices by engaging in critical discussions in the professional domains available. Hopefully, such critical reflection will eventually bring about more ethical and professionally accountable practices.

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Science Education and the Metaphysics of Measurement

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Abstract

'Science' grounds the meaning and significance of the practices, values and norms of the scientist. 'Science' also grounds the work of the science teacher and allows her to distinguish herself from other educational disciplinarians. 'Science' doubly blesses the science education researcher, for she inherits 'Science' both as an indirect object of inquiry and the means of legitimating the methods of that inquiry. Is it possible then, that despite the differences between the respective works of the scientist, the science teacher and the science education researcher, each may be measured against the common ground of 'Science'? This paper explores this question by taking 'Science' here in its metaphysical sense. The paper aims to respond, aphoristically and poetically, to the question of what, if anything, should secure the meaning of science, science teaching and science education research. It will do so by drawing upon the later philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger.

Keywords: Science Education, Metaphysics

The Worlds of Science and Science Education

It appears that great contribution to philosophy by existential philosophers over the past two centuries or so have failed to penetrate attempts to understand the nature of science as it pertains to science education. Science education, like the sciences, is still burdened by the metaphysical search for the kind of certainty that the existentialists have long asked us to abandon in favour of a more robust acceptance of plurality and personal commitment. Coming to understand where this metaphysical tendency comes from becomes a worthwhile philosophical project in itself. But it is a project that first demands of us a thorough exploration of the metaphysical terrain of science itself. And yet, the very object of our inquiry – science – introduces here, at the beginning of our inquiry, the first great hurdle.

It is important from the outset to draw a distinction between philosophical work that contributes to that broad field we might refer to as philosophy of science, and that much narrower – and perhaps more neglected area – of philosophy of science education. It might be assumed that if one were to foster and nurture philosophical inquiry and debate in the former area; then the results of that philosophical work would trickle down into inquiries into the philosophical aspects of science education. This assumption is reasonable if we take 'science' as something which is common to both 'the sciences' and 'science education'. That is, 'science' is something that scientists are in the business of producing and practicing, and 'science' – as the set of such practices and products – is what is of concern to the science teacher in the classroom. For most then, 'science' and 'science education' are joined at the hip by 'science'.

A distinction between these two 'sciences' is not a denial of the significant overlap between 'the science' of 'the sciences' and 'the science' of 'science education'. Any overlap is surely made possible by the overlapping ontologies of these disciplines – what Heidegger would have referred to early in his writings as 'regional ontologies' (Heidegger 2002/1938). An atom *is* for the scientists, as much as it *is* for the science teacher (or the science student for that matter). If photosynthesis is a process that exists in the biology classroom, then it exists there by virtue of its first being present in the biology laboratory.

But we should be cautious about making such a hasty identification of overlapping ontologies. There is a danger here of falling prey to the tendency to consider only – to borrow a phrase from Wittgenstein – the ‘surface grammar’ of science rather than the ‘depth grammar’ of science (Wittgenstein 1953; p. 109, §664). The research chemist uses the word atom in her work, for sure; but its place in the linguistic practices of the laboratory may be very different to the usage of the term ‘atom’ in the chemistry classroom. The ontology of the scientist – which includes such entities as atoms – consists not of discrete objects with properties, but rather a complex set of things that are made meaningful and useful when understood within the vast complex of practices and relationships that exist in the laboratory. What is true of the science laboratory is also true of the science classroom. A casual observer could be forgiven for thinking that the ‘atoms’ under discussion in the chemistry classroom are the same as the ‘atoms’ in play in the language games of the chemist.

There is another way to bring clarity to our understanding of how the ontologies of science and science education can at once have entities in common and yet also have entities that are unique to the practices and relationships that constitute each discipline. What we are trying to capture here is analogous to the distinction von Uexküll draws between the ‘environment’ beings find themselves in and the *umwelt* of each being within that environment (von Uexküll, 1987). Although the ant and the snail occupy the same physical environment, the *umwelt* (or ‘world’) of the snail is very different to that of the ant. For example, the *umwelt* of the ant encompasses its social being in the world, whereas the snail is confined largely to an *umwelt* defined in part by its solitary progress with its home on its back. Just as at every turn we *could* encounter entities in an ‘environment’ common to both the ant and the snail; a perspective that instead properly considers the intimate attunement of each being to its environment reveals worlds that belong uniquely to each being: belonging not in the sense of possession, but by way of adaptive attunement. The perspective afforded to us by the idea of *umwelten*, shifts our gaze away from mere ‘matter’ to ‘what matters’. The world of the ant takes in what matters to it – as a social being that acts on and in its world – and not merely what is available to it as an environmental resource. It is possible, then, for an ant that is lost, for it to remain in its environment, and yet by virtue of its lack of attunement to its being in that environment socially, no longer has access to its original social *umwelt*.

The philosophical framework we choose to distinguish between the ‘science’ of the laboratory and the ‘science’ of the classroom shapes how we interpret our encounters with and our access to ‘science’. But it may also be the case that our encounters with science and our access to science have determined the boundaries between these two worlds. So, when the Australian Chief Scientist, Ian Chubb (2013), calls for giving teachers and students greater access to the ‘world’ of science and scientists in an effort to stem the flow of students away from science subjects at school, which ‘world’ of science is he referring to? Could it be, like the parable of the snail and the ant, that he is promising teachers and students access to the ‘environment’ of scientists without considering whether it is even possible for students and teachers to access the *umwelten* of scientists? If both the work of scientists and science educators are to be measured up against ‘science’, what is this ‘science’?

The answers to these questions hinge upon the question of whether there is a single, unified, independent ‘environment’ of science ‘out there’ – an environment that is as sure as the ground upon which snails crawl and ants walk. For the realist Rom Harré (2002; p. 20) the ‘human *umwelt*’ is such a realm, for while it distinguishes between the world accessible to humans and the world accessible to non-humans, it makes no distinction between the world of the scientist and the science educator. If we hold to this position, then, the only ‘science’ available to us is the science we associate with the exploration and expansion of the *human umwelt*. And since it is the scientists, whom through the use of conceptual and physical instruments are responsible for this task, the human *umwelt* becomes univocally the ‘science’ of the scientists. This is certainly consistent with and reinforces the view that the ontology of the sciences is prior to that of science education.

However, the question concerning the distinction between science and science education is more than simply an ontological question – that is, one that asks after what *is*. For it is clear that the *human umwelt* has significance to scientists and science educators far beyond providing an ever-expanding catalogue of the things available to scientific minds and instruments; otherwise we would see no reason to distinguish an ‘environment’ from an *umwelt*. The dual nature of science as that which provides “what is” but also “what matters” to us is captured well in Heidegger’s conception of metaphysics as *ontotheology*. As he puts it:

If we recollect the history of Western-European thinking once more, then we will encounter the following: The question of being, as the question of the being of entities, is double in form. On the one hand, it asks: What is an entity in general as an entity? In the history of philosophy, reflections which fall within the domain of this question acquire the title ontology. The question “What is an entity?” simultaneously asks: Which entity is the highest entity, and in what sense is it? This is the question of God and the divine. We call the domain of this question theology. This duality in the question of the being of entities can be united under the title ontotheology. (Heidegger, 1976, p. 499; quoted in Thomson 2005).

Questioning the metaphysical basis of science and science education is not merely an academic exercise. For if we take a stance towards science that gives priority to the *umwelt* of the sciences ahead of that of science education, then we run the risk of negating or neglecting the possibility of science education having its own claim to a world of science that is related to but autonomous of the world of science set up by scientists. Scientists have always had a direct or indirect influence on shaping the educational landscape of science education. And where once their influence was felt through their input into policy, curriculum, and assessment; in an age where the metaphysical ‘truth’ of science no longer holds sway, scientists have taken to trying to reconstruct both science teachers and science students. They frame teachers as lacking knowledge of the cutting edge developments in science – the latest breakthroughs from the front-line of science, without which teachers’ work becomes anachronistic. The students of science are shaped by a rhetoric that has them ‘disengaged’ with science – the story of a generation that has somehow strayed from the path of interest and commitment to the values of science.

The prioritizing the science of the sciences ahead of a distinctive *umwelt* of science education gives priority to the world of science in two ways. Firstly, it gives priority to the ontology of science. The entities of the science classroom must first come into being in the science laboratory; only later can they be transported into the classroom and become a part of the discourses and practices of science education. In this view, it is not the case that scientists and science educators share a common environment but differ in their *umwelten*: instead there is only the *umwelt* of the sciences. The science of the sciences – with its epistemology, praxis, etc – stands in an a-priori relationship to the science of the classroom. This second aspect of prioritizing the science of scientists captures the notion that this kind of scientific science is the ultimate source or origin of the very possibility of the entities of the science classroom existing. Thus, the science of the sciences functions ontotheologically for science education – providing an answer to the question of what *is* and also the question of what is *the source of the being* of those entities which are.

That Which Gathers a People

In his recent series of Gifford Lectures, Bruno Latour examined Natural Religion; contending that the ‘Nature’ in ‘Natural Religion’ constituted an entity that gathers a people in much the same way as a deity or deities would in any other religion, rendering Natural Religion a pleonasm (Latour 2013). His project was motivated by his concern that Nature, as it is conceived and appropriated by scientists (and those who accept the scientific view of nature directly or indirectly), is insufficiently secular to meet the demands of the current age – the Anthropocene – in which ‘Nature’ is no longer a mere backdrop to the affairs of human actors, but an agent that shapes and is shaped by human beings’ inter-connectedness with it. Latour’s project is not a negative one – not simply a post-modern critique of the metaphysical tendencies of science. For Latour looks to James Lovelock’s Gaia as a candidate for an entity that might gather a people in the age of the Anthropocene in an entirely secular – and I might add non-metaphysical – way. The relationship between humans and other agents in the world called forth by Lovelock’s Gaia is of the kind that existentialists have championed for centuries as a way of being in and with the world. Latour sees Gaia as an entity that does justice to the plurality of agents in the world; the reciprocity between the actions of these agents; and the sense in which we are drawn into a condition of necessary attunement with other beings.

Along the path of his argument, Latour sketches out the features he thinks are common to all entities that gather a people: for instance, in the sense that the entity Nature gathers Naturalistic scientists, or the entity we call the Christian God gathers the Christian people. The four broad characteristics he ascribes to such entities

are: exteriority, unity, animation and indisputability. It may be possible, then to use these features to examine the degree to which the metaphysical foundations of the science of scientists and the science of science education differ, and if so in what ways. The aim here is to consider the possibility of differentiating between ‘science’ of scientists and ‘science’ of science educators on the basis of their respective metaphysical foundations. Latour’s analysis of the ‘entities that gather a people’ may be useful in this regard if we read the ‘gathering of a people’ in a metaphysical light. This requires a further argument that I shall return to later in my discussion of the metaphysics from a Heideggerian perspective. Suffice to say that it is possible for a people to be gathered by entities that promise the kind of certainty and stability that existentialists have long eschewed. So, there is merit in applying Latour’s framework if only to examine the possibility of transcending the metaphysical tendencies that science fulfils in different ways for both scientists and science teachers.

What is particularly striking about Latour’s analysis of the sciences, and pertinent to the question of what kind of science is accessible to science teachers and their students, is the degree to which the entity that gathers scientists – Nature – is also the site of a tension that scientists themselves have failed to properly acknowledge. Latour highlights the tension by revealing the contradictions that arise from the four features when we factor in scientists’ relationship to Nature. Firstly, for scientists, Nature is entirely exterior. Nature stands apart from us; the entities that make it up and processes that occur in it (like tsunamis and osmosis) are not dependent on the whims, fancies or subjectivity of human beings. Yet, when we consider how Nature is accessed, we realize that it is the complex network of practices of the scientists that make Nature appear as it does. The development of instruments, the dissemination of results, debates at conferences, fieldwork, etc., all bring Nature into the light of human consciousness. Secondly, scientists take Nature as unified, so that the complexity and variety of processes are assumed to be unified under the laws of nature. But the degree to which the multiplicity of processes in nature can be reduced to laws of nature is often overstated – the broad conformity between models of Nature and Nature itself break down at the microscopic level of attention to detail. Thirdly, the Nature of the scientist is inert: Nature is not animated – it does no act. And yet we are confronted with the overwhelming impression that nature is full of activity and animation, with everything expressing its own kind of agency. Finally, Latour contends that scientists would have it that Nature was indisputable – one cannot argue against the brute reality of Nature. But this is based on the products of science more so than the process of science. Every indisputable ‘fact’ is the result of a great deal of controversy and debate within the scientific community.

We see from this account that Nature, as the entity that gathers scientists, is characterized by being exterior to humans while also being accessible from inside the practices of science; nature is unified under a set of laws but is still flexible enough for divergence from these laws at the scales at which it is investigated by scientists; nature is physically inert but the agencies of entities that make it up proliferate through the work of science. And finally, it is only by virtue of the dynamic and controversial nature of the scientific methods that we encounter facts about Nature as incontrovertible. Latour labels these two dimensions the Epistemological and Critical versions of Nature, respectively, and argues that scientists find it difficult to accept that the entity under which they are gathered has these contradictory aspects, and furthermore that it is difficult for them to accept the necessity of the tension between these contradictory aspects. Nature, as it gathers scientists, has neither one nor the other countenance, but both.

With this picture in mind, we can begin to see the points of convergence and divergence between the science of the sciences and the science of science education. If science is taken as our encounter with Nature, then it is easy to see how scientists and science educators can be thought to share a common – or largely overlapping ontology. If our encounter with Nature is an epistemological one, then both scientists and science educators have an equal claim to accessing a common Nature. For Nature is equally exterior to both the practices of scientists and non-scientists. Nature, as unified and inanimate, cares not for how scientists work collectively to approach it, nor how teachers choose to teach about it. Nature stands as indisputable regardless of how humans might choose to distinguish between the science of the laboratory and the science of the classroom. This epistemological view of science and Nature is consistent with the view that scientists and science educators inhabit the same ‘environment’. But is a shared commitment – a gathering under – this epistemologically dominated entity sufficient to say that the scientist and the science educators measure up against the same ‘world’ of ‘science’: the same *umwelt*? And more importantly for contemporary debates about students’ (dis)-

engagement with science: what kind of access to the *umwelt* of scientists is possible for those gathered within the *umwelt* of science education; and vice versa?

Perhaps the answer to the question of access to the science of scientists (or science educators for that matter) is found in the Critical approach to Nature. That is, by searching for points of distinction between the practices of scientists and science educators from a critical perspective. The more we examine the companions to the four elements of exteriority, unification, in-animation and indisputability, the more the *unwelten* of scientists and science educators disentangle. In the science classroom, the Nature that emerges from, and is constructed by, the practices that occur therein is not the Nature that resides inside the practices of scientists. To borrow a phrase from Thompson, the practices that take place in the science classroom simply do not afford the construction of meaning and interpretation that is possible in the discourse of the scientific community. Likewise, the kind of multiplicity that arises from scientific practices is different from that which results from pedagogical practices in the classroom. The vast literature on scientific conceptions, mis-conceptions and conceptual change points to a differentiation between what scientists and teachers take as the relationship between the Critical and Epistemological dimensions of Nature. The degree to which Nature is animated or de-animated by scientists and non-scientists is not easily determined. Much like the question of how indisputable we would have Nature be, the degree of animation permitted is a function of how much priority is given to the epistemological stance.

If we accept that both scientists and science educators have access to the same ‘environment’ through their common encounter with Nature through the Epistemological stance; and if we accept that the practices of science and science education are sufficiently different (from a Critical perspective) to constitute different *unwelten*; then how do we construct or negotiate any meaningful exchange between scientists and science educators (or non-scientists more broadly)? Were scientists and science educators to have vastly different epistemological commitments, would the question perhaps not be so urgent or so important?

There are two avenues for overcoming the impasse created by having scientists and science educators measuring up to the same epistemological view of Nature while disagreeing precisely about how Nature emerges from within their respective practices. The first pathway is one in which there is a more robust commitment from each party to the uniqueness of their respective metaphysical stances. And that commitment may come from a greater acknowledgment of the fact that what constitutes the worlds of science and science education is the necessary tension between the epistemological and critical dimensions of science. While scientists and science educators would like to see themselves as gathered by Epistemological Nature; they cannot deny the reality that what defines them as scientists and science educators (and what distinguished one group from the other) is the capacity to hold these contradictory aspects together: both in what they take to exist and what they take to matter. Such an approach would do away with the view that the science of the scientists somehow has priority over the science of the science classroom. The second approach is to question that very role that the entity of Nature plays in both the worlds of the scientist and the science teacher.

Beyond Metaphysics

If we apply Heidegger’s ontotheological view of metaphysics to the questions of what constitutes the proper ‘science’ of science education, then we begin to see that the ‘science’ of the science classroom, if it is to function metaphysically, must serve two inter-related roles. Firstly, it must provide an account of what *is* in the world; and secondly it must set up a being which, to use Heidegger’s phrase is the “highest being”. The latter is provided for by Nature if we take Nature to have the four characteristic features of exteriority, unity, under-animation and indisputability described by Latour. Moreover, it is by virtue of the epistemological character of, or construction of Nature that it can serve this role as well for science educators as for scientists.

Latour points out that scientists in practice do not take Nature merely as that which is exterior, unified, under-animated and indisputable. Nature is also that which is disclosed by the practices of scientists and is, therefore, interior, multiple, animated and controversial. But unlike the theological dimension of science, which the scientist and the science educator could be said to share, there are likely to be vast difference between what is considered interior to the practices of scientists versus the practices of science educators. It is also highly unlikely that the multiplicity in interpretations in the science classroom is going to be that same as that

encountered in the laboratory; and nor will the entities in the classroom be animated in quite the same way across these contexts. Furthermore, we should not expect scientific controversy in the classroom to be identical with that in the scientific discourse of scientists. Both the ‘science’ of the scientists and the ‘science’ of the science classroom share a metaphysical structure that bifurcates our theological and the ontological approach to Nature. Both conceptions of science share a common theology that is grounded in empiricism. Yet we can distinguish them by the practices and relations they afford since each results in a different *umwelt*.

But there is another aspect to Heidegger’s thinking about metaphysics that may be more pertinent to our attempts to deal with the metaphysical commitments or tendencies of both the sciences and science education. And that is Heidegger’s suggestion that historically the distinction between the ontological and the theological has manifested – shown up as it were – differently in particular epochs. More importantly for Heidegger (with respect to the Western philosophical tradition) within the epoch of pre-Socratic Greece, people had no need for metaphysics. In polytheistic Greece, people were not gathered under a particular entity as a way of securing certainty in an uncertain world. For the pre-Socratics, being was associated with *phusis*: a way of being that arises, lingers and withdraws through one’s attunement to the world. Heidegger saw this pre-metaphysical epoch disappear as it gave way the Philosophic Greek, Christian, Modern and Nietzschean/Technological epochs. In each of these subsequent epochs, the ontological and the theological aspects of truth and being were expressed in different ways, but nonetheless, all were committed to metaphysics (see Wrathall 2011; p. 212 ff).

The need for scientists and science educators to find certainty and stability in and through a cognitive construction of Nature (as Epistemological Nature say; or Critical Nature; or even a combination of Epistemological and Critical) continues this metaphysical tendency. Moreover, we could look to Heidegger’s historical account of the truth of being to see the recurrence and preservation of particular ontotheological assumptions in scientists’ or science educators’ views of Nature. For instance the pure exteriority of Epistemological Nature sits comfortably within the ontotheological framework of Modernity with its separation of subject and objects and the strong commitment to understanding Nature so as to have cognitive or physical control over it. We may also see something of the impulse of the technological ontotheology in scientists’ concerns and strategies around trying to optimize the human resources available to the machinery of that industry we call science.

The point is not that any particular metaphysical foundation to science or science education is preferable to another, or that the ontotheology that is characteristic of one epoch is any better than that of another. What is important is the acknowledgment of a plurality of ways of disclosing being. That is, recognising that we are gathered under different kinds of entities: there is no single ‘science’ against which we can measure the truth of the work of scientists, science educators and science students alike. Or as Mark Wrathall puts it:

Heidegger believes that our highest, postmetaphysical dignity is to be disclosers of different understandings of being, none of which can be understood as getting closer or further away from the ultimate truth or reality. (Wrathall, 2011; p. 242)

It is with kind of plurality in mind that we should ask how science education measures up to the metaphysical promise of science.

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The Difficulty of Ethics Education of Science and Technology for Adults in Japan after FUKUSHIMA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to infer the following with my practice of scientific and technological ethics education for adults in Japan: how the Japanese citizens' idea about the control of science and technology changed since the Fukushima nuclear plant accident that occurred due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011. In conclusion, it is clarified that the following popular public opinion is unfounded: Japanese citizen noticed that it was dangerous that they left decisions concerning science and technology to professionals and specialists, and they recognized that it was important that the citizen participate in the policy decision on science and technology since the nuclear plant accident in Fukushima. On the contrary, it seems that the tendency the citizens leave the decision concerning science and technology to specialist and professionals has accelerated more. As grounds of an argument of this inference, I use the discussion by citizen in scientific and technological ethics cafes which have been held in Tochigi Prefecture, the next prefecture to Fukushima, since 2011.

Keywords: Ethics of science and technology, Adult education, Fukushima

Introduction

Before the nuclear accident in Fukushima, it was not easy for ordinary citizens and specialists to discuss the pros and cons of nuclear power plants in the context of ethics in science and technology. Some would contend that the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power plants are closely tied to the problem of politics and economics. Moreover, any discussion of modern rationalism based on the economic priority of having a regular supply of 'cheap, stable power' must consider the technological versatility principle which dictates that safety measures in a nuclear power plant will not be effective until both safety and utility are discussed in the context of technological ethics. In addition, since the nuclear accident, wary and dissatisfied citizens who oppose the government's decision to reopen some plants have resisted publically by demonstrating because nuclear power plant re-operation has solely been based on a technological versatility principle supported by economic and political logic.

To enable a breakthrough, I point out the necessity of discussing the merits and demerits of nuclear power plants, not from the viewpoint of politics and economics, but from the view of ethics in science and technology, followed by elucidation of the effectiveness of this strategy.

Discussion about nuclear power energy in science cafes before and after FUKUSHIMA

According to website data of the Japan Science and Technology Agency, comparing 'the information on science cafes that were held in Japan in January-February of 2008' with 'the information on science cafes that were held in Japan in January-February of 2012' has revealed the following (Ueno, 2008a, pp.20f.): Firstly, there has been no large scale discussion regarding the merits and demerits of the nuclear power energy at science cafes in Japan either before or after the nuclear accident in Fukushima, in March, 2011. Secondly, themes related to romantic aspects of science (like space exploration) and science as a utility (like life sciences and medical treatment) have become popular at science cafes.

Science cafes were held in 31 places in January 2008, in 43 places in February 2008, in 107 places in January 2012 and in 120 places in February 2012. The following six themes were popular in science cafes that were held both in January-February of 2008 and in January-February of 2012. The two percentages, from left to right, refer to the topics discussed in cafes held in January-February of 2008, and in January-February of 2012, respectively.

- 1) Life Sciences, plants, animals, insects and dinosaurs (24.0%, 20.5%)
- 2) Medical treatment and health (12.7%, 7.2%)
- 3) Space (9.2%, 11.6%)
- 4) Food (7.8%, 5.0%)
- 5) Physics theory (4.9%, 5.1%)
- 6) History (6.1%, 3.9%)

There was a marginal rise in interest in ‘Disasters (except nuclear power plant accidents)’(1.1%, 3.9%), ‘Nuclear power plant accidents’(0%,3.8%),‘Science-Education’(1.6%, 4.8%), ‘Risk communication’(0%, 0.5%), ‘The Environment’(2.2%, 4.6%) and ‘New energy’(0%, 1.8%)as themes in science cafes have seen an increase since the nuclear accident in March, 2011. In contrast, ‘Good life (lifestyle modification etc.)’ (5.5%, 1.3%) and ‘Science journalism’ (1.6%, 0.5%) decreased. On the other hand, ‘Geography and weather’ (2.7%, 8.4%) witnessed a remarkable increase. Notably, there were a few science cafes that also dealt with ethics in science and technology as a theme in 2008 (0%) and 2012 (0.4%).

I analyzed the current state of science cafes in Japan from these data.

Citizens of Japan experienced a large-scale nuclear accident, which is tantamount to being confronted with a difficult ‘trans-science’ (a problem that cannot be solved by science alone), although certain questions have arisen that involve the problem. Therefore, ‘Knowledge related to people’s lives and common sense’, which is different from the ‘Expertise of scientific-technical professionals and scholars’ is needed as well as a forum where professionals and citizens could exchange views. However, in Japan, to citizens, scientists, engineers and administrators science cafes have not been used to critically discuss ethics pertaining to science and technology; rather, these cafes are conceived as venues where people can vent intellectual curiosity through stimulating discourse about such topics as the amenities science and technology can furnish in future (Regarding science cafes where discussions about ‘Geography’ have increased, these basically have dealt with scientific analysis concerning the mechanisms related to earthquakes).

Discussion on nuclear power plants before FUKUSHIMA

When we consider details about how nuclear power was introduced to Japan, the following two points require clarification. Both of these involve the logic of the economic priority (Sawada, 2012, pp.180f.).

The first point relates to the policy of the National Security Council in the United States.

Back in March of 1954, the crew of a Japanese tuna long liner ‘The fifth Fukuryu-maru’ was exposed to radiation released by the American ‘Bravo’ hydrogen bomb experiment off Bikini in the Marshall Islands. This impacted the introduction of nuclear power to Japan. To offset anticipated criticism from the Soviet Union, due to its glaring nuclear superiority, the Eisenhower administration tried to take the high road by offering peaceful, non-military use of nuclear energy to Japan in indemnification for the atomic bomb and subsequent radiation damage. Many Japanese politicians greeted America’s gesture positively. Yasuhiro Nakasone expressing his view at the time said that, ‘If Japan doesn’t embrace the Atoms-for-peace policy (the Policy of increasing the number of friendly countries using nuclear power technology for peaceful use) soon enough, it risks falling behind the rest of the world’.

The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense Erskine’s proposal was well received, and consequentially, a committee reviewing the strategy of America’s National Security Council recognized that the importance of introducing ‘Peaceful use of nuclear power’ to Japan had increased, and they took full advantage of the bikini accident as the committee began to move toward ratifying the Japan-U.S. Atomic Power Agreement.

The second point is that the leaders of the U.S. industrial world anticipated the Japanese Government could surmise that 'The United States would provide Japan with a nuclear reactor in the near future'.

The president and the chairman of the company General Dynamics, John Hopkins, proposed a 'Nuclear power Marshall Plan' that aimed to construct and maintain nuclear reactors in countries that reported electricity shortages, like a 'Marshall Plan' that supported a plan to rebuild the infrastructure in war torn Europe after World War II. Hopkins also remarked at a lecture of the National Association of Manufacturers that this was good for business because, 'It proved potentially profitable for American enterprise'. In addition, Thomas Murray who was on the Atomic Energy Commission committee, spoke at the annual conference of steel makers labor union, 'To wipe out the memory of the slaughter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, backed by our full cooperation, let us construct a nuclear reactor in Japan'. House of Representatives Assembly member Sidney Yates submitted the bill which outlined how, 'a nuclear reactor to generate electric power could be donated to Hiroshima City', although it did not pass.

There were a number of interpretations offered to explain America's decision. One reason for the introduction of nuclear power plants to Japan was based on a rationalistic idea for political economic gain, 'To secure a stable and sufficient electric power supply cheaply' and 'as a counter measure to criticism from Japan for the Bikini event'. In addition, the professionals believed that technological versatility was paramount. Consequently, no effort was made by the policy makers to earnestly discuss issues such as the danger nuclear power posed, because of the technological versatility principle of providing fairly low cost energy in abundance; an endeavor that was primarily funded by America in its effort to help rebuild Japan.

Discussion on the nuclear power plant after FUKUSHIMA

Ex-premier Noda described the process to review the re-operation of the Ooi nuclear power plant as follows: 'Myself and four cabinet ministers are responsible for the decision making in the end. Finally, in consultation with the four cabinet ministers I want to initiate and decide how to engage the re-operation. The time for us to make a decision will arrive soon. After which, I will take all the necessary steps to ensure the plant is completely safe.' He also explained that, 'People who are using artificial respirators must be vigilant in the event of a sudden power failure.' Other adverse effects espoused by the Noda government, to legitimize re-operation of the plants, include 'the risk of bankruptcy to small and medium-sized enterprises who relied on cheaper power sources, the shock to the Japanese economy and ordinary people who can't help but be affected given that nuclear power plants once provided 30 percent of the power supply' (The Asahi Shimbun Newspaper, May, 2012).

Actually, Ex-premier Noda's stance is the same as those who look forward to the nuclear power plants returning to operation.

People who insist on the nuclear power plants being re-engaged cite four reasons to support the policy: (1) There could be electricity shortages and power failures without the plants as an energy source. (2) The electricity rates may go up because a lot of oil is needed to operate non-thermal power plants. Also, factories will close and reopen in foreign countries, due to the newly exorbitant cost of domestic production. (3) When the tsunami defense measures end, and given that the cause of the Fukushima nuclear accident was a giant freak tsunami, reopening the nuclear power plants there is justified. (4) There should be a variety of power supply sources. Therefore, it is necessary to return the nuclear power plants to the list of power sources, right away (Kawai, 2008, p.97.).

On the other hand, people who oppose the nuclear power plant re-operation doubt the credibility of the insistence that 'if they don't operate again power failures will occur because of an electricity shortage'. As evidence, they cite frequent changes to the figures recorded that estimate a lack of electric power (Tanaka, 2012, pp.164f.). For instance, the numerical values on which the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry based its assumption of an average intense summer heat in fiscal year 2010 has changed greatly as follows: 'There was a 18.4% shortfall' (compared to the estimate on April 13, 2012), 'a 16.3% shortfall' (in comparison with information distributed at the ministerial conference on night, April 13), 'a 16% shortfall, and even if the

electric power flexibility from the other companies were considered, it was still a 15.9% shortfall.’(May 10) and ‘the reduction decreases up to 5% if flexibility reflected in what other electric power companies are required to save is carried out.’(Numerical values made public at a conference on energy strategy of Osaka City on May 15). In addition, Kansai Electric Power Company tried to use the numerical value of 2010, which was an intensely hot summer, rather than the numerical value of the average for the past five years, when it did not include the effect of power saving, and did not include the charge system according to the peak shift contract and time zone, while estimating the numerical value.

People who oppose the re-opening of a nuclear power plants can expound on their case easily. For example, there is the potential magnitude of subsequent catastrophes, and the burden that future-generations should bear given the high probability of there being substantial long-term radioactive residue / fallout. They have justifiable misgivings about any assumptions that the extent of the state of emergency incurred at the nuclear power plants in Fukushima will never take us by surprise and overwhelm us again. For instance, when we think about measures for safety in traffic and construction, we consider that accidents actually happen, and whenever an accident happens, we can study it to enhance preventative measures. Conversely, with nuclear plants, we do not have such a luxury as nuclear accidents may cause irreparable damage. The people who promote nuclear power use unrealistically pledge that such a monumental catastrophe as befell Fukushima is likely never to happen again. Such assurances do little to assuage legitimate concerns about the helpless desperation we may again feel when the next natural disaster wreaks havoc on our best, (albeit still woefully feeble defenses) up against the earth’s vicissitudes. Essentially, we cannot estimate the level of risk from past accidents, because a still worse case may be yet to come especially given the unpredictable volatility of nuclear accidents (Mishima, 2012, p.93.). Therefore, it becomes a foregone conclusion that abolishing nuclear plants is the best strategy to prevent another Fukushima from occurring.

Reasons why, right or wrong, nuclear power plants have not been adopted as a theme in science cafes in Japan

One of the reasons why, right or wrong, nuclear power plants have not been adopted as a theme in science cafes is simply that the government has endeavored to foster science cafes supporting its own scientific and technological policies.

The notion of a science cafe was introduced to Japan officially in a government document, ‘Cafe Scientifique: a cafe where scientists can discuss with citizens on equal footing’ (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2004, p.114.), in June, 2004. Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology held science cafes on three occasions at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation during ‘Science and Technology Week’ from the 18th to the 24th of April in 2005. The Science Council of Japan, Japan Science and Technology Agency and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology held science cafes at 21 venues nationwide from Sapporo to Okinawa during ‘Science and Technology Week’, from the 17th-23rd of April, in 2006.

‘Children losing interest in science’ had become a societal problem by then and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry began to take counter measures to dispel such an attitude and revive students’ curiosity. For instance, classes were arranged to be taught by company-employed professional scientists, in lieu of teachers, in order to ‘reinvigorate children’s interest in science and revitalize the attitude that Japan is a technological country’. At the same time, to enhance familiarity with contemporary science and technology, famous enterprises like the ‘Sony Explorer Science’ facility in Daiba, Tokyo, and the ‘NTT Inter-communication Center’ in Shinjuku, Tokyo, were launched by their respective companies. If ordinary citizens could become familiar with science and technology, then the popularity of science and technology could increase; thereby, justifying expenditure for the facilities (Ueno, 2008b, p.285).

Science cafes then spread quickly nationwide, because they were a vehicle of the government’s science and technology policy. However, the government continued to promote science cafes, in cooperation with private enterprise, as they championed the third stage of their Science and Technology Basic Plan (fiscal year 2006 - fiscal year 2010). This mandate aimed to value the progress of science and technology, and play down or even

discourage constructive criticism from citizens and societies. The citizens who oppose science and technology policies that the government is advancing, for instance nuclear plant promotion, these citizens who demand that government-touted behemoths like the Tokyo Electric Power Company, who have placed profit above all else, be held accountable, anticipate difficulty discussing the following themes in science cafes: ‘What does the research and technology mean to each citizen?’ ‘Who has been influenced by this research and the technology?’ ‘What changes have been experienced by citizens as a result of this research and the technology?’ ‘Why should we trust this research and the technology being proffered?’ These pointed questions might not be debatable because they relate too directly to the ethics of foisting science and technology on or delivering it to the nation; a potentially fractious theme indeed.

To discuss pros and cons of nuclear power plants in the context of the society theory of science and technology

Ethical issues concerning the usefulness of nuclear power plants

The purpose of this paper is to seek a method to discuss the right or wrong / merits and demerits of nuclear power plants and the ethics inherent in the science and technology of nuclear energy, but in as apolitical and bipartisan a climate as is conducive to constructive dialogue. Notably, if other choices or energy alternatives do not exist, the discussion concerning the ethical standpoint of nuclear power becomes meaningless. As indicated by an ‘Ethics committee for the stable supply of energy’ in Germany (Mishima, 2012, p.92.), any trust to a parliamentary democracy that discusses only moot questions is endangered by the insistence that ‘There are no choices’. On the other hand, choices regarding the energy supply and diversification increase in a society that has the wherewithal to conduct itself responsibly including investigating alternative energy sources; something that begins with simply being able to discuss such notions freely in public forums.

To achieve this, I am attempting to create what is in effect a science and philosophy cafe or a philosophy of science cafe.

The roots of philosophy cafes reach back to the custom of people freely discussing topics in cafes and salons in big cities in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. In my opinion, participants in scientific cafes can keep the ideal of ‘Clarifying ones ideas by reflecting on the opinions of others.’ Moreover, ‘Opinions can change through discussion’ and this holds true for those of participants and observers alike. If we refer to the management style of the philosophy cafe, since May 2011, I have held scientific and technological ethics cafes where citizens discussed the topics involving ethics in science and technology with professionals on eight occasions in Tochigi Prefecture, which is adjacent to Fukushima.

Japanese culture doesn’t necessarily lend itself to sharing opinions openly in public. Because silence is a virtue in Japanese culture, critical thinking and critical insistence are very difficult for Japanese citizens who haven’t received special training on how to state their views in elementary and junior high school. The public tends to think that what professionals espouse about science and technology is unconditionally true. Therefore, a scientific and technological ethics cafe seeks to make two key points: firstly, we offer ‘a place’ where citizens can readily talk about topics concerning the ethics of scientific and technological advancement, secondly, we encourage citizens not to regard everything that professionals say concerning the ethics of scientific and technological progress as the gospel, but instead to reflect critically and try to constructively interpret, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information objectively; ever cognizant of the fact that there are seldom direct pat answers to ethical questions involving the business of nuclear power generation.

Outline of scientific and technological ethics cafe

In our scientific and technological ethics cafe, only the theme concerning science and technology ethics will be regularly discussed in the framework of ‘Science Cafe’, and such a science cafe is at present only found in Tochigi, according to the science portal of the JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency, 2012).

The themes discussed in our cafes over the course of eight sessions up to June, 2013 were as follows: The 1st ‘Is a distinction between cure and enhancement possible?’, the 2nd, ‘Should a poor quality house, based only

on cost performance, be built?', the 3rd 'Does the advance in technology contribute to making society more inclusive?', the 4th 'How can we reduce the gap between the speculation of each country / companies and the expectations of consumers / citizens about a smart grid?', the 5th 'Is there a scientific basis for any prejudice against drinking (alcohol consumption) by women?', the 6th 'Are the safety standards officially announced for radiation really safe? (data and comparison of low line amount radiation exposures)', the 7th 'Are the animal experiments are trying to give safety-confirmations for cosmetics' research?', the 8th 'Why did major media in Japan neglect the verification of the radioactivity data immediately following government announcements after the nuclear accident?' Participants were 95 people (23 men and 72 females) in total, from as young as junior high school age up to retired seniors. One-third of the time was allotted to the guest lecturer's presentation (a professional in the field related to the theme), and the remaining time devoted to discussion involving all participants, including the lecturer.

Results of a survey and consideration

We can judge the extent to which 'we were successfully able to offer a place where citizens could readily talk about topics concerning scientific and technological ethics'. Such was the first aim of this cafe; namely, to be able to conduct the café, both in response to the comments from the regular participants and results from a questionnaire seeking themes for future cafes. Regarding participants and their rate of attendance, on average there are 15 new participants per cafe, 15 attended twice or more; notably, those who attended three times (thrice) or more were all women. We deemed the venture successful if the cafe became a place where people could meet to readily discuss the negative aspects and adverse effects of science and technology, rather than the less controversial more positive notions of science and technology. Ultimately, the cafe became 'the place' where everyone can share their views easily. Over the sessions, participants got to know each other, which deepened people's trust and made the discussion more fruitful, as well.

Notably, we cannot assert that we achieved the second aim of this cafe, that is 'supporting citizens not to take what professionals say at face value when it concerns scientific and technological ethics. Rather, constructively and critically they were able to reflect on the big ideas'. We have analyzed the questions from participants and lecturers (not to other participants) in eight cafe sessions, to date. As a result, 'Question about knowledge' comprised 39 (the entire 71%) of all 55 questions. On the other hand, 16 questions (the entire 29%) were allotted to ponder 'Questions to ask regarding the appropriateness of my understanding' were fleshed out over 55 questions. There were overwhelmingly a lot of questions regarding content knowledge. From this, we understand that there are still persons who understand professionals like this: professionals are persons who have a wealth of expertise (beyond reproach) that civilians may not be privy to, and through the course of imparting it to ordinary citizens, mistakes in logical interpretation and evaluation are seldom made.

Conclusion

I pointed out that the successful and unsuccessful use of nuclear power energy had never been discussed in the context of ethics in science and technology either before or after the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. This topic on ethics in science and technology was concretely discussed using the example of the scientific and technological ethics cafe, which I promote. However, it was and is not easy to change the current state of discussion, because to do so risks denying a political-economic community that values modern rationalism and the technological versatility principle, not to mention Japanese people's traditional character.

I do not think the current situation involving the controversy, in part, a political battle, regarding a continuum from 're-operate or abolish the plants?' is preferable. I think that I should advance practice with scientific and technological ethics cafe on a large scale to change Japanese society into one based on responsibilities and the results of one's educated choice.

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Having the Courage to Measure up for Education

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Abstract

In this “age of measurement” it is increasingly difficult for educators to educate (Biesta, 2010). The pressures to conform to the demands of bureaucratic authorities generally trump over educators and their aims and desires to educate. While external authorities may contribute to frustrating the potential of education, according to Dewey (1988a, p. 133) there might be another contributing factor. He suggests that our own aims and desires to educate may not have deep enough roots. He suggests that educators ought to have “cultivated” and “significant conscious desires” and even a disposition to be “courageous” (1988a, p. 134; 1988b, p. 38) in order to attain the independence to ensure that our practices in education are indeed educational. Dewey (1934) called such a disposition a “religious attitude” because it engages with the ultimate concerns that people can aspire towards. In this paper I shall argue that this religious attitude of Dewey’s which can enable our roots to deepen, does not pertain just to our aims of education as an intellectual phenomenon, but one that is existential, artistic and courageous.

Keywords: Courage, aims, existential, religious attitude.

Two Sources of Oppression

In this age of measurement many educators feel they are being restricted in their capacity to educate due to spending their energies responding to the interests of managers driven by measures (Giroux, 2007). Our key performance indicators are reduced to data which measure weighted quantities of publications, their impact, the amount of research money won and if student satisfaction ratings are constantly on the rise. By complying with these, educators often submit to the corporate agenda of pursuing market share rather than educating the community. Consequently, becoming embedded in this practice, according to Biesta (2010), can cause us to value what we measure rather than measure what we value. Often this subjection is perceived as a form of oppression which is understood to involve an authoritative oppressor imposing its will, such that one’s freedom to pursue one’s own interests and desires is denied. Hence superficial calls for ‘freedom’ can appear attractive to some who want to throw off the shackles which inhibit them from pursuing what they desire. But Dewey also identified a second and more subtle source of subjection – our own desires. He argued that these can oppress us by being received unquestioningly without investing enough intellectual rigour and without being made personally meaningful. Consequently, these can limit our own growth and limit the sort of active and democratic social life which might be possible.

It is considered worthwhile quoting him at length to better capture his point. He stated,

The chief difficulty [is] ...we do not know what we really want and we make no great effort to find out. We, too, allow our purposes and desires to be foisted upon us from without. We, too, are bored by doing what we want to do, because the want has no deep roots in our own judgement of values ...We yield to one kind of external pressure in doing what we like just as we yield to another kind in having to do what we don’t like. The only difference is that pressure in the latter case is obvious and direct; in the former case it is subtle and indirect. (Dewey, 1988a, p. 133)

This is much like Nietzsche’s notion of ‘slave morality’ which denies experiences for individuals to rise up and create their own values and morals. Biesta (2010, p. 15) confirms this through his observation that “there is very little contemporary work that engages explicitly with questions about what is educationally desirable.” Dewey goes on to explain that we need a sort of critical thinking that is able to discern between values, desires

and purposes deeply enough to understand what makes them valuable – to critically judge their justification and why they might be valuable, or as Nietzsche described – the ‘value of values’ (citation?). Secondly, our thinking also needs to be constructive – or creative – to form our own aims and desires upon intelligent and well-informed warrants. But this critical and constructive thinking requires us to challenge the status quo of the environment and ourselves, and so it depends upon us to have courage.

Measuring up for Education Requires Courage

Regarding aims of education, Dewey (1985) was very specific that education, being an abstract concept, doesn't have any specific aims of its own but rather it is individual people who have aims. Dewey encourages individuals to appreciate that aims should not be passively received as if they were located only in external sources. Dewey argued that the capacity for individuals to be willing and able to take personal responsibility for intelligently forming their own aims requires the “primary requisite” of courage. This courage is essential for us to overcome our ‘natural’ state of being intellectually lazy (ibid, p. 134). This may strike us as rather accusatory and so perhaps we might want to replace this word lazy with ‘reluctance’ in the sense that conducting an inquiry does not appear to be worth the effort and indeed may well be quite difficult. Exploring the very roots and foundations, that is the whys of what we believe, what makes our values valuable and what justifies the particular desires we have, can be very confrontational in the sense that we begin to question and doubt the very meanings that have given sense to our lives up to this point. Such an inquiry is likely to uncover potential bias in terms of race, politics and especially religion as we dismantle some ‘grand narratives’ that we perhaps have been appealing to in our private closets, simply as a matter of being embedded in the particular family, community and culture in which we find ourselves. We may question whether our people may not be the ‘good guys’ after all, in spite of what our news media and folklore tell us about ourselves. We will certainly need courage if we are to seriously consider if we – the free, democratic and secular West – are actually as ‘enlightened’ as we like to assume and have a right to educate others.

Dewey (1988b, p. 33) identifies that the process of measurement requires things to be specific and isolated in order to allow themselves to be quantified. In contrast he argues that *education* consists of more than just specific skills and knowledge of facts. It pertains to a whole network of other concerns such as desires, tastes and abilities. Consequently, I argue, our aims of education might also be limited in this same way as measurable data, if separated and isolated from spiritual aims. By spiritual I mean the meanings and purposes we give to our lives and commit ourselves to. The process of deepening our roots necessarily requires us to re-evaluate what we believe about *education* – our own particular philosophy of education to which we are drawn. Dewey (1985; 1988a,) is very clear that our philosophy of education which consists of aims and purposes, ought to be something that we as individuals take responsibility for. If the roots of our desires are to be deepened towards achieving a greater unity of our experience and existence then I suggest that inevitably such a deepening must extend to the spiritual. Our understanding of education is intricately involved with how we understand the ultimate meanings and purposes of life. Dewey (1985, p. 248) recognised this with his simple observation that “education ...is identical with the operation of living a life which is fruitful and inherently significant”. Deepening the roots regarding our aims of education will require that we unify them with the way we understand the ultimate purposes of life.

The problematic nature of measurement to separate elements from their unity with the rest of existence is not just limited to the culture of performativity imposed on us by external authorities, but it can also be a problem which limits our own aims of education. Attempting to unify our aims of education with ultimate aims for life can appear daunting because it requires us to enter into existential activities involving some existential anxiety – and this requires courage.

Having the Courage to Face Existential Anxiety

In his teacher preparation course in the late 1940s, Philip Jackson was confronted with the question ‘What is education?’ which he read in Dewey’s book *Experience and Education*. Over the next sixty years he worked to respond to this and reviewed his journey in his own book (2012) *What is Education?* In this work Jackson explains that in order for him to come to grips with forming his own intelligent understanding of education, he was drawn to the spiritual and existential writings of Paul Tillich. Jackson (2012, p. 44) suggests that “both Tillich and Dewey were endorsing an impossible quest” because they both pointed to an existential concern of living well but however, there are no ultimate answers that can provide certainty to this quest. What becomes paramount therefore, is not the actual finding or attainment of answers but rather actually *living the questions* in such a way that one’s way-of-being or way-of-living, becomes enhanced.

Existential anxiety represents the realisation of the potential of our nonbeing. It is often likened to standing on the edge of the abyss looking down into total emptiness and meaninglessness as one confronts one’s own death - alone. It is often evoked when one becomes aware that the meaning and significance of life is uncertain. There are no external or authoritative answers and so the individual is thrown back upon herself in an isolated sense as she is the only one who is able to give her life meaning and purpose. Such a response is always “an existential risk” because “the meaning and fulfilment of our lives is at stake, and not a theoretical judgement which may be refuted sooner or later” (Tillich, 1959, p. 28). To undertake this risk in the midst of existential anxiety requires courage. This is described by Tillich (1980, p. 17) as “courage to affirm oneself in spite of fate and death”.

In appreciation for how difficult it is to endure a prolonged engagement with existential anxiety, Eric Fromm argues that as humans we tend to *fear* deep and profound thinking. He argues that courage is so important to overcome this fear (or ‘intellectual laziness’ to use Dewey’s term) in order for such thinking to occur. The sort of deep thinking which is required for us to intelligently form aims and purposes with deepening roots is difficult because it involves venturing into the existential realm of personally giving one’s own existence some significance in a world of uncertainty. It takes us beyond philosophy as a theoretical and intellectual exercise to one that is lived and therefore existential. According to Tillich (1959, p. 24), philosophy, like theology, becomes “existential through the situation of the philosopher.”

Fromm (1942, p. 91) recognises that “we are fascinated by the growth of freedom from powers *outside* ourselves and are blinded to the fact of *inner* restraints, compulsions and fears”. He argues that we do have the freedom to tackle our internal restraints but unfortunately we tend to fear this freedom because it is difficult to exercise and it results in increasing our existential sense of being a unique individual, who alone is responsible for giving sense and purpose to our own life. This is why he claims that it is important for us to be able to say “no” to powerful authorities and to be willing to be disobedient. Such willingness requires courage and courage itself must be embedded in an aspirational alternative to the current situation. Therefore the courage to be disobedient is not for rebels but for revolutionaries who are driven by an attitude *for* something rather than only *against* something (Fromm, 1981, pp. 20 & 24). Because we are considering an intellectual and existential sort of courage then we need to have constructively and creatively formed a very clear alternative.

So the courage being considered here is not only an intellectual and rational sort but it also has a unity with the whole of our existence – our being. This courage can be understood to equate with the sort of holistic thinking that Heidegger promoted which is far more complex than the simple calculative sort of thinking that has dominated in the West. Heidegger argued that we have inherited this more narrow understanding of calculative and re-presentative thinking since misinterpreting Aristotle’s writing regarding substances and we are now in flight to actively avoid thinking in a profoundly different way. Heidegger (1966, p. 59) associates the ancient Greek understanding of thinking with our will, claiming that “to think is to will, and to will is to think”. He made it clear that it is important to understand “the particular being’s participation in Being” so as to appreciate the more holistic nature of thinking which involves more than the application of rationality to ‘solving’ problems. It is something which is an active part of existential *living* – the physical, psychic and spiritual together (Heidegger, 1968).

Deepening our Educational Aims through a Religious Attitude

Dewey did not promote a 'religion' of sorts but he did recommend a 'religious attitude' and we can see how this might enable us to improve and deepen our aims for education. As we have previously noted through Dewey, the aims of education do not exist as part of the world but are ideas created by people – preferably by each individual. It has been argued that these should not exist in isolation from our other purposes and ideas and so to deepen the roots of such aims they should be integrated and even unified with our other understandings regarding our ultimate meanings. Dewey referred to this attempt to unify our ideals into a whole as involving a religious attitude.

Many of Dewey's ideas go back to Greek concepts – including understanding the role of ultimate meanings of life. He states that,

Plato's starting point is that the organisation of society depends ultimately upon knowledge of the end of existence... Unless we know the end, the good, we shall have no criterion for rationally deciding what the possibilities are which should be promoted, nor how social arrangements are to be ordered. (Dewey, 1985, p. 94)

Here Dewey explains that rational thinking does not exist separately to spiritual beliefs regarding the end purposes of existence. This same point is repeated by Heidegger (1968, p. 10) who reports that "nothing religious is ever destroyed by logic". Because reason and religion should not be dichotomized there is an invitation to consider how our logical aims of education might be deepened through an engagement with the religious or spiritual. For some, this might require courage to undertake a venture into the religious aspect of experience.

Engaging rationality, ethics and politics with religion was considered quite normal in ancient Greece. According to Gadamer (1999, p. 39) "The religious vocabulary that they [Greeks] took over, and especially the predicate of divinity, is not intended to make a statement about god or the gods, but rather to designate the order of being about which they are inquiring; the whole, the all, being." Deepening the roots of the aims, purposes and desires of these Greeks involved attempting to unify these ideas with their ultimate ideas relating to living a good and meaningful life.

Gadamer (1999, pp. 28-30) identifies that "'virtue' [did] not consist merely in knowledge" but rather on "the way of life" and "moral consciousness" that was required to attain *eudaimonia* – the good life. Of central importance was the attitude by which they made sense of and gave meaning. This attitude, according to Dewey, provides the religious dimension to experience and so without it, our experience – and our being (including our aims, purposes and desires) – would be somewhat impoverished. He consequently described the "unreligious attitude" as separating and isolating ideas and ideals from each other, making mankind isolated "from the world of physical nature and his fellows" (Dewey, 1934, p. 25). Such an attitude which separates and isolates as characteristic of our age of measurement, lacks the courage to deepen the roots which form the justifications and reasons for desiring and aspiring to the things we value most. Measurement encourages an unreligious attitude.

This religious attitude of Dewey's can be understood as being necessarily courageous. It represents one's character as one attempts to unify a sense of self and a good life, which simultaneously involves ones reasoning, aspirations, actions and emotions. There is a recognised pursuit of the 'good' through this religious dimension which is also described as "morality touched by emotion". To use some terms that are considered typically religious Dewey describes this attitude as devotion and as the combination of faith and élan. So Dewey's (1934, pp. 8 7 10) religious attitude doesn't involve promoting a religion but instead "it denotes attitudes that may be taken towards every object and every proposed end or ideal" to determine "significant moments of living" which reference life as a whole.

Courageously Measuring up for Education Requires us to be Artful

In order to determine significance for life and for education, our aims, purposes and desires need to be re-evaluated and formed intelligently and responsibly. Aims of education cannot be accepted passively from

external authorities. Dewey (1938, p. 67) reminds us that Plato's definition of a slave was one who "executes the purposes of another" and so if educators are not to become slaves, we need to be moved by our *own* purposes. Dewey challenges us in this regard with this confronting statement,

Until educators get the independence and courage to insist that educational aims are to be *formed* as well as executed within the educative process, they will not come to consciousness of their own function. Others will then have no great respect for educators because educators do not respect their own social place and work." [my emphasis] (Dewey, 1988b, p. 38)

Here Dewey advises that before we can attempt to challenge and potentially change the world through education in some way, we firstly need to courageously and intelligently form educational purposes and aims. Not only do these aims require intelligent inquiry but Dewey also recognises that this process requires courage. In performance-driven environments it can take a great deal of personal courage to guide the attention of managing authorities to the intellectual method which centres *educational* aims and purposes and thus be able to pursue an agenda for education rather than just securing market share. We live in a time described by Blake et al. (2000) as being nihilistic because many educational institutions do not have any meaningful purposes and aims for education, but instead are myopically focussed on effective management of measurable performance indicators. This can be observed on the websites of most Australian universities where great celebrations appears to be given to managing effectively and little is articulated regarding the educative role of the institution.

According to Dewey the formation of any aim will not suffice in order to measure up for education, but only those aims which have deep roots. The sort of depth he was referring to not only involves a philosophical inquiry by individual educators into the justification of values, but it also involves engaging with the religious aspect of experience which is existential in nature. He adds that a philosophy which accepts the uncertainty and mystery of life "and turns that experience upon itself to deepen and intensify its own qualities" can be understood to be a form of art. Indeed he concludes that "art is thus prefigured in the very process of living" (Dewey, 1989, pp. 30 & 41). It is interesting to note the "enemies" he identifies to such a process of living for which courage is required to fight, include "the humdrum, slackness ... submission ... tightness ... incoherence and aimless indulgence" (Dewey, 1989, p. 47). Creating aims, purposes and desires which give unity to life with its various components of spirit and the flesh requires us to be artful.

Bauman echoes Dewey's point above in the title of his book *The Art of Life* in which he demonstrates that we are all artists of our own lives whether we like it or not. Each of us actively relate to some meaning and purpose for our existence. He therefore challenges his readers to be good artists by courageously transcending superficial understandings of happiness which tend to dominate our taken-for-granted and everyday lives. This requires exercising some deep and philosophical thinking regarding the ultimate purposes for life and so he acknowledges the appropriateness of descriptors such as a noble mind, strong character and nerves of steel – all of which seem to indicate the importance of courage while engaging with existential anxiety. He reviews some thinkers through time – one of whom is Pascal. Bauman (2008, p. 37) states that "Pascal suggests that people avoid looking inwards and keep running in the vain hope of escaping a face-to-face encounter with their predicament, which is to face up to their utter insignificance whenever they recall the infinity of the universe." Bauman then says that most people actually desire and enjoy being seduced by superficial pleasures.

Bauman therefore warns against self-interest which appears central to seeking happiness via gratification on a superficial and sensual level because this usually is a disservice to the way we live in the long term and adversely affects those around us. Such self-interest orients us to seek only the satisfaction of our desires and fails to provide the impetus to critically review the desires themselves and whether they are good for us and for those with whom our lives interact. Desires are, then, often accepted as natural or normal. This leads Bauman (2008, p. 40) to give serious attention to the importance of love in its tendency to "abandon self-concern" and contribute to a meaningful life through actively working for the good of others. There is obviously a parallel here with the vocation of education which involves working for the good or rather the 'betterment' of students, and, as most teachers will attest, paying less attention to our own self-concerns.

Educating Others to have the Courage to Measure up to be Educated

Biesta (2010, p. 26) has argued that if educators are to educate in this age of measurement then there is a need for us to “reconnect with the question of purpose in education”. Through Dewey we recognise that being able to educate doesn’t just require freedom from externally imposed, performance-driven agendas, but as individual educators we also need to have well-formed and deep rooted aims and desires for education. I have suggested that part of the deepening process of the roots to our aims and purposes of education, will involve us venturing into the existential dimension as to what makes our own lives meaningful and purposeful and have argued that this can be understood as an aspect of Dewey’s religious attitude. Dewey has identified that courage is the ‘primary requisite’ for critically and constructively forming aims for education which have deep roots, and I have reviewed how this courage plays a particularly important role in enabling us to face some existential anxiety as we take it upon ourselves to engage with making our own lives take on some significance and purpose in the face of uncertainty as we aim to educate the very desires that we live by.

While we ought to continually re-evaluate the desires and aims that we live by, we are also involved in educating the desires of our students. Dewey (1938) referred to this ‘collateral learning’ as the forming of attitudes which are the most important aspect of the educative process. It is the actual attitudes and interests of the student which are to become educated (Pring, 2004). Not only does education involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills but it also involves the formation of attitudes – including desires, values and purposes. Garrison (2010, pp. xiii, xvi, 88, 107) recognises that Dewey’s approach centres upon *eros* which specifically engages with the interests and desires of students because ultimately “we become what we love. Our destiny is in our desires...” and therefore educators should enable students to discriminate between different desires and the consequences of these desires in order that “those that are genuinely desirable” can be embodied in a better way of life.

Dewey (1988b, p. 38) considered that “education is itself a process of discovering what values are worth while and are to be pursued as objectives.” He also recognised that what is already valued by external authorities and our internal selves tend to be powerful, because they are rooted upon the desires and aims of the status quo. Therefore he calls for us to be willing enough to engage with a religious attitude which is courageous, and to be “militant” enough “to fight” for a re-evaluation of the value of our desires, aims and purposes so as to live as intelligently as possible (Dewey, 1934, p. 77). This approach to education is considered necessary to enable our lives and the lives of our students to be as valuable as possible.

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Can We Measure Trust in Knowledge Acquisition? A standpoint derived from Anscombe's notion of 'Teaching by Testimony'

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Abstract

In recent years, a demand to measure educational outcomes has emerged. In Japan and other countries, accountability is on the reform agenda of educational systems, both at the national and local levels. Educational outcomes must be based on evidence so as to make them visible to stakeholders. The concerns exists, however, that the demand for the measurability of educational outcomes undermines a necessary condition of education, trust between teachers and students, which is not easily gauged.

This presentation examines the significance of trust as a ground for teaching knowledge by elucidating Anscombe's notion of 'teaching by testimony'. In her view, the trust of students in their teachers offers a firm ground for teaching knowledge. This trust allows students to accept the 'testimony' of their teachers and thus to instil knowledge. Therefore, trust is a necessary condition of teaching.

This presentation attains its purpose by the following steps. First, it clarifies the background of Anscombe's perspective. Anscombe develops her own views, based on Wittgenstein's philosophy that indicates the initiation of pupils into their communities. Second, it relies on Anscombe's papers to detail her discussion of 'teaching by testimony' and refers to current discussions of the epistemology of testimony. Finally, it observes that not until knowledge acquisition fails can trust be shown. This position provides a standpoint for grasping the current situation of education and suggests that those who carry out measurements be prudent.

Keywords: Accountability, Teaching by Testimony, G. E. M. Anscombe, Language-game, Trust

Introduction

In recent years, a demand to measure educational outcomes has emerged. In Japan and other countries, accountability is on the reform agenda of educational systems, both at the national and local levels. Educational outcomes must be based on evidence so as to make them visible to stakeholders. The concerns exists, however, that the demand for the measurability of educational outcomes undermines a necessary condition of education, trust between teachers and students, which is not easily gauged.

This presentation examines the significance of trust as a ground for teaching knowledge by elucidating Anscombe's notion of 'teaching by testimony'. In her view, the trust of students in their teachers offers a firm ground for transmitting knowledge. This trust allows students to accept the 'testimony' of their teachers, who thus instil knowledge. Therefore, trust is a necessary condition of teaching.

Measuring Education: The Demand for Accountability and the Crisis of Trust

As Wagner states, the term accountability refers to 'a statement of explanation of one's conduct' or 'a statement or exposition of reasons, causes, grounds, or motives' (Wagner, 1989, p. 7). Accountability involves a set of procedures, such as the report of plans, processes, and outcomes, that seek to make daily teaching visible to interested parties. Therefore, it requires that teachers be cautious in establishing their purposes, instructional

materials, practices, classroom environments, and so on. Educational outcomes must be based on evidence so as to make them visible to stakeholders (Ericson & Ellett, 1987).

Studies have criticised accountability. Davis and White maintain that monitoring organizations cannot audit all the aspects of schools that allow learners to develop their personal qualities and deeper levels of understanding (Davis & White, 2001, pp. 667-81). Biesta argues that a technical-managerial approach has emerged in recent years, one that focuses on the possibility of auditing. While this approach has strengthened the relationship of teachers to government, it has undermined their association with stakeholders. Davis and White and Biesta insist that teachers, who know their schools in detail, should play a role in the auditing and accounting of their activities through peer reviews.

Accountability in Japan has been influenced by the policies of the United States and the United Kingdom, where it was institutionalized earlier than Japan (Kurosaki, 1996; Kodama, 2009). Kodama (2009) criticises the penetration of the concept of performativity, which he relates to accountability, in the reform of education. In contrast to critical studies of the concept, researchers have focused on the way to achieve accountability in education (Miura, 2012; Matsui, 2010).

Accountability is related to trust. O'Neill points out that the background of accountability is a lack of trust in professionals, including teachers (O'Neill, 2002). Thus, measurement procedures are required for securing trust. Katz explains that the demand for accountability in education arose as a means to restore trust in schools. The demand, however, has not necessarily attained its objectives (Katz, 2010).

Studies criticising accountability argue that the concept misses the function of measurement and does not grasp the basis of education. On the one hand, accountability measures the outcomes of education and seeks to secure trust; on the other hand, it passes over the premises of education. Therefore, it risks undermining the basis of education.

What is the basis of teaching that accountability has overlooked? Can it be measured in terms of accountability? Does measuring it secure the quality of education? To answer these questions, this paper turns to Anscombe's discussion of teaching by testimony. The discussion understands education in terms of knowledge acquisition.

The background of Teaching by Testimony: A contrast with Wittgenstein's later philosophy

The Weltbild as a basis of knowledge acquisition

In terms of knowledge acquisition, language is presented in two ways. First, Backhurst states that 'children gain knowledge in the course of learning their first language' (Backhurst, 2013, p. 187). In this regard, this knowledge is 'not just knowledge of the language, but knowledge of how things are. In acquiring language, a child inherits a conception of the world' (ibid.). The conception is not taught by someone, but is acquired by children and is 'the background to [their] thinking and reasoning' (ibid.).

Knowledge acquisition has been argued in the philosophy of education. Studies sometimes cite Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Maruyama argues for '*Weltbild*' or the picture of the world as the fixed foundation for the language game. The concept stems from Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*. The foundation, which is fixed by the language game, does not doubt propositions themselves:

But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false. (Wittgenstein, 1969, §94).

The '*Weltbild*' is inherited as the basis of communication in a language-game. Thus, *Weltbild* has to be formed in children as the presupposition of knowledge acquisition (Maruyama, 1993). Wittgenstein writes:

The child learns to believe a host of things. I.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it. (Wittgenstein, 1969, §144)

Children acquire *Weltbild* as the ‘non-cognitive foundation of knowledge acquisition’; it is not achieved by teaching, but through daily life (Burbules, 2008). Therefore, if teachers intervene in the process, the style of teaching is tacit teaching. Though school life, children acquire a foundation with teachers.

Teaching by testimony

Backhurst refers to another way of acquiring knowledge, through language. He says, ‘a person can acquire knowledge by understanding and accepting someone else’s utterance—not just knowledge that “such-and-such” has been said or written, but knowledge is that such-and-such is the case’ (ibid.). For instance, when a person who knows ‘it is raining in Melbourne’, tells someone of this fact, the person who hears the statement knows that ‘it is raining in Melbourne’. Backhurst calls this kind of knowledge ‘knowledge by testimony’ (ibid.).

In the late 1970s, Anscombe argued for the bond between testimony and knowledge acquisition in ‘What Is It to Believe Someone?’ (Anscombe, 1979 [2008]). This article appeared ten years after *On Certainty* was published by Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein depicts many teaching and learning situations, to which Anscombe refers in her article. The discussion of such contexts is rare in Anscombe’s works other than in ‘What Is It to Believe Someone?’, which is clearly influenced by *On Certainty*. It is thus reasonable to analyse this article after first examining *On Certainty*, given that both works treat the same topic from precise standpoints.

For example, Anscombe depicts the process of knowledge acquisition as teaching and learning. She presents mechanisms for the acceptance of teacher testimony by learners and for their acquisition of knowledge. Wittgenstein’s later philosophic reflections on knowledge acquisition, which see education as supporting the initiation of learners in a community where the language game is shared, functioned as a foundation for Anscombe’s reflections. Thus, Anscombe’s view differs from that of Backhurst. We should see Anscombe’s discussion of teaching by testimony as an extension of Wittgenstein’s view of the ‘a non-cognitive foundation of knowledge acquisition’.

Anscombe’s View of ‘Teaching by Testimony’

‘Teaching by Testimony’ and knowledge acquisition

As Anscombe points out, teaching as testimony and knowledge acquisition is based on a foundation that we cannot doubt. If the foundation is doubted, our everyday communication becomes impossible. Anscombe sets the condition for knowledge acquisition. When a learner acquires knowledge through the testimony by a teacher, she has to believe the testimony of the teacher. On the contrary, when the learner sees that a testimony as false, the testimony is not acquired as knowledge. Whether a testimony is true or false is given by the testimony itself. Thus, without confidence in testimony the communication of ‘teaching by testimony’ and knowledge acquisition would collapse (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], pp. 3-4). ‘Think how much reliance on believing what you have been told lies behind being able to say that. It is irrelevant at this level to raise a question about possible forgery; without what we know by testimony, there is no such thing as what a forgery is *pretending* to be’ (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], pp. 3-4). Thus, Anscombe warns against taking a stance of epistemological scepticism.¹

Here is another example. A person reports that she ate an apple for breakfast: ‘I ate an apple this morning’. It is not important here whether the utterance is based on information such as ‘It was surely an apple’. She would simply know what apples are and would be able to recognise apples as apples. Therefore, ‘[s]he was “taught the concept” in learning to use language in everyday life’ (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 6).

An inquiry into the condition of teaching by testimony

Teaching by testimony presupposes a non-cognitive foundation that establishes trust in teaching. As a condition, we can suppose the utterer's authority for the information. Certainly, in the example in which a person eats an apple, she is 'a total original authority' (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 6). Teaching by testimony depends on the authority of the speaker. However, it casts doubt on this view. Anscombe refers to another example, the case of the information of drawings: Who is the original creator of a drawing? What is drawn in a drawing? According to Anscombe, the information of the drawing can be taught by testimony. 'He [a viewer] almost certainly knows it from having been told, even if he's seen the drawing' (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 6).

A speaker is, however, not an original authority (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 6). Thus, whether a speaker is or is not an authority for the information makes no difference to the conditions of teaching by testimony. 'Much information is acquired from teachers who are not original authorities, and their pupils who acquire it believe *them*' (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 6). To believe a speaker is a condition of 'teaching by testimony'. However, the next steps should clarify what the concept is and what it means.

Belief: A Condition of 'Teaching by Testimony'

Mary Geach, Anscombe's daughter and the co-editor of an anthology of her writings, indicates that her mother was a pious Catholic (Geach, 2008) and that her discussion of teaching-learning is partly derived from the teaching of the Church and on faith in God. However, Geach states the implications of Anscombe's paper are not limited to religious contexts. Indeed, accepting the testimony of a teacher and the acquisition of knowledge are part of everyday life at school.

Anscombe explains that belief by faith has a rather long history (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 1).² What is her understanding of faith? Anscombe speaks about receiving a letter as an example. Smith receives a letter from his friend, Jones. Smith reads in the letter that Jones' wife has had a new baby. In accordance with teaching by testimony, when Smith learns that Jones' wife has had a new baby, Smith believes Jones.

To clarify the mechanism of believing, Anscombe analyses the word of 'to believe', since '[t]hat sense of 'faith' still occurs in our language' (Anscombe, 1975 [2008], p.13). For instance, we can suppose conversations as the following: "Do you believe that Jones had a new baby?" "I was told that he had a new baby, and I accept it on faith".

There seems to be three conditions for faith. (1) Smith's friend, Jones exists. (2) Jones's letter was indeed written by Jones himself. (3) The letter states the prior conditions (1) and (2). 'Those three convictions or assumptions are, logically, presuppositions that *you* have' (ibid.). In other words, to believe does not depend on examining presuppositions one by one, but receiving testimony.

What is it to believe someone who gives you information? For instance, a paper refers to a Christmas cracker with a message in it. Blue crackers have true messages in it; red crackers have false messages. Smith knows this, but Jones does not. Jones then comes to Smith with blue crackers. Jones opens the cracker and finds a piece of paper with a message; he then reads the message to Smith. Smith accepts the message. Does Smith believe Jones? No. Smith knows the facts of the message and accepts them, since blue crackers have true messages. Smith does not necessarily believe Jones. This example involves two conditions. First, to believe someone relates to background factual knowledge. Second, to believe someone is to believe *her*. If Smith did not know the facts about the message, he would not believe what Jones says. The facts are likely to affect Smith's recognition. He does not believe Jones but rather the information in the blue cracker.

Anscombe moves to the next step and examines the two conditions through the example of a false penfriend. Suppose that Smith has a penfriend, but he has been tricked and the friend does not exist. Does Smith believe in his penfriend? It seems silly to say that he does not believe in his penfriend, since he exchanges letters with this supposed correspondent.

In this example, the conditions for believing an utterance are placed in doubt. However, it is not appropriate to restrict these conditions to that of believing information. The former three conditions are also placed in doubt:

(1) and (2) are refused by Jones. How about condition (3)? Anscombe indicates that condition (3) regresses infinitely, since the information that secures the sender requires further information.

After all, what is it to believe someone? The answer Anscombe gives is so simple that some readers are astonished. She says, 'Now the critical differentiating point is this. In all those other cases it is clear what the one who "believes X" means by "X speaking", even when we judge that X doesn't exist' (Anscombe 1975 [2008], p.18).

To believe X is to accept that X speaks such and such. From the above discussion, faith cannot be observed as a substantial concept. We find faith among people in situations where the language game smoothly functions. This idea does not slight faith; instead, it sheds light on the non-observable side of faith.

Conclusion: Trust Cannot Be Shown until Knowledge Acquisition Fails

To investigate the process of knowledge acquisition that is overlooked in the age of accountability, this paper cites Anscombe's discussion on teaching by testimony. Though teaching by testimony requires a non-cognitive foundation, it succeeds when the testimony is simply accepted by a learner, an acceptance that involves the acceptance of his or her utterances, without additional background information to prove his or her authority. In this way, suspending doubt enables teaching-learning as a communication between a teacher and learners. If the lack of trust behind the demand of accountability affects learners, it is likely to disturb teaching and learning, since learners must believe in their teachers.

At this point, we may ask, Should we measure trust itself? Should we develop the conditions indicated by the measurement? Unfortunately, the trial may end in failure. To develop the conditions, it may be possible to list the background facts. However, it is not essential to believe these facts. Again, should a teacher offer additional information that proves that she deserves to be believed? As Anscombe points out, because of the infinite regress of additional information, such information is not essential for belief. Trust is only found when the language game smoothly functions. If so, not until knowledge acquisition fails can trust be shown. Trust is shown by its absence. Therefore, it is difficult to measure trust as a substantial concept.

Of course, if stakeholders are dissatisfied with lazy teachers, the concept of accountability would be needed. It may be reasonable to apply the concept in some cases. However, it is also true that the concept may undermine the necessary elements of a learner's knowledge acquisition. The position of this paper suggests that stakeholders who carry out measurements be prudent.

¹ This point concurs with Wittgenstein's refutation of G. E. Moore's scepticism.

² 'If words always kept their old values, I might have called my subject "faith". That short term has in the past been used in just this meaning, of believing someone' (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 1). Anscombe says that the concept of faith can be divided into secular faith and religious faith. She places importance on the former (Anscombe, 1979 [2008], p. 2).

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On Thinking (and Measurement)

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Abstract:

We do indeed “live and work in a time when the issues facing education, many of which have been with us for a considerable period, are being approached primarily through measurement – classroom assessment, research methods, standardized testing, international comparisons”. It is also true that “we do not often stop to consider what counts – and alternatively, what doesn’t count – in a climate where measuring up to a standard is the name of the game. At a deeper level, we rarely raise questions about measurement itself.”

*Heidegger argued that what is “most thought provoking [in this ‘thought provoking age’] is that we are still not thinking,” in *What is called thinking? (Was Heisst Denken? 1954, p.4)*. This somewhat startling assertion deserves careful attention especially in relation to the quote above (“we do not often stop to consider what counts – and alternatively, what doesn’t count – in a climate where measuring up to a standard is the name of the game”). Heidegger’s assertion is pertinent for a number of reasons: he associated this “not thinking” with a “critical moment in history”(p.57), with a “call”, and with a “miscalculation”. I will argue that it is important (again?) to reflect on a number of questions: what is thinking, especially in relation to measurement? Was Heidegger correct in arguing that we have “miscalculated” in so far as we have sought “the safety of the mere drive for calculation” (*The End of Philosophy, p. 106*)? And how does the desire for a higher form of “representational thinking” (in Heidegger’s words; *EOP, p. 110*) in these contexts serve and promote a number of aims in higher education, such as (“student-centred”) learning and even “flourishing”? I will attempt to provide answers to a number of these questions by reflecting on the broad but fundamentally important question of measurement and its limits.*

Keywords: thinking, measurement, calculative thinking, learning, evaluation

No doubt, there are different ways of understanding measurement (and its instruments, defined broadly). This is an important fact, not least because a focus on measurement, even a preoccupation with measurement, can be amplified into something far more thought-provoking, even alarming, if one thinks of Heidegger’s focus on “calculative thinking”- namely a kind of thinking which dominates and pervades all thinking, or thinking in general, about things that can be measured and by extension, even, that cannot be measured also. I will argue that some of Heidegger’s arguments concerning the dominance or paradigmatic nature of “calculative thinking” can be met by a careful and more nuanced understanding of the relationship between measurement (which in one sense, relies on calculation), and more broadly draws upon calculative reason, and even more broadly, on “calculative thinking” inasmuch as calculation comes to be seen as essential to an understanding of the meaning in and of things.

I will also argue that one can employ measurement in some senses, (and much more broadly, a kind of calculative thinking), for example in education, without necessarily abandoning meditative thought, a kind of pondering, or an opening for thinking that is not necessarily deleterious in terms of our nature as thinking beings, and without contributing to what Heidegger called “growing thoughtlessness” (1969, p.45; 1968, p.30; 1977, p.21). This claim is especially important when one thinks critically of the value of measurement, and indeed evaluation, in education.

The Question of Definition

The question of measurement, its nature and meaning, has been a topic of debate among many philosophers. Not surprisingly one finds a number of different definitions. Ernest Nagel (1963) understands measurement in terms of the “correlation with numbers of entities which are not numbers” (p.121). He argued that such a definition is “sufficiently comprehensive though cryptic”; he added, “the problems of measurement merge, at one end, with the problems of predication [what it means to be a “man” or a “circle”] (1963, p.121). He also believed that the *raison d’être* of “numbers in measurement is the elimination of ambiguity in classification and the achievement of uniformity in practice” (1963, p.122). S. S. Stevens understands measurement as “the assignment of numerals to things so as to represent facts and conventions about them” (1963, p.148) and adds that measurement

is never better than the empirical operations by which it is carried out, and operations range from bad to good. Any particular scale, sensory or physical, may be objected to on grounds of bias, low precision, restricted generality, and other factors, but the objector should remember that these are relative and practical matters and that no scale used by mortals is perfectly free of their taint. (1963, p.149)

Zoltan Domotor and Vadim Batitsky understand the measuring process as one which is “modeled by a physical interaction between the measured object instantiating the measurand and the measurand’s measuring instrument.” (2008, p.145) “Instrument” can presumably be understood here in a broad sense, for instance, in the form of a survey. They add: “the interaction is described by a state transformation of the compound system ‘object + instrument,’ in which the final state of the instrument completely determines the instrument quantity’s value that is then used to approximate the measurand’s value.” (2008, p.145)

Each of these definitions is helpful: Nagel’s definition highlights, quite properly, the relationship between numbers and things which are not numbers (for example, human subjects) and further, between subjects and things that may be predicated of them; the “elimination of ambiguity in classification and the achievement of uniformity in practice” does sound like an *ideal* of measurement, though, in the sense that it is difficult to see how all forms of measurement can always entail such outcomes. Stevens highlights such issues in his own definition, for example, and emphasises the relationship between numbers, things which are not numbers, and representations of those things (that is to say, conventions, facts and so on that are employed in order to make sense of these things). Given the imprecision of some instruments (including some surveys), and given the differences in interpretation that one sometimes finds (for example, in the interpretation of measurements in Quantum Mechanics) he is surely correct in also emphasising the possibility of bias, restricted generality, and such things, without forgetting the allied point - that “no scale used by mortals is perfectly free of their taint”. The last claim is a little difficult to justify since it is a broad (inductive) generalisation, but one could argue that is in all probability true of many, if not all, measurements that rely on scale.

Nagel does not miss or overlook such issues altogether, to be fair. He argues that a numerical measurement is “only one way of making evaluations of certain selected characters, although it is so far the best” (1963, p.122). It is the “best” presumably because it makes use of a “universally recognized language”; it makes possible a “refinement of analysis without loss of clarity”; it gives us an “emotionally neutral character and permits a symbolic rendering of invariant relations in a manifold of changing qualities” – in short it allows us to express a “recognition of a necessity which is not human” (1963, p.122). A number of points deserve careful attention here. Once again, Nagel seems to be describing measurement at an ideal level. For example, no “loss of clarity” may be true of the numbers themselves but it is difficult to see how an analysis can preserve entirely this kind of thing- that is to say an analysis which is not itself expressed in numerical form. So once again, a measurement may give us a value and that value in itself may be entirely clear; however it does not follow from this that an analysis of the meaning of that value, which is expressed in non-numerical form, will meet all these criteria (especially, no loss of clarity).

The physical interpretation itself, as he recognised, allows us to discover some properties of the world, since mathematics (and by extension measurement), “is relevant to the exploration of nature” (1963, p.123). (There is an important question here in terms of the “exploration of nature”, namely, that of the extent to which we can know this claim to be true, but that is an epistemological question that takes us beyond the immediate scope of this paper). That physical interpretation, he added, “will constitute whenever it can be found, the conditions for

the measurement of that subject matter.” (1963, p.123). He did recognise a number of limits like Stevens: he drew a distinction between “those qualities which are capable of fundamental measurement and those which are not” (1963, p.135); measurement is understood in this light as the concerted attempt to “obtain well-defined connections, expressed mathematically wherever possible, between qualities measured or measurable fundamentally and those incapable of such measurement.” (1963, p.135). He also recognised the importance of some loss of clarity, especially when a confusion arises:

it is a great sin to *compare* the statement of a relation with the relation itself.... the equation, in every case, is a symbolic statement, pointing to several aspects of the subject matter. When once the plural referents of the symbols are made explicit, and when numbers are not regarded either as common qualities or as chaste platonic beings, but rather as the expression of relations or operations between qualities, belief in the power and validity of mathematical physics need not be superstition (1963, p.139).

The point is well made, though some questions arise here also: for example, it is not clear if the “plural referents of the symbols” can be made explicit, systematically or consistently, in an entirely clear or unambiguous way. This is not to deny the kind of power and validity that Nagel is affirming here; the point is that the criterion concerning clarity may be very difficult to meet on occasions, especially when it is not the relation itself that is at issue, but rather the statement of a relation, and by extension, the understanding of its meaning. (One might think here of the relation that holds between energy and matter broadly conceived, and then consider the *statement and the meaning* of the further relation between dark energy and dark matter.)

Robert Crease adds considerably to this picture. He distinguishes between two kinds of measuring: “ontic” measuring, which is concerned with objects or the properties of objects; and measuring which does not “involve placing something alongside a stick or on a scale”, namely, “fitting” (“less an act than an experience: we sense that things don’t ‘measure up’ to what they could be). (2011, n.p.) This second kind of measuring, “ontological measuring”, refers to the use of good examples (such as Aristotle’s “measure” of a good person) that might help to clarify our understanding of what something is; it highlights “how something exists”. (2011, n.p.) Crease adds: the “distinction between the two ways of measuring is often overlooked, sometimes with disastrous results”. (2011, n.p.)

Heidegger and the Limits of Calculative Thinking

Certainly the disastrous, or potentially disastrous, results of confusing or misunderstanding certain kinds of measurement, or measuring activities, are emphasised in the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger was writing a number of important reflections on a certain kind of thinking at more or less the same time as Nagel and Stevens. Whereas Nagel, Stevens and others were emphasising the power and validity of measurement (and the sort of thinking and form of explanations that underpin it), Heidegger was voicing concerns increasingly about a transformation in our thinking about the world that could conceivably have catastrophic consequences. He explored this in a number of important works.

In *Discourse on Thinking* (1969) he writes:

the growing thoughtlessness must, therefore, spring from some process that gnaws at the very marrow of man today: man today is in flight from thinking. This flight-from-thought is the ground of thoughtlessness. But part of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it. Man today will even flatly deny this flight from thinking. He will assert the opposite. He will say – and quite rightly – that there were at no time such far-reaching plans, so many inquiries in so many areas, research carried on as passionately today. Of course. And this display of ingenuity and deliberation has its own great usefulness. Such thought remains indispensable. But – it also remains true that it is thinking of a special kind (1969, pp. 45-46)

The claim is a striking one, and it is not altogether clear. The “flight” from thinking could mean that it is an escape from this kind of thinking, in the sense, perhaps, that it is an attempt to flee collectively from a kind of

thinking which is not easy or which does not have some kind of utility; or it could mean that it is a kind of forgetting (and certainly, “forgetting” is an important theme in his early and late works), amongst other things. Notwithstanding this ambiguity, it is identified as the “ground of thoughtlessness” which may mean that it is at the basis of the problem of forgetting or of escape, or it is the fundamental cause of the “flight”. If it is at the basis or if it is the cause of the problem then it would be conceivable that a type of thinking that is focussed on utility or on usefulness might miss such things altogether and even in this context, deny that such a thing is happening, since “so many inquiries” and so much research are taking place. Heidegger grants that this kind of thinking, that is, ingenuity and deliberation, for example, attuned to things such as utility, and indeed measurement as a utilitarian instrument, so to speak (no pun intended!), “remains indispensable”. But he goes much further than this:

Wherever we plan, research and organize... we take them [conditions that are given] into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on specific results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates.... Calculative thinking computes.... Ever anew, ever more promising and at the same time more economical possibilities... [it] races from one prospect to the next.... Never stops, never collects itself... [it] is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is. (1969, p.46)

In so far as measurement, or rather, the thinking that is conditioned by measurement and by the presupposition that things that are measurable are of the essence, one might say, “reigns”, then we can “count on specific results”; specific outcomes; by extension, a certain kind of utility. These are some of the distinguishing marks of “calculative thinking”; it encompasses planning, measuring, this kind of “investigation”; it processes information; it is reiterated; it unfolds in all of its forms even as this type of thinking forgets, escapes from, or ceases to be conscious of the things that bind it and unify it at its foundations, perhaps because its foundations have become obscured or concealed by the drive towards “investigation” for the purpose of maximal utilitarian outcomes or, as a subset (itself a kind of calculative term), “economic possibilities”.

Heidegger reminds us, in this striking, somewhat elusive but unforgettable passage, if we need to be reminded, that this kind of thinking, once it becomes dominant, or *paradigmatic*, if you like, obscures, conceals and even displaces another kind of thinking, one that philosophy traditionally vouchsafes and preserves (especially in ancient Greek ontology), that thinking which is concerned perennially with meaning more broadly, with things that are genuinely meaningful more broadly, that is, with the “meaning which reigns in everything that is”. Once again this is striking but a little unclear.

“Meaning” here might mean significance or value or something like that. Notwithstanding such complaints, “meditative thinking” is not “calculative thinking” because it contemplates “meaning” which “reigns” ontologically, and in the broadest contexts, that is to say, not merely on an instrumental or utilitarian or economical plane. It is in this context, according to Heidegger, that “meditative thinking” is seen to “lose touch”; to be “worthless for dealing with current business” or “practical affairs” (1969, p.46) – a potentially catastrophic set of assumptions and affirmations, since it leads according to Heidegger to a startling claim: we find ourselves “suddenly and unaware...firmly shackled to these technical devices that we fall into bondage to them.... we can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp confuse, and lay waste our nature. (1969, pp. 53-54).

In the same way that the “flourishing of any genuine work” depends “upon its roots in a native soil” (1969, p. 47) so too, it would seem, does “calculative thinking” lead away from flourishing since, by this analogy, it leads away, in terms of “flight”, from its own “native “soil”, or from thinking that concerns itself with the ground, with ontological thinking of a primordial kind, attuned to its foundation, and which recalls the “meaning which reigns in everything that is”. (1969, p.46). He asks: “will everything now fall into the clutches of planning and calculation, of organization and automation?” (1969, p.49). Other questions arise: will we forget to ponder or forget even to ask the questions that lead us back to this kind of thinking? (1969, p.50). Will the world “now appear as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist”? (1969, p. 50) What is “uncanny” then is not that the world grasped through “calculative thinking” is

becoming “entirely technical” but rather that we are in “unprepared for this transformation” perhaps because we do not ponder things deeply enough or because we have forgotten foundational questions about the meaning of things and their relation, essentially, to their ground (ontologically speaking); what is “uncanny” is just this “inability to confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age” (1969, p.52).

He had no doubt that a

profound change is taking place in man’s relation to nature and to the world [and to human nature]. But the meaning that reigns in this change remains obscure.... *the meaning pervading technology hides itself...* the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology [is] *openness to the mystery...* a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperiled by it. (1969, p.55).

It seems he is arguing that “calculative thinking” has become so pervasive, so paradigmatic, that we have largely become, or we have (almost?) entirely become – the meaning is not very clear here, it must be said – oblivious of the fact that it is functioning in this way, that is, in a way that obliterates alternative deeper (ontological, not merely instrumental) ways of thinking and seeing. He reinforces this point with another startling metaphor that is not so unclear: the “approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced *as the only way* of thinking...” (1969, p.56) – hyperbole, perhaps, but nonetheless, it should be said that the threat of the dominance of this kind of paradigm, at the expense of profound alternatives, should awaken some concern, if not the sort of alarm that Heidegger’s writings in this key suggest.

What great danger then might move upon us? Then there might go hand in hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative thinking an inventing indifference toward meditative thinking, total thoughtlessness. And then? Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature – that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man’s essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive... persistent courageous thinking... (1969, p. 56).

Heidegger’s argument relies on a number of leaps here: from the claim that “calculative thinking” is dominant or even pervasive or paradigmatic, to “total thoughtlessness”, which even if charitably interpreted, it must be said, looks rather hyperbolic. Even if this kind of thinking is dominant, it does not follow that it “reigns” everywhere. Nor does it follow that from the dominance of this kind of thinking in general, we must have sacrificed or in some sense lost “man’s essential nature”, even if that nature is in part associated with “meditative thinking”; even if most people privilege “calculative thinking”, it would not necessarily imply that we have “thrown away” our “special nature” as human beings. It would take just one person to think meditatively in order for us to claim that “man’s essential nature” in this respect has not been “thrown away” or obliterated, in so far as that nature is being manifested in the thinking that is then taking place. Moreover, it would take the existence of the possibility of thinking otherwise, especially in meditative ways, to allow one to claim that our “special nature” as meditative beings remains intact, to some extent at least.

Our “nature”, on this interpretation, as meditative beings, is not just a question of how we think, why we think and what we think; it goes to the heart of what is possible, what remains in us at the level of potentiality. If these claims are correct then it would follow that “man’s essential nature” is not necessarily in need of saving, for as long as there are some thinkers (like Heidegger for instance), or for as long as there are a few thinkers who still think meditatively, or in whom the potential for this kind of thinking is preserved. In cases such as this, “man’s essential nature” inasmuch as it is comprised by meditative thinking, would not necessarily be in need of saving, even if the “coldness of calculation” “reigns” generally (but not absolutely) and even if reason is, in general, “attuned to confidence in the logically mathematical intelligence of its principles and rules” (1956, p. 91). There remains the possibility that knowledge, and inquiry, may be other than “calculation” and other than the “sign of the degradation of thinking” or as the “elevation of logistics to the rank of true logic” (“logistics” is understood by Heidegger as the “calculable organization of the unconditional lack of knowledge about the essence of thinking”) (2003, p.80).

Concluding reflections

It is important to bear in mind the kind of measurement one is talking about and the kinds of things that one is trying to measure. For example, if the measuring instrument is a survey and if one wishes to measure the perceptions of students on a particular course or class in which student-centred learning is the paradigm, then this can be done, if not with complete precision, then certainly in a way that might produce meaningful results, that is, results that one could act upon. It would be possible to find out what students value, for example, and what they do not, and even if complete clarity or precision is not achievable, nonetheless it would be rash to conclude that we are not necessarily thinking well or deeply, in this kind of context.

Heidegger's argument, namely that "measurement" in general or measurement fundamentally is problematic because it is based on "calculative thinking" is an important but in some respects a limited insight. If "meditative thinking" is the alternative we ought to pursue, then the meaning that "reigns in everything that is" becomes the focus. But it may be asked here to what extent thinking – whether calculative or meditative – is adequate to this great task, especially given the work of Kant and Hume and many who come after, on the limits of reason, experience and more broadly, thinking (Heidegger, 1997, pp. 170-175). It is at the very least conceivable that "meditative thinking" may not take us all the way, so to speak, towards such an encompassing understanding of "meaning".

Nonetheless, in terms of education and measurement, the use of calculation, may produce important insights and meaningful results. What a neo-Heideggerian approach would highlight here is that it is important that such measurement, such uses of calculation (for example, in a statistical sense, working out means, medians and modes) should not come to be seen as the only way of thinking or as the definitive ways of thinking about things – as being of the essence.

So if we are concerned with something like student-centred learning, its limits and efficacy, we ought to make measurement a part of our analysis, perhaps, without privileging it as the only way or as the essential way of reaching a deep and encompassing understanding of such things; certainly, if Heidegger is correct, without *assuming* (and this is a crucial term here) that we are gaining an understanding of all students, or of student-centred learning as a whole, that is, an understanding that is of the essence.

But why should we come to see it in this way, that is, as being of the essence? It certainly does not follow: it is at least conceivable that an instrument of measurement may be employed with a sophisticated sense of its limitations (again, one might think of much work here on the limits of statistics and statistical sampling) or with a sharp sense of the limitations that apply to questions that are asked, answers that are given, and the data to be collected, for example, about student perceptions and student feedback. In other words, it would not follow from the activities of measurement or even an emphasis on measurement that one has forgotten or is in flight from "meditative thinking" (or from alternatives to "calculative thinking"). The inherent limitations of the instruments themselves may indeed be part of the debate, in quite a rational and sophisticated way.

It is conceivable too that one might learn something profound about the nature of instruments and the nature of calculation, and these insights may conceivably also inform our understanding of the meaning that "reigns" in things which are in fact calculable or measurable, without losing sight of things that go well beyond these limited approaches and frameworks. In short it is important to allow, in this neo-Heideggerian context, when speaking of measurement or more broadly of "calculative thinking", that the meaning of the things that we are studying may be studied in other ways and in terms of a different way of thinking. A calculative approach, which is modest and not absolute would not necessarily "lay waste our nature" so long as one grants that there are inherent limitations in instruments and consequent acts of measurement and so long as one is aware of valid alternative ways of thinking about the very same things.

Of course, Heidegger might have responded by arguing that we would be missing the essence, where "essence" means those things that endure in us, and that we cannot have a deep understanding of things when what is measured or measurable is privileged or becomes paradigmatic of progress, everywhere or in general. Nonetheless it does seem clear that we can understand some things, such as student perceptions of excellence in

a course or in classes, or more broadly in education, without necessarily commanding an understanding, meditatively, of meaning in a more encompassing sense. And it is possible to understand these kinds of things well without necessarily being dogmatic about meaning and measurement; that is, for example, by recalling the limits and boundaries of these kinds of measurements and this kind of thinking. In other words, there would be no contradiction necessarily between this kind of recollection and an ongoing affirmation of the power and profundity of “meditative thinking”. Indeed, the recollection in just this context, could be conditioned by the power of “meditative thinking”, the paths it opens up in relation to our understanding of numbers, relations, and statements of relations, ways of understanding these, and indeed, their limits. This kind of thing can conceivably allow us, in a sense, to “confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age” (1969, p.52), if Heidegger is correct about the dawning of “calculative thinking” (in the modern age) which relies excessively on measurement and instrumental value, and other such things. It could conceivably allow us to question, to think through more deeply, those attacks “that nothing is believed any longer to resist” (1969, p.50); this could constitute a resistance, and one might argue (though this is a topic for another time), that this kind of resistance is taking place and ought to continue to do so.

In order to understand measurement and that which is measurable deeply, one might argue that it is important to understand measurement in the light of its nature, meaning, significance and range of application. It is important to understand things in the light of their nature, meaning, significance and range of application, but also in the light of relevant limits and boundaries (to the measurable, the calculable, the thinkable). In this kind of way, we can open up an understanding of measurement, without necessarily being captivated or bewitched or dominated by numbers, relations between numbers, statements of relations and ways of understanding all of these, and without coming to think that this is the only way of understanding these things. Then it would be possible to keep open a path to a deeper understanding of the conditions of possibility and the meaning of other things which might conceivably transcend such limits and boundaries. In Heidegger’s words, within that kind of framework, open to the possibility of thinking more deeply and even thinking otherwise, in “that ground, the creativity which produces lasting works could strike new roots.” (1966, p.57)

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