

Schools in Transition

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Linking Past, Present, and Future in Educational Practice

Edited by

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PREFACE

School is one of the most central and thus also, perhaps, most debated educational institution in the modern society. We can hardly imagine any human culture without some kind of education; nor can we imagine any modern society without some kind of schooling. Schooling is a pivotal part of education – so much that most of the history of educational science is based in the research of school.

This book reflects and analyzes the function of school, and recent trends in school development. The articles of the book examine problems of school from several points of view, without striving to achieve a single, uniform view. It should be stressed that the subject area of school and schooling does not limit itself only to the institutions which are traditionally called schools, but school in the general sense, referring to all institutional forms of education, independent of student age and level.

We would like to thank all the authors, whose contributions made this book possible. We would also like to thank Sense Publishers for accepting this book for publication.

KIMMO KONTIO, EETU PIKKARAINEN
AND PAULI SILJANDER

1. A MODERN IDEA OF THE SCHOOL

The school is, without doubt, one of the most central institutions in modern Western society. The emergence of the school as a pedagogical institution is intertwined in a very fundamental way with the emergence of the modern society and modern cultural life forms. This means that the function of the school as a pedagogical institution is not solely understood in terms of functional necessities of society and economy but, additionally, in terms of its role as an institution whose task is to open up reflexive learning processes and, thus, participating also in the redefinition of social and cultural life forms. In this sense, the relation between school and society can be defined as reciprocal: although the function of the school is always determined by the factually- and historically-formed societal and economical necessities and cultural life forms, this determination is not absolute. As a pedagogical institution school is itself a crucial determinant of reformation and redefinition of the societal necessities and cultural life forms.

It naturally follows that the societal role and the functions of school has been under continuous critical debate and redefinition. In fact, this debate has been the essential part of the developmental history of the modern school system. Although the history of the critical debate about school includes also modes of radical school critics – the “de-schooling” arguments on behalf of a society without schools – the significance of the school as a social institution has been focal and increasing, at least since the 19th century in modern Western societies. However, the trends of change in the last few decades in particular have posed special challenges for the development of school systems, and a need to re-evaluate the pedagogical role of the school.

This volume discusses the pedagogical task of the school – i.e., the school as a pedagogical institution – from a number of different viewpoints. The essential questions motivating the articles in this volume are for example: How should the role and status of school be defined with respect to other social institutions? What is the educational task of school? How should the forms of pedagogical interaction and the structure of school be understood in modern society? How are the development needs of the national school systems related to global trends of change in educational policy? How are the functions of the school defined from the point of view of the economics of education?

This book does not aim to offer unambiguous answers to these questions but, instead, to stimulate – from different point of views – the discussion of the meaning of school in contemporary societies by emphasizing its peculiar pedagogical function.

An introduction to these issues is made below, first with (1) a short historical review of the pedagogical and social evolution of the school, and then with (2) an introduction to the articles in this volume.

WHAT IS SCHOOL – A SHORT HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The institutional forms of school and their development are an essential part of the general development of modernization, the early stages of which have been traditionally described in terms of a transition from pre-modern society to modern society. In other words, the rise and development of the modern school system cannot be separated from the emergence and development of modern society. And the converse is also true: the emergence of modern society cannot be separated from “modernity of pedagogy” (Koch, Marotzki, & Peukert, 1993). Although the concrete form and institutional structures of the school – such as they are understood today – have evolved over a long period of time, there is an underlying change in the world view of ‘pre-modern man’, which has also involved a change in thought about upbringing and education. In other words, the transition from pre-modern or traditional society to modern bourgeois society also signified a critical change in conceptions about schooling, teaching and learning processes.

This does not mean, however, that organized education has not existed before the development of the modern society. Forms of organized schooling and education can be found in all the high cultures since archaic time – as the teaching practices of Sumerian reading and writing techniques about 2500–2000 BCE, Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum in ancient Greece, convent schools in the early Middle Ages, and so on and so forth – but school as a general pedagogical institution for every citizen is a product only of modernization especially promoted by the ideas of the European Enlightenment (see e.g. Gradstein, Justman, & Maier, 2005). The exact time of the development of ‘modern school’, however, is neither possible nor necessary to define (see e.g. Hoffmann et al., 1992). Rather, ‘a modern school’ is a typological phrase (Helmer, 1993) describing the change in educational thought and institutional schooling. Keeping in mind the difficulties in defining the precise turning point from ‘premodern’ to ‘modern’ and also in defining what the ‘modern’ actually is, we can conceptualize, on a general level, the difference between ‘premodern’ and ‘modern’ thinking about education and schooling.

In pre-modern societies, learning and teaching processes mostly took place in close correlation with the forms of action that were typical of the very social context to which the new generation was being inducted. Basic skills and knowledge were learnt in social interaction with the family and other members of the community. The natural medium of the processes of learning and growth was quotidian praxis, where personal experiences, and social skills were gained in dynamic interaction

with other people and things. Thus, there was little call for change or ‘innovations’ to the basic structures of pre-modern society from the new generation –none, at any rate, that would have necessitated learning processes beyond the level of knowledge and skills of the previous generations. Typically, people in the pre-modern community would transmit and transfer ‘historically constructed knowledge’ and skills – i.e. tradition – in mutual reciprocal interaction without any need for a form of pedagogical interaction or institution that was differentiated from the rest of life in the community. The pedagogical concern for the individual development of forms of knowledge and interaction was part of everyday caring in the immediate symbiosis between generations. In other words, knowledge of the world, people and intercourse between people was passed from one generation to the other, as if of itself, within the framework of people living together. This meant that pre-modern or traditional societies did not have a need for pedagogical institutions or special pedagogical professions, or, for that matter, a form of knowledge and praxis that was distinct from other forms of everyday praxis.

In the pre-modern way of life, pedagogical activity – concrete educational and teaching acts – have therefore always been directly integrated into human life and practical problems of a community. In other words, the learning processes have been inseparably attached to the contexts of the life-world, in which learning and the processes of growth are realized. The fact that the learning processes take place in everyday contexts and forms of living together does not, however, mean that the learning and growth processes are not directed in a more or less conscious manner. Education and teaching in their various forms are part of the everyday life of any human community. This is because the knowledge and skills required by social interaction are historical in nature. They have arisen as a result of man’s own activity, and they exist as a tradition. This means that their transmission from one generation to the next is not based solely on biological growth and maturation, as they are passed on in human action, in which the members of the next generation are required, in a more or less conscious fashion, to realize their own learning potential in ways that enable them to participate in human society. (Benner, 2012, p. 24). In this sense the transition from the pre-modern to the modern world and its conception of education and teaching is more like a gradational change rather than a steep turn.

It was essential for the development of the school institution that with modernization the unity between learning and direct social interaction characterized above began to weaken gradually (Benner, 2012, pp. 16–19). The transition from the pre-modern to the modern way of life created a need for more goal-oriented learning processes as the means of traditional pre-modern communities for ensuring the future of the next generation were felt to be insufficient. Entry into modern bourgeois society, required learning processes that could no longer be fulfilled in a typically pre-modern way. Learning processes that were meaningful and necessary in traditional communities did not any longer meet the qualification needs of modern society.

However, the emergence of modern society cannot be seen simply as a structural change in society calling for a change in ways of thinking of learning processes.

The emergence of the 'modern subject' was a necessary part of the process of modernization and reform in society. To the modern human, the future appeared open, thus offering in principle an opportunity for social change that could surpass the limits of prevailing society and traditional forms of community. The modern man also wanted to know more. This required the development of new forms of teaching and learning, which also meant new conceptions of knowledge. Knowledge is not immutable, but something created. What is more, modern society presumed skills that could not be learnt in the immediate, close community or in the contexts of everyday life. It was a functional necessity that the learning and teaching processes assumed a sphere of their own. When modern societies were evolving, this 'pedagogical sphere' gradually acquired established forms of institutional and organized action. While institutional education became an essential part of the structure of modern societies, the identity of modern man was more and more characterized by goal-oriented educational aspirations and aims for which traditional life forms could offer no sufficient guarantee.

In other words: In the modern sense, pedagogical praxis is no longer integrated into the other forms of human praxis, but is a relatively autonomous sphere among others in society. This separation of educational praxis is not possible without institutionalization. Although pedagogical praxis is vital and constitutive for every human community, it was only in the course of modernization that it began recognizably to take its form of institutionalized and organized action. The relationship between the younger generation and the social life-form is mediated by the specific forms of organized interactions, which differ from the other social activities. Actions in the educational sphere no longer belonged or, more precisely, do not belong yet to the spheres of work and economic production, political decision making and coordination of society, sacral rituals, moral publicity or esthetic experience. Educational institutions are specialized and bring their own function into the context of society. They do not take directly part in the planning of the future actions of society as do political institutions; they do not secure the material and economic basis of society and self-preservation of human species, as work and labor do; they are not directed towards the intersubjective giving of and asking for reasons for moral actions in the real medium of communicative public use of reason in order to form public opinion.

However, this does not imply that educational institutions do not link to the other institutionalized forms of human praxis. On the contrary, they are specialized to produce those processes of learning and individual abilities vital for our productive participation in other institutional realms. The institutionalized forms of pedagogical action create a sheltered area, where the members of the new generation may develop their abilities without yet being fully responsible for participating in the activities vital for the preservation and continuation of the socio-cultural life-forms shared by the adult generation.

Because of its existential role and specific social function, the pedagogical sphere has its own rationality, shaped in the specific forms of interaction and differing from

other forms of social action. Typically, the notion of teaching refers to such a form of interaction at the core of educational institutions. Teaching can, of course, take place in any situation where someone is in need of guidance or help; nevertheless, teaching in the pedagogical institutions differs from this occasional help. It is done continuously in organized settings. Teaching is the main activity of the pedagogical institutions, which are occupied by agents who have the professional knowledge, skills, qualification and status recognized by the institution to conduct the activity called “teaching”.

School is not just a context for “spontaneously running learning processes” (Fend, 2008, 180) or the immediate learning in the social intercourse and direct dealings with diverse aspects of everyday life. Learning is intentionally supported, guided, aimed and initiated by the diverse educational operations. Furthermore, what is at stake in schools is not merely to produce specific skills needed to solve problems that occur in the everyday lives of the pupils. Schools are able to produce educated individuals in the very broad meaning of the word, individuals who are able to continue their learning processes outside of school and participate in the various activities in society. The actual task of school is to expand the prevailing horizon and everyday experience of the pupils. This is possible only when institutionalized schooling is detached from the actually here and now lived context of the younger generation.

The emergence of the modern school system thus implied the basic insight that systematically organized teaching and learning processes enable the formation of skills and competences otherwise unobtainable within the framework of immediate everyday experience and intercourse between people. From the viewpoint of individual learning goals, in pre-modern society the routines of everyday life and prevailing social practices could be learnt without any special pedagogical intervention, but the modern world required something more. In other words, the task of the school as an institution was to create a ‘pedagogical space’ where human growth, development and learning processes could be subject to special pedagogical arrangements and attention. In a certain sense, the modern way of life called for teaching and learning processes that can be characterized as ‘artificial’ – or as Benner (2012, p. 19) pedagogically organized teaching is about “artificial interaction”, in which professionally acting pedagogues support and help the growing people in ways that would not be immediately possible in the rest of everyday life.

How, then, can the position and task of school be characterized, and what makes it a legitimate social institution? Briefly, two central aspects may be highlighted from the preceding discussion. First, with the development of modernization came the formulation and determination of the status and functions of school in relation to the needs of changing society. It became the task of the school to ensure that the representatives of the new generation adopt cognitive and practical skills to enable their operation as members of a bourgeois, industrializing society. Secondly, the pedagogical task of the school in modern society is to provide and optimize real opportunities for the fulfillment of individual educational processes, learning

potentials and ideals. The learning contexts of everyday life are insufficient and too sporadic in modern society, in terms not only of the cognitive needs or qualification requirements in a changing society, but also in terms of the individual needs and goals for education. From the latter perspective, the task and goals determined for the school as an institution emerge from the 'internal rationality' of pedagogical practice rather than from any obligation to enforce external societal needs. Citing Johan Friedrich Herbart, the school is the institutional form of 'educative teaching' (erziehender Unterricht), with the task of expanding and deepening the pupils' existing reserve of experiences by introducing into it, in a systematic and pedagogically meaningful way, cognitive and practical elements that are not possible in the changing contexts of everyday life. This means that the formulation of goals for the school – and its legitimate justification as an institution – cannot be directly derived from the immediate needs of society (such as qualification requirements in working life), but also not from individual learning objectives and educational needs. It is about reconciling and optimizing the mutual relationship between the two. Defined on a highly general level, the school's task as a pedagogical institution in the modern sense is built on this very basis.

With the move to late modern or post-modern society, the institutional structures and patterns of thought of modern society have been questioned in many ways. The critical voices of post-modernity have also targeted the foundations of the paradigm of institutional education. While the status and tasks of the school and other pedagogical institutions have become subject to increasingly varied and conflicting criticism, there is continuous lively discussion on the importance of education and development challenges of school systems. It proves how important an institution school is.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE BOOK

This volume investigates school from several points of view, divided into five parts: (1) Functions of the school: theoretical issues, (2) School, learning and teaching, (3) School, economics and labor markets, (4) School and school reform – national perspectives, (5) School, utopias and the future. In the beginning of every part there is a short introduction to the theme and the story of the section. Here we next give a condensed introduction to the chapters of the book.

Functions of the School: Theoretical Issues

In this section the philosophical and theoretical assumptions and foundations of a school as pedagogical and social institution are examined. The articles continue the discussion of the introductory chapter about a role, and function of modern school: what does the concept of school in a modern sense mean? What is the relation of a school to a state? How should one understand a school as a place of individual process of *Bildung*, growth and learning? Using a theoretical-philosophical approach, the

articles investigate educational ideas of a few well-known theorists of education and philosophy.

David Hansen's and Jessica Davis's *Socrates Goes to School* articulate a vision of the school as a center of 'a philosophical pedagogy', drawing on Plato's ideas from the Republic concerning self-cultivation and self-formation in conjunction with developing a civic or public consciousness. They incorporate ways in which John Dewey reconstructed Plato's ideas in service of what he called "the creative task" of justice and democracy. They discuss how a philosophical orientation can inform the entire formal and informal curriculum of the school, such that students learn the necessary skills for functioning in society even while developing a critical lens on the meaning of those skills, the nature of their society, and their personal destinies as human beings. The author's message challenges the values characteristic of present educational policy, i.e. the values calling for top-down accountability, the instrumental evaluation and external audition of schools. The authors remind us – as do Plato and Dewey – that we do not need to "audit" our merit as participants in humanity. Schools are not places where teachers and students have to earn a place in the social balance. Instead, school can be a place for philosophizing deeply and argumentatively about the important things in life.

Teemu Hanhela's article *Axel Honneth on Role, Form and Results of Public Education Revisited* is a theoretical analysis offering clarifications on Honneth's understanding of public education. Hanhela shows how Honneth's conception can be organised in concert with his recognition theory and a practical view of how a democratically-oriented education should be organised in schools.

The article introduces three pedagogical theorems: *the role of public education*, *the form of public education* and *the results of public education*. In the first category, the role of public education, the paper proposes that education is an inherent part of everyone's civil rights and the crucial instrument for maintaining a democratic society. The second theorem – the form of public education – is examined in order to improve our understanding of how democratic education should be organised, if Honneth's referred philosophical tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey is to be taken seriously. The third theorem – the results of public education – reveals Honneth's distinctive position. According to the author, for Honneth it is not enough that in democracy the discourse principles become an inherent part of our identity, but instead that the development of an intact identity equipped with *self-confidence*, *self-respect* and *self-esteem* should be secured and prioritized. Public education should secure and cultivate this identity development in an equal manner to all, as its main task.

In his article *What are Universities for? From the Community of the Selves to the Transformative Potential of Higher Education* Jani Kukkola attempts to show what the university essentially is, if any such character can be ascribed to it. Kukkola makes a case for the transformative potential of university education, considering it a phenomenon that can capture something of the uniqueness of the institution relative to other forms of education, without making claims to have captured its

soul. Alongside the development and expansion of universities from their medieval origins has been a quest for the ‘idea’ or the ‘meaning’ of the university itself. This idea may not necessarily require a fixed essence *per se*, as Kukkola will later claim, but rather a dynamic discursive transformation potential as a *community of selves*.

School, Learning and Teaching

The pedagogic core task of the modern school has been traditionally described, among others, with concepts teaching, learning, education. With modernization came the demands of pedagogical professionalism and the related idea that carrying out the pedagogic tasks of the school requires specific vocational competence, i.e. teacher profession. In this section school education is examined from the point of view of the traditional pedagogical tasks of school on the one hand, and in light of the present educational research on the other. Especially two distinctive features of the present discussion make themselves felt: first, the pedagogical concepts such as ‘upbringing’, ‘education’ (*Erziehung*), ‘Bildung’, ‘teaching’, ‘growth’ have almost disappeared from discourse of school reformers and educational researchers; these concepts have been replaced by the concept of “learning”; secondly, the pedagogization or educationalization of culture and of society has called for a reassessment of the teaching profession and of the pedagogical tasks of school. The central questions are, therefore: ‘How should one understand the pedagogical nature of school and with what kinds of conceptual categories should one describe it?’, ‘Have concepts like *Bildung* and ‘human growth’ any place in present educational language?’, ‘How should one understand the professional role of teacher?’ The following articles focuses on these questions and some others.

In his article *Schools and the New Language of Learning: A Critical Perspective* Jouni Peltonen analyses the striking change in the manners of speaking that has occurred during the past 25 years within educational research, resulting in “the new language of learning”. This change follows the decline of traditional pedagogical concepts such as *education* and *teaching* or *Bildung* and *Erziehung* and goes hand in hand with the rise of the concept of *learning* as the most dominant conceptual category within educational discourse. Consequently, the claim is that the new, especially the constructivist- or sociocultural theories of learning, can alone orientate the process of education and the function of the educational institutions. While admitting that these new theories of learning have had a certain positive impact on some educational practices, their explanatory and normative potential is questioned in the article in two respects. As Peltonen demonstrates, the new theories of learning do not manage to constitute a sufficient basis for understanding, or for criticizing and improving either the processes of education taking place in the educational institutions or, analogously, for explaining, understanding and reforming educational institutions in modern or late-modern societies. In contrast to the “hegemony of the new theories of learning”, Peltonen argues that in order to capture the complexity of the educational processes and the complex nature of educational institutions a

synthesis of the theories and lines of thinking provided by different branches of educational research and educational theory is required.

In the article *The Paradox of Being a Teacher: Institutionalized Relevance and Organized Mistrust* Daniel Tröhler describes the paradoxical nature of the teaching profession which arises out of the mismatch between the excessive expectations imposed on teachers and, at the same time, the constant mistrust shown to them for fulfilling these expectations. The paradox is related to the cultural shift of the educationalization of the Western world – that not only are a wide variety of social, economic and moral problems defined as educational problems but, in addition, education itself is placed at the core of the historical process and expected to fulfil future ideals. According to Tröhler, educationalization was reinforced by the tradition of modern educational thinking and especially by certain inherent fundamental religious motives. The author defends this thesis with the help of two, at first sight very divergent, figures in the history of education: Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi and Burrhus F. Skinner. Common to these thinkers is, according to Tröhler, their argument which is constitutive of the cultural shift of educationalization but, also, their shared view that in order to save the younger generation from the corrupting forces of external society, certain ideal conditions for making the natural development of the children possible are needed. Tröhler underlines the religious motives behind this idea. The task of education is to take care of the salvation of the younger generation, to protect the “God’s creation” against the world of artificial moral corruption. The educator’s task is, then, to be God’s deputy, substitute and imitator, to secure the existence of this moral order. This religious background helps us, according to Tröhler, to understand those enormous expectations that schools and teachers meet even in secular contemporary societies. This raises the question: should one reject expectations, which no one can fulfil.

Eetu Pikkarainen analyses in his article *School Learning as Human Growth: Modal Dynamics of Learning* the function of school as a place for human growth. By human growth – or *Bildung* – he means the learning which is required by a member of a future society. According to Pikkarainen, school must be a bridge between current society and an unknown future society. Because we cannot be certain what competencies are required for the future, this approach suggests that we focus on the qualitative features of learning. Pikkarainen elaborates the nature of learning with the help of the semiotic conception of modal competence, which can be approached by the modal sub-verbs *want*, *can*, *know* and *must*. Learning is separated into three different levels: the lowest is pragmatic; the next is social; and the last and highest in terms of human growth is existential learning. The task of school, at all levels, is to foster or at least try to achieve the existential level of learning.

School, Economics and Labor Markets

In this section, education is analyzed from the point of view of the economics of education. Starting from the seminal works of Theodor Schultz and the “human

capital revolution in economics” in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the economics of education has gained an established and influential status among other sub-disciplines of educational research. As articles in this section prove, the economics of education has not only deepened our understanding of how education is related to the labor markets but has also gone far beyond Schultz’s original labor market focus by establishing a rich framework to study the production of education. Also, when analyzing the role of education in comparison to the human capital theory, as well as the microeconomics of education, the economics of education has, in many respects, overcome many of the reductionist, one-dimensional cause and effect views of the neo-classical human capital orthodoxy. The concepts in the economics of education currently focus on the complex, multi-causal relations between education and labor market. They recognize the challenges involved with modeling the production of education by considering the peculiar nature of emerging educational processes.

In their article *The State, Markets and Education* Kimmo Kontio and Maximilian Sailer argue that the development of public educational institutions as well as the economic rationale of the public funding of education can be explained in association with their functional necessity for securing and promoting economic welfare but also in their recognition of the potential alienating tendencies arising from the demands of the economy. Thus, traditionally the idea of modern public education is related to the kind of a “double function” where, in addition to the market mechanism, the function of educational institutions is also determined by political decision making regarding the amount of public spending on education and the goals public education is meant to achieve. Kontio and Sailer claim that, based on the findings of economics of education, several arguments can be found that together give a strong economic rationale for the public funding of education. On the other hand, the recent trends of the privatization of public education challenge the traditional role of the state when it comes to the funding of education and, more emphatically, for the provision of public education. This theme is selectively studied by introducing the market and public choice based argument on the provision of public education made influential by Milton Friedman. Whether the claims for the privatization of education marks a true change in traditionally-defined governmental responsibilities in education remains to be seen and naturally the economic justification of these claims is dependent on how adequately the overall benefits of education are estimated. The well-known methodological challenge is, of course, that many of the benefits are not easily expressed in pecuniary terms.

The rationale for the public funding of education is also addressed by Henry M. Levin in his article *The Economic Payoff to Investing in Educational Justice*. The vital preoccupation of Levin’s 40-year academic career has been to study whether seeking educational justice by greater educational investments in at-risk populations provides an economic payoff for the public that exceeds the costs. In contrast to the popular conclusions drawn already from the monumental *Coleman Report* (1966) and more recently quite often heard skepticism on whether improved public educational funding can promote educational equity, Levin argues that the

moral imperative for investment in educational equity can be supported by the strong economic evidence and, thus, an investment for educational equity is also a good public investment policy with high monetary returns. Although Levin's focus is on American society, his research can be considered as an example of the methodologically sophisticated attempts recently made to study the overall returns of educational investments. It thus has significant importance in general (see also Belfield & Levin, 2007.) Moreover, Levin's analysis of the costs and effects of the various educational interventions is noteworthy (see also Levin & McEwan, 2001). Namely, it is far from evident that educationalists and school reformers are always well aware of the importance of the cost analysis (when properly used and understood) when evaluating the desirability of the educational investments. For example, there might be a tendency, especially in dire economic times, to emphasize the cost side and ignore the effect side of the investments and this might have serious drawbacks. This is because, naturally, the desirability of the various educational interventions must be compared not only in relation to their costs but in relation to their cost-effectiveness ratios.

In his article "*Productivity, Effectiveness, Efficiency: Basic Concepts of the Economics of Education*" Dieter Timmermann gives a systematic analysis of the eminent economic concepts of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. When reflecting on the function of school and the educational system in terms of these concepts, many important issues come to the fore. For example, the concept of productivity can be constructed differently depending on how are the measures of schooling outputs and inputs identified. From this follows the idea that instead of a single productivity measure, a number of schooling productivities can be identified. Consequently, because there is no obvious reason to choose one productivity over other, educational productivity is a construction that is dependent on the observer's view about education and his or her interest in creating a certain kind of a agenda for education. When the focus is turned to the concept of efficiency, the normative orientation is added to the picture i.e. that the relation between output and its costs must be optimized so that the recourses are not wasted. The concept of effectiveness differs from the concepts of productivity and efficiency in the respect that it does not measure input-output-ratios but instead output relations. So, this concept expresses rather the pedagogical than an economic point of view of schooling. Also, when the nature of the production of education is reflected, the indetermination of the production must be taken seriously. This means, that instead of assuming a linear process of transformation of the contents taught into context of learned, the educational production involves significant contingencies and uncertainty resulting from endogenous factors. For example, the competencies a pupil will have at the end of a learning process is dependent on the fact that a pupil is an autonomous co-producer of these competencies. So, in the end, raising the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of the schooling might be crucially dependent on the fact how this indetermination of the educational production is taken into consideration.

School and School Reform – National Perspectives

In this section the contemporary discourses concerning school and school reforms are revealed with the help of a few national case studies. In these articles, the national and local interests and premises are related to the supranational and global educational policy trends. So, although the articles discuss educational policy and school reforms from national perspectives they describe also how supranational ideologies and global school reform waves, in many cases, challenge national and local educational interests and cause ideological tensions in national educational policy-making. In spite of the national and contextual differences, many authors of this section agree on the critical assessment of educational agendas of supranational organizations. From the national perspective, school doctrine of supranational organizations and global education policy trends appear as an ahistorical policy agenda and reform demands, in which cultural-historical connections of education have been ignored.

Pauli Siljander's article *School in Transition: The Case of Finland* examines, from a Finnish national perspective, the changes that have occurred in the Finnish educational system and educational mindset especially, over the past fifty years, taking into consideration the longer peculiar national history of Finland between two cultural, political and societal systems; on the border between the East and West. Siljander proves how the alterations in general educational policy views and pedagogical principles are interrelated and have defined Finnish school reforms from the 1960s to the present. According to Siljander, Finnish school reforms in their many focal transitions have been guided by the principle that Finnish national philosopher J.V. Snellman defined in the 19th century as a national lifeline: a small nation's strength is its *Bildung* and the *Bildung*'s strength is its generality instead of its particularity or elitism. The principle, thus, includes a strong demand for educational equality. It can be shown convincingly that changes in general educational policy and changes of pedagogical principles have gone 'hand in hand'. Although Finnish school reforms have been traditionally guided by the emphatic vision of *Bildung*, the recent debates on educational policy and pedagogical reform have made visible the tensions arising from the supranational organization's educational policy agendas and their implications to the national school system and its reforms.

In their articles, Wolfgang Schönig and Andreas Fuchs analyze the heated public debate concerning the meaningfulness of the recent school reforms in Germany. According to Schönig's *The Transformation of School in a Changing Society – A German Example* the German school system, when responding to the prevailing societal challenges has adopted the school reform's ideological guidelines from the neo-liberal political agenda; this in turn has led to the massive and resource-demanding restructuring of the German school system. The restructuring is fundamental in nature. When the chosen strategy is *management by objectives*, it has led to the establishment of the skill-based national education performance standards with the need for a rewriting of the curriculum, a redefining of teaching practices

and the creation of “the evaluation machinery” to satisfy the constant need for the measuring and top-down assessment of education. However, according to Schönig’s analysis, the evidence that these neo-liberally motivated reforms are bettering school practices and their outcomes is absent. When analyzing these reforms from the point of view of educational science and in the light of empirical studies, Schönig reveals the vacuity and shortcomings of these reforms. For example, the concept of skill is itself an unclear and vague term, lacking substance or content, tending to narrow the outcomes of education as a purely pragmatic adaptability and, moreover, from the skill-based curriculum, follows the de-politication of the curriculum and de-professionalization of teacher profession and teaching practice. The fundamental failure of these school reforms is that they are based on a logic that corresponds neither to the educational intuition nor to the expertise of teachers and professional pedagogues. What is needed, as Schönig emphasizes, is educational theoretical reflection about school and the educational processes taking place in schools on which the school reforms must be ultimately anchored.

John Andreas Fuchs’ *It Takes a Village* – (Catholic) Education in the 21st Century analyses the aftermath of the first PISA results (2000) on German educational policy. The results sent a shockwave throughout Germany and led immediately to the paradigm shift in educational policy where traditional educational values, objectives and ideals were replaced by educational standards, measurable test scores and competencies. Fuchs introduces a diagnosis, very much in the same spirit as Schönig, of the state of German public education which, as it defined education as a measurable, standardized and valuable resource, has lost education itself. One may ask, then, if German public education is facing a kind of “legitimation crisis”. In other words, when reflecting on the question of the provision of education in Germany, Fuchs points out interestingly that the recent trends in educational policy and school reforms do not necessarily correspond to parental preferences concerning education. It seems evident that what parents expect of public education is that it treats their children like human beings, respects their individual needs, hopes and dreams and does not regard them as sterile standardized human resources. According to Fuchs, the mismatch between parental wishes and the guidelines that public education has adopted in the aftermath of PISA explains the popularity of the private, especially Christian, schools in Germany. To show what is done differently in private schools, Fuchs analyses the pedagogical idea and practices of Catholic schools. Fuchs concludes that because Catholic schools have to a certain extent managed to elude state control, they have also been able to maintain very traditional and fundamental values in and motives for education (*Bildung*).

In the article *Schooling Vis-À-Vis Learning: The Case for Reducing Compulsion* Andrew Stables questions the dominant contemporary trend in educational policy where a long compulsory and formal schooling is individually and socially desirable. According to Stables, the mantra that the more one pursues formal education, the better one can do, has lost its power. Rather, this ideology leads to the problem of “over-compulsion” that endangers the actualization of the student’s own preferences

and ambitions and the critical evaluation of the personal educational paths. Although school is a functionally necessary social institution, an overly standardized formal school reduces the possibilities and potential effects of education and schooling. Stables introduces a scenario of a proposed school reform in England where the compulsory school age is reduced to 14 years and the current secondary school is abolished. However, the main point in the article is not to argue against school or schooling or defend de-schooling but, rather, to seek alternative ways of organizing formal schooling.

In the article *School Representation in Curriculum Policies* Alice Casimiro Lopes and Elizabeth Macedo analyse the political discourses surrounding school and the school curriculum in Brazil. In particular, they seek the meanings that are given to school as a social institution. Their methodological approach relies on post-structural discourse theory from Derrida to Laclau and Mouffe. According to this view, these discourses at different levels of society are seen as political hegemonization trials which have little by way of objective foundations. The important point is that if these discourses and texts have any effect they must be read and interpreted by people and this opens up the creation of new and different views. They find in their data four convergences which they name as (1) school as social redemption; (2) the school we have; (3) the [desired] school; and (4) the school as a place of authentic experience of teachers.

School, Utopias and Future

The articles on the last section open far reaching perspectives to the both past and future. While most of the earlier articles concentrate on many concurrent problems and reformation visions of schools, the main point of these two articles is to delve further into the future and history, if not to the timeless questions of schooling. While the first article sets forth a bewildering and intriguing Utopia of future school and society, the second argues that whatever changes may occur in society, school will perhaps remain surprisingly similar. In spite of their apparently opposing perspectives these articles, after all, point to the same core question of this whole book: school and school learning.

Alexander Sidorkin's article *The Emancipation of Children* constructs an argument that may to some degree seem quite similar to the radical school critics, like Ivan Illich's *deschooling*, especially because of its explicit Utopian finale. Yet there is a remarkable difference and originality in Sidorkin's thesis in relation to classical educational criticism. Namely, Sidorkin builds his arguments on economic analysis and conceptions. While economic theories have typically argued about whether education is either a form of consumption or investment, or both, Sidorkin's claim is that first and foremost education and school learning is neither: it is *work* and it is the work of children. Thus his criticism against schooling is not against any boring, difficult or artificial characteristic of school work but against the case that it is the last form of forced labour or even human servitude in civilized society. Thus schools

need not be “deschooled” but school work should be – just like any other work – paid justly and at least partly voluntary. Sidorkin’s utopian model may not perhaps change the school so much as cause a number of revolutionary transformations to the social structure and especially to the rights of the youth.

Norm Friesen’s article *The History of Education as the History of Writing: A Look from the Past to the Future* adopts an historical point of view with an exceptionally long time perspective. His point of departure is the Sumerian culture from about 2500–2000 BCE, whereas educational and school histories typically start from antiquity or from the eve of modern times. Friesen starts his consideration from the modern critique that instead of being boring, difficult, artificial and individual as in school, learning – especially the learning of children – should be fun, natural, authentic and social. According to Friesen’s view, this criticism is not a new phenomenon: famous critics like Rousseau, Dewey, Illich etc. have already broached the idea. Schooling seems to be very stable institution whose roots are as long as the history of writing. Happily, the Sumerians used clay as durable writing tablets and thus this period is exceptionally well documented. We can therefore reconstruct the educational characteristics of that culture and find astonishing similarities between it and later school practices. From that evidence, Friesen can construct an argument that – boring, repetitive and artificial – schooling will be also in the future an essential and necessary part of any human culture which relies on writing and textual knowledge.

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SECTION I

FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Theoretical Issues

The previous historical introduction describes the rise of school to its position as a central social institution in modern society. The core reason for this development is most apparent in the general modernization process where the life worlds of citizens became so diversified and complex that the pre-modern ways of socializing the younger generation into the society of the older generation was no longer possible. This explanation opens up a fairly conventional view of the functions of schooling according to which school simply transfers the knowledge and skills needed in different areas of society to the younger generation. Thus schooling is perceived as a general sub-contractor, producing workers and other useful members for the different social areas and institutions like work places, politics, churches etc. But this is clearly not the whole story nor the only story. School is not merely subordinate to other social structures and institutions even though economic factors dominate in current discussions and trends. School has, or can have, other commitments too. School can serve the needs of the individual student by offering, for example, possibilities for Bildung and personal growth or social advancement. Secondly, school may assume a critical relationship to the surrounding society by producing a better, or at least a different kind of, citizen than any member of the older generation. Thirdly school can have functions and an essence of its own which are not subordinate to other institutions and to the needs of the student. Nevertheless, members of the school institution can take an active part in defining and re-defining these functions and features of schooling.

This section approaches the functions of school and schooling from this critical and independent point of view. A proper starting point for examining the functions of and reasons for any institution or activity is, undeniably, philosophy. The first article, by Hansen and Davis, returns to the first, broad and systematic philosophical study of the philosophy of education, which is the *Republic* of Plato. The core function of school, conclude both writers, is to provide a place for philosophizing, a site for asking the deepest grounds and reasons about the most important things in life. This leads to a new fundamental problem: the right of every person to take part in this activity i.e. the problem of democracy. In the article by Hanhela this topic is analyzed via Klaus Honneth's views. Surprisingly –but consistently with Hansen and Davis' starting point – it appears that democracy requires the development of a strong and healthy identity in each member of society. In the last article in this section, Kukkola focuses on the democratic development of the school institution itself. In higher

education in particular, the expectation that the institution transforms its members is still present, but it is now accompanied with the expectation that members, in turn, transform the institution. Thus university, in the role of school, should not be seen as a predefined essence but a community of academic selves discussing the functions of that institution. In brief, it can be stated that independently of their varying theoretical starting points all the authors agree that the basic aim of school and schooling is to humanize society. By supporting the students' realization of their potentialities for growth and *Bildung*, institutional education attempts to foster those conditions which lead to a more humane and democratic society and, ultimately, a better world.

DAVID T. HANSEN AND JESSICA DAVIS

2. A PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOL FOR OUR TIME

Thinking with Plato after Dewey

Why indeed *do* we have schools? This perennial question has taken on new urgency in our era. As has been widely shown in the scholarly literature, governments the world over have been using educational policy to render schools ever more tightly into instruments of economic, nationalistic, and often xenophobic competitiveness. These policies shunt aside long-standing educational aims such as the cultivation of engaged citizens, of human beings infused with aesthetic and artistic sensibility, of persons dedicated to an ethical life in close association with others, of people who treat their lives as vocations, and more. In the place of such values, we bear witness today to top-down accountability measures that do not invite educators to give an *account* of their work, but which instead *audit* their doings through a narrow range of quantitative measures whose epistemic worth has been seriously challenged, including by statisticians themselves (Nichols & Berliner, 2007; McNeil, 2000; Popham, 2001; Porter, 1996; Ravitch, 2010; Sockett, 2012). Policy-making today appears to exclude testimony and wisdom from the very people who actually perform educational work rather than talk about it. The policy-making community sometimes seems to engage in nothing but talk, and it is often monological. It is not guided by serious listening to educators who understand that education is a profoundly value-laden endeavor.

These circumstances render the title of our chapter, at first glance, rather fantastic – literally, driven by fantasy. A “philosophical” school: how could philosophy have any place in schools today? Plato and Dewey: how can their educational perspectives possibly find a place in a policy zeitgeist dominated by a narrow strand of quantitative methodology? Dewey (1985b) poses these questions in his own distinctive, hard-hitting manner. “Is it possible,” he asks, “for an educational system to be conducted by a national state and yet the full social ends of the educative process not be restricted, constrained, and corrupted?” (p. 104). By “full social ends,” we take Dewey to mean that education *can* cultivate the values touched on above: civic engagement viewed through a cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic lens, ethical and aesthetic involvement in all the facets of one’s life, and building and supporting lives of purpose and meaning for all people. Dewey was concerned that nation states too often construct educational policies that “restrict, constrain, and corrupt” these deeply humane values.

Plato had comparable concerns about the relationship between the polis and education. A reading of his dialogues suggests, to us, that he conceived education as something distinct from socialization and tradition. He does pay custom and convention their due. He is not a revolutionary, any more than is Dewey. Plato understands that a stable community will necessarily rely on shared values and assumptions informed by past practices – what Dewey (1985b, pp. 7–35) later terms “like-mindedness” (not to be confused with ‘identical-mindedness’). But the past does not *determine* the present or future. Plato makes plain (*Republic* 518c–d) that true education entails a “turning of the soul” away from merely traditional forms of life and toward a mode that includes elements of tradition aligned with critical reflection, inquiry, dialogue, and above all wonder. We mean wonder at the fact we humans are here in the first place; wonder that we are actually capable of conceiving justice and of enacting it (with justice understood as morality rather than as mores); wonder that we actually have a sense of beauty and of goodness; and what might be called critical wonder at how “restricted, constrained, and corrupted” – to recall Dewey’s words – a state’s educational policy can become. In *The Apology* and elsewhere in his oeuvre, Plato shows Socrates relentlessly criticizing the Athenians for not being serious about education. He charges them with caring only for their own narrow, short-term interests of power, prestige, and profit. In a wrenching, unforgettable manner, Plato demonstrates the power of such interests by dramatizing how they led to Socrates’ execution at the hands of the state.

Plato and Dewey were keenly aware of how difficult or even impossible it can seem to bring philosophy into education – as well as education into philosophy, since both writers were also concerned about philosophy’s tendency to leave practical, formative human matters behind. Both Plato and Dewey, each in his own way, ventured a philosophical school. Plato created the Academy just outside the walls of Athens, and Dewey conceived the Laboratory School on the south side of Chicago. Both institutions were places where philosophy and action met at a dynamic crossroads of dialogue, testing of ideas, and drawing in evidence from the world. Both were places for high theory, though not directly or systematically so in the Laboratory School. There the process was more indirect, in that what unfolded on a day by day basis triggered numerous philosophical lines of inquiry, especially on the part of Dewey but not restricted to him (Tanner, 1997). Both were places where thought and action had a bearing on the world outside the institution. Many visitors to Plato’s Academy came to discuss ways of instantiating political principles in actual constitution-making back in their city-states (Reeve, 1992, p. xiii). The Laboratory School’s overt policy was to engage teachers and students in perceiving connections between their activities, and the outcomes of such activities, with the larger world of which they were all a part.

We take inspiration from the powerful sense of realism both Plato and Dewey embodied. We also take heart from their equally powerful sense of idealism. They show why it is never fantastical to address the idea and the prospect of a philosophical

school. The task is ever-important and ever-timely. In what follows, we sketch a conception of such a school. We will draw particularly upon several of Plato's ideas as elaborated in his *Republic*. We do so in light of our sense of Dewey's educational arguments as expressed in particular in his *Democracy and Education* (a book whose 100th year anniversary is in 2016). Thus we read Plato as if he came "after" Dewey. Our view of a philosophical school will not be a prescriptive blueprint but, to use a term of art from Plato, a model we hope will be worthy of examination.

WHY PLATO IS A CONTEMPORARY WHO SPEAKS TO THE MEANING OF SCHOOL

Jean-Luc Nancy (1996) writes: "A contemporary is not always someone who lives at the same time, nor someone who speaks of overtly 'current' questions. But it is someone in whom we recognize a voice or gesture which reaches us from a hitherto unknown but immediately familiar place, something which we discover we have been waiting for, or rather which has been waiting for us, something which was there, imminent" (pp. 107–108). In this chapter, we read Plato as a contemporary in the many-sided sense that Nancy evokes. For us, Plato *writes*; it is not merely the case that he *wrote*.

We appreciate the challenges in adopting this posture. For one thing, we cannot help but read the book through the lens of our own concerns, which unavoidably shape what we are in a position to see in the text. We acknowledge there is much we doubtless do not see, and that we will not see until we undergo further intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical change as persons. Even then, there is no guarantee that our vision will be able to take in the full horizon of Plato's thought on education.

For another thing, it would be impossible to summarize the criticism scholars have heaped upon Plato's *Republic* since he first introduced it in his Academy sometime in the 370s BCE. (The exact dates of the book's composition are unknown.) Commentators have characterized the *Republic* as the fountainhead of all subsequent philosophy, as a totalitarian blueprint, as a beautiful evocation of the just life, as an elitist view of education and society that excludes women, children, non-aristocrats, and non-Greeks, as a moving portrait of Socrates and his educational effect on others, and as much more. In our own experience, the book constitutes an endlessly provocative invitation *to think education* (cf. Hansen, 2015): that is, to imagine as best as possible how education can enhance the human condition, by which we mean the well-being of individuals and communities alike. The book serves as a dramatic mirror to the constitution of one's own being, or soul. Serious readers of the book, who make their way through it with care and patience, will learn much about themselves. They will perceive much better than before what their underlying social and educational values are. They will have fresh insight into their hopes, concerns, and fears about the world. They will learn, not always in a comfortable manner, about their intellectual and ethical blind spots.

We adhere to no particular “camp” of interpretation with respect to Plato’s view of education, justice, and society. We take to heart Gilbert Ryle’s (1966) wise and witty perspective:

Although philosophers are and ought to be highly critical persons, their wrangles are not the by-products of loyalty to a party or a school of thought. There do, of course, exist in our midst and inside our skins plenty of disciples, heresy-hunters and electioneers; only these are not philosophers but something else that goes by the same long-suffering name. Karl Marx was sapient enough to deny the impeachment that he was a Marxist. So too Plato was, in my view, a very unreliable Platonist. He was too much of a philosopher to think that anything that he had said was the last word. It was left to his disciples to identify his footmarks with his destination. (p. 14)

It is precisely Plato’s openness to thought, to questioning, to inquiry, and to doubt, that we see as constitutive of a philosophically-minded school. The commitment to openness which we take to be characteristic of philosophy, and which Plato exemplifies, is grounded in assumptions about educative possibilities. For Plato, these educative possibilities are rooted in his position on truth and our relationship to it. For Plato, we humans do not possess ‘the’ truth about who or what we are as beings. He takes pains in the *Republic* to show that Socrates is often quite unsure of himself and of the arguments he is putting forward (394d, *passim*). However, as Socrates also shows us, we can move closer rather than farther away from truth – and it matters that we strive to do so, for the sake of both justice and its correlate, education.

Moreover, not only is inquiry and wonder the preferred pedagogical orientation that can be inferred from Plato’s works, but poetry, music, and physical education – what we might call *the embodied arts* – are also indispensable for cultivating the fullness of each individual’s activity as a participant in the just city (*kallipolis*) that Plato conceives in the book. By drawing on Plato’s *Republic* with its rich metaphorical and allegorical language, we hope to foreground the art of inquiry and to keep Plato’s thought alive – as our contemporary – in our conceptualization of a philosophical school.

In what follows, we elucidate our core terms by walking with Socrates out of the ancient Athenian agora and into the terrain of today’s educational world. Like Dewey, we are concerned to portray a school that would serve public rather than merely private ends. We understand the term “public” as a communicative ethos that is generated through open, unfettered dialogue and inquiry with respect to a given set of concerns. We take unfettered dialogue and inquiry to involve listening with care to others, speaking with care to them, and remaining open-minded and open-hearted even in the face of contrasting views. Within this disciplined but unbounded dialogue and inquiry, people are able to step outside their private worlds and into a critical mode of talking, thinking, planning, and doing (Dewey, 1988). We are mindful of Dewey’s (1991) argument that not only are education, justice, and

democracy creative, ever-unfinished tasks, but that the very structure of the self is similarly fluid. These views clash with the perception that Plato held a ‘fixed’ notion of self and society. However, we will explore how Plato’s conception of education can not only be revitalized by the Deweyan notion of plasticity, which denotes the potential to *change*, but can be seen as offering an argument on its behalf. We wish to show that if we read Plato after Dewey, the former’s apparent constraints take on a new coloring, and help us to invoke an image of a philosophically-minded, public school.

THE SCHOOL AS A PLACE OF AND FOR THOUGHT

The methods of inquiry demonstrated by Socrates in Plato’s dialogues mirror what we can observe in the classrooms of many good teachers today. These teachers challenge students to think. They treat students as capable of dealing with confusion and uncertainty – within limits – because they grasp that what the Greeks called *aporia*, or what Anne Carson (1999) calls *the experience of error*, is constitutive of genuine learning as contrasted with the mere acquisition of facts. Mistakes, errors in understanding, faulty judgments, misguided actions: machines might be able to avoid such experiences, but human beings need them to become educated.

People sometimes assume that philosophy is useless in pursuit of this pedagogical approach – namely because it focuses (supposedly) on pure abstractions and on questions that are unanswerable, rather than addressing real-world problems. Indeed, Socrates is famous for his suggestion that all he knows is that he does not know. Could a school today be constructed on such an epistemological and ethical premise?

To speak in paradoxical terms, a good public school is certain about the values in dealing with uncertainty. Uncertainty and ‘unknowing’ are central conditions for inquiry. In their absence there is no motivation to look into things. Uncertainty is also at the heart of the human condition. We are not divine but are fallible and vulnerable beings. Philosophical skepticism implores us to respond to uncertainty rather than to react to it uncritically or flee from it unthinkingly. As such, uncertainty triggers some of the deepest creativity of which human beings are capable. We take these claims as illustrative of why the ‘Socratic method’ – itself embodied in the very structure of Plato’s dialogical mode of writing – continues to animate classroom practices around the world wherein teachers and students engage in thoughtful, inquiry-centered discussion. The longevity of this approach mirrors the widespread educational aspiration, articulated in depth by Dewey, to teach the scientific method to young people so that they can engage in inquiry self-consciously while learning how to approach public claims in a reflective rather than an unmindful, dogmatic, or idolatrous spirit.

Plato’s and Dewey’s respective commitments to their ideas about inquiry run deep. They express a firm belief in the efficacy of rational, open-ended discourse. Both thinkers conceive ‘rationality’ as a holistic concept. It encompasses familiar notions of

reasoning, but also embodies aesthetic, ethical, and emotional components. In Plato's still provocative picture of the tripartite rational soul, reason does not dominate or exercise hegemony over spirit and appetitive desire. Rather it guides them, keeping them in harmony so that the soul constitutes a unity. Dewey also painted rationality in broad strokes, centering it around and in the arts of communication. He rooted the idea in much more than problem-solving – a recurring human task with which his thought is often associated – but also in human responsiveness to other people and to the events of life itself. Neither Dewey nor Plato put rational discourse in service solely to specific, a priori outcomes. Such a move would contradict the very integrity of inquiry. Both thinkers urge us to nurture rational dialogue and inquiry because they see in them a space for humans to thrive educationally as the social creatures they are.

In this light, a philosophically-minded school would draw teachers and students into dialogue and inquiry that have no fixed external end or purpose. This philosophical discourse would run through the curriculum (see below). It would accompany instructional moments when students are concentrating on learning to read various kinds of texts, to write good sentences and paragraphs, to numerate and solve mathematical problems, to manipulate a paint brush or potter's wheel, to hold a basketball in order to shoot accurately, and so forth. The philosophical dimensions of their activities would constantly trigger inquiry, wonder, and curiosity, even as they also help cultivate arts of listening, of speaking, and of working cooperatively with others.

A school that takes philosophy seriously is thus not designed to serve merely the economic ends of society. The school's administrators and teachers would not yield passively to externally imposed auditing mechanisms and the standards to which they are attached. They would certainly respect the rule of law, and would take such standards seriously. But they would put them in service of pedagogy rather than the other way around. They would embed curricular standards in a larger vision of educational purpose and practice, thereby transforming them from externally imposed fixed standards into internally shaped, dynamic standards. The latter would function as what Dewey calls "ends in view" (Dewey, 1985b, pp. 35–112, pp. 115–152). For Dewey, *all* educational ends, or aims, should be seen as steps along a path rather than as terminal destinations. In this light, all members of the school would have the ongoing opportunity to *participate* in the setting of educational standards to which they will adhere. Put another way, they will be positioned to offer an *account* of their learning (*Republic*, 498a, 531e, 533b–534d). Teachers and administrators will support students to learn to ask questions, to articulate their beliefs, and to put their judgments on the table for rational scrutiny. It is by participating in this living, breathing, and thinking practice that the purpose of a philosophical school is realized.

Plato's dialogical method constitutes a kind of purposeful openness, and reflects his conception of thinking. For Plato, thinking is not 'applied' to the world. It is undertaken *in* the world through dialogue with others, and through inquiry into the things that we sense and the things that surround us. Plato pictures study as, ultimately,

leading people to approach what he poetically terms “the Good.” We take this term of art to denote, among other things, the conviction that we humans are capable of unfathomably artful lives – of aesthetically and ethically rich lives – if we picture ourselves as more than merely economic producers and consumers dwelling in an atomistic, individualistic world. The sense of the Good helps us in “summoning the understanding” (*Republic* 526e). Put another way, deep questions of purpose and of value “summon” or awaken thought and understanding. They oblige us to make clear distinctions as we examine the contours of our own thinking (*Republic* 524e–525d). Plato inaugurates a particular way of thinking – “dialectics” – which conduces, as he puts it, to the “ascent to problems” – i.e. to realizing that the social and natural world around us can be questioned rather than treated merely as a backdrop. When teachers and students pose questions about their very ‘Being’ – about who and what they are, and indeed *why* they are – and when they perceive contradictions and tensions in the human-made world they inhabit, they are “summoned” to problematize and thus to inquire into that world (*Republic* 530b, 531c, 534d, 538d). For Plato, dialectics ultimately can lead to seeing a unified (though not uniform) prospect of social harmony (*Republic* 537c), just as science for Dewey can lead to social amelioration.

A philosophically-minded school becomes a place *of* and *for* thought. It urges its members to contemplate and discuss the very questions which so often leave people feeling uncertain, perplexed, and unsettled. The school does not exist to proffer solutions to these questions, so many of which have no terminal answer. Rather, the questions become a spur to careful inquiry, considered judgment, and dedicated communication. Nobody is left isolated or abandoned in their questioning. Rather, the school becomes an agora where anyone’s doubts, puzzlement, and fundamental curiosity can gain a hearing.

AN EDUCATION IN THE EMBODIED ARTS

We referred previously to Plato’s extensive discussion of the educational values in poetry, music, and physical education in the forming of the *kallipolis*, or “just city” that he conceives in *The Republic*. Here, we discuss how Plato has in mind the education of *all* members of the city, not just those destined to become what he calls guardians or philosopher-kings and -queens. We recall here the isomorphism (Lear, 1992) that Plato conjures between the ‘soul’ of the just city and that of a just human being. He refers to three groups of people: (1) the largest number are those who carry out the work of the city in every relevant cultural, economic, and social domain; (2) the guardians are those who protect the city from external enemies (war was endemic in Ancient Greece when Plato penned his book); and (3) the small number of philosopher-kings and –queens would serve as guides (though not autocratic decision-makers) during debates over policy, as adjudicators of disputes, and as public enactors of revered cultural values. These groups correspond, respectively, to the three parts of the human soul: (1) the appetitive part, (2) the spirited part, and (3) the reasoning part. As mentioned previously, a rational soul – and a rational

city – feature a harmony of the parts in which each functions well on its respective platform without overriding the functions of the other parts.

While the *Republic* culminates in a lengthy inquiry into the proper education of the philosopher-kings and -queens, it also portrays what Plato takes to be the right sort of education for children and youth in a just polity. All youth in the kallipolis ought to hear not just any myths and any poetry, but only those that inculcate virtues such as moderation (*Republic* 389d–391c), grace, harmony, and rhythm (*Republic* 400c–e). To cultivate the kind of love of the Good, or love of Beauty, that Socrates was in search of, Plato ‘paints a picture’ of exactly how artistic forms such as painting, singing, and the like can indeed leave an imprint on a person’s aesthetic and moral sense – for indeed, the aesthetic and what we call the moral fuse in his outlook. Education in music and poetry, Plato argues, is “most important” because the rhythm and harmony of its tempos leave a potentially lasting mark on the soul, “bringing it into grace” (*Republic* 401d). Moreover, Plato contends that this kind of ‘metered’ education eventually positions students to detect when things, such as the affairs of life, are disharmonious – that is, either are missing (such as justice – see below) or are in excess (such as wealth or concentrated power). Because heavy exposure to music and poetry encourages people to see the unity in temporal space – every pause anticipating the next note or word – they can also come to see unity and holism in nature (*Republic* 401e–402a).

Plato suggests that a pedagogy that engages children systematically in the arts would put them on the road to becoming ethical persons who strive for harmony, who love beauty and the order in a soul that has been transformed through an aesthetic sensibility (*Republic* 403a). At the same time, taking another cue from Plato, a ‘balanced’ soul emerges through a fusion of the arts of poetry and music with those of physical education. Plato advocates systematic exercise for children so as to discipline or ‘direct’ the spirited part of their natures, even as they develop moderation with respect to foods and the uses of medicine (*Republic* 410b–412a).

As we interpret Plato, the grounding education in the embodied arts that he elucidates would be provided to everyone in the just city – not solely to the small roster of guardians and philosopher-kings and -queens, but to farmers, cobblers, homemakers, tailors, merchants, sailors, doctors, and all the rest. This shared grounding seems crucial to Plato because it appears the good city can only come into being and endure if everyone has a deep commitment to it, expressed in part through their dedication to what they are most suited to do. Here again he draws upon the isomorphism of city and individual soul. Just as the singular human soul will prosper if each constituent of the soul plays its distinctive role in harmony with others, so the soul of the city will be healthy if everyone in the three groups of citizens, guardians, and philosophers share the same rational commitment to justice. Justice (*dikaisune*), for Plato, fundamentally entails doing no harm to others. It encompasses the idea of moderation, by which he means a respect for one’s own particular activity fused with respect for others’ autonomy in their activities. He regards *pleonexia*, which can be translated as “outdoing others” or “wanting more” than what necessity dictates, as

the greatest threat to justice in both the city and the individual soul. This *pleonexia* points not just to what we familiarly call greed, but can include trying to take over, or destroy, other peoples' practices.

As touched on previously, an education in music, poetry, and physical education puts the constituents of an individual soul in harmony. Importantly, this outcome means that the soul becomes its own best 'guardian': the soul learns how to preserve itself. Internally, the three elements will work cooperatively. For example, appetite will not overwhelm reason, but nor will reason thwart the functions of appetite as contrasted with keeping them in balance. Correspondingly, each person in the city will strive to remain in harmony with others. The cobbler will not try to take over ship-building; the farmer will not try to elbow aside the tailor and take over his craft; the philosopher-queen will not push aside the teacher of music and take over that art. In this way, as Plato pictures it, each person will be, in his or her singular way, a preserver of the harmony in the just city.

A familiar critique of this picture is that Plato seems to lock individuals in the just city into a single life-long role, with no lateral freedom of choice. We see some truth in the critique. Plato does seem to believe that every person has a natural inclination and equipment to perform one or another social function well. He pictures early education as a process in which persons come to realize, or discover, their distinctive bent and thereafter pursue it in cooperation with other people pursuing their particular talents. Dewey expresses great appreciation for Plato's insight that both internal psychological harmony, and external social harmony, will most likely prevail if each person is doing what they can truly do best. However, Dewey criticizes Plato for apparently presupposing a small number of social classes – to wit, workers, guardians, and philosophers – into which persons are born and from which there is no escape.

We think Dewey overlooked an important aspect of Plato's discussion – namely, Plato's sense that every activity, or what he calls 'craft', in the city can constitute a genuine vocation rather than merely a 'job' or 'occupation'. The philosopher-kings and -queens do require an unusually long education – they will not take office until what appears to be their late 40s or 50s – because of the highly complex and delicate leadership functions they will have in the just city. However, every person will learn his or her craft throughout life, for Plato suggests that *there is much to learn, continuously*, about every undertaking (*Republic*, 374b). Thus, to indicate that an individual would be 'fixed' into a particular position or craft does not mean that person's learning or development would be 'fixed' or predetermined.

Plato holds out an image of every individual becoming a true artist of their work. The farmer becomes more than 'just' a tiller of the soil, but someone who develops a profound, intimate expertise in soil, seeds, plants, timing with respect to what and when to plant, weather, and all the rest. The cobbler becomes an increasingly artful expert in leathers and other materials, simultaneously developing an aesthetic as well as practical expertise in the unfathomable range of human ideas about 'good shoes'. The music teacher cultivates an ever-deepening insight into child psychology even

while learning continuously about the dynamic constitution of music itself. In this light, Plato anticipates Karl Marx's later critique of capitalism as having destroyed the sense of craft for individuals as they become craft-less hired hands in factories (it is uncountable how many persons in today's global capitalist order do not have the opportunity to *experience* their work as a craft). Plato also anticipates Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1983, pp. 53–54, *passim*) picture of democracy in which each individual not only engages in a craft they know well but embodies the full dignity of that craft – each person becoming a living, dynamic role model to others in the polity in how to lead a truly artful life, whatever the person's vocation may be. It remains true that Plato seems to have had no conception of a cobbler one day becoming a music teacher, or vice versa. Our own sensibilities, like those of readers (we imagine), recoil at this thought. 'A cobbler forever!' 'A music teacher forever!' All the same, it bears emphasizing that Plato does not *reduce* individuals to their supposedly limited roles. Rather he pictures every person as a genuine, irreplaceable part of the *body politic*, and this conviction accounts, in part, for why he pictures education as a process of each person finding out what their purpose in the community can be.

It is typical to think of schools as instrumental in equipping students with the skills and abilities to choose and qualify for their careers post-graduation, with the goal of also choosing their lifestyles, places of residence, etc. In this sense, one could say that schools exist to promote *conditions for choice*, valuing the freedom to pick and choose. Plato seems to be looking at things from the other side. He is interested in *conditions for discovery* (cf. Sandel, 1982). He is looking not so much at the freedom to choose, but rather the freedom to truly discover what one can do well and to develop that craft in depth. This outlook is provocative and controversial, and we should press Plato hard with questions. But it is equally important to let him question *us* by asking us to examine our often unquestioned assumptions about freedom. It is not evident to us that today's shopping mall market of 'choices' supports a depth experience of a craft, not to mention of life itself. Moreover, we know that socioeconomic inequities severely limit the choices of some, so there is hardly a level playing field with which to begin. It is noteworthy that in Plato's just city public policy would ensure that there would be neither the poverty nor the excessive wealth discernible everywhere in the world today (*Republic* 421c–423a). In the just city, equality of opportunity obtains in the form we have sketched here – namely, that a person be 'equal to', or commensurate with in terms of disposition and ability, the craft in which they engage. Every person should have an education in poetry, music, and physical education through which they can discover their bent.

A lesson we draw from Plato's sometimes shocking account is that the issues he raises merit sustained discussion and inquiry in a philosophically-minded school. The relation between the individual and society; the meaning of 'harmony' in a person's individual constitution and that of a society; conceptions of justice; choice and discovery; opportunity and how to judge the worth of opportunities; inequities in the conditions for either choice *or* discovery – all of these issues, and more, can

help constitute the curriculum across the discrete subjects of literature, history, mathematics, science, and the like.

At the same time, we envision a renewed place in the school for the embodied arts of poetry, music, and physical education, all of which have been marginalized (for example, in the United States and in China) as schooling becomes increasingly a mechanistic process of preparing for and sitting standardized examinations. Dewey would describe the marginalization of these arts as the marginalization of the human factor in education. He is well-known for his systematic critiques of rote training, and for championing a holistic curriculum featuring wide-ranging modes of discussion, interaction, inquiry, and experimentation. Dewey pictures this pedagogy as walking hand-in-hand with the overall life of the school, which he describes on numerous occasions as a ‘miniature society’. Moreover, he learned first-hand that such a school environment can be a practical reality (Dewey, 1985a; Tanner, 1997).

In a philosophically-minded school, students will continue to learn mathematics, literature, science, the arts, languages, and other familiar subjects. But all these will be taught not solely for instrumental purposes – to acquire the knowledge and skills to function in the world – but to cultivate a sense for craft and vocation – that is, a sense of what it can mean to *inhabit* life fully rather than as a superficial consumer of experiences. Moreover, such an ethos supports teachers and students in being mindful of truly ethical purposes, in the sense that they can come to treat the school as a shared world in which to cultivate themselves as thinkers guided by a sense of deep wonder and love for justice and how to render it *manifest* in the world of human words and deeds. In this way, instrumental learning will occur against a backdrop of visible, dialogically emergent human values which are at once ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and social.

As we gather from Plato, Dewey, and numerous other scholars, ‘philosophizing’ is a term of art for reflective method, or for method when fused with thinking. As we have suggested, philosophizing will be an ongoing element in each and every subject in the school, in each and every classroom. It will be an ongoing element in all the communications that take place in school, and between the school and related communities whether near (e.g., parents) or far (e.g., virtual dialogues with teachers and students in schools on the other side of the globe). Philosophizing will itself be a topic of discussion and inquiry. And, as mentioned previously, because the school will be consciously formed mindful of Plato’s pioneering educational proposals, the very elements in the latter will be taken up in timely, judicious ways. For example, the question *Is there a human nature?* Can be an explicit topic in every classroom. Every teacher and student can raise the issue in conjunction with underlying convictions, assumptions, and forms of inquiry in a given subject (including physical education).

Plato and Dewey elucidate the hopeful possibilities that can issue from what they picture as the humanity of reason and the reasonableness of humanity. The ability to reason positions human beings to weigh what they *ought* to do, even as it constitutes a living mechanism for criticizing poor reasoning, or its very absence, in the vicissitudes of societal life. The capacity to be reasonable points to arts of listening,

patience, self-criticism, and more. To illustrate these points, and to conclude this portion of the discussion, consider an imaginary scenario in an ideal school seen, first, through the lens of contemporary practice, and then through a lens informed by our reading of the *Republic*.

In many schools today, administrators expel students for breaking various institutional rules (Kafka, 2011). In some cases, the offenders are left to fend for themselves; in other cases, they transfer to other schools. This approach to infractions is understandable, and it seems reasonable especially when a student may have injured other parties. The practice of ‘exile’ is certainly common to many social groups. Indeed, the Athenians put forward this very option to Socrates, as a punishment for his conviction on charges of corrupting the youth and slandering the gods. If not in so many words, the prosecutors said to him: ‘Go and live somewhere else, and we will leave you alone. Practice your impiety and corruption of youth elsewhere!’ As we know, Socrates rejected the option. He chose to die rather than to leave his social group, believing himself innocent and yet remaining loyal to his polity.

The philosophical school assumes that the persons who come through its doors are capable of reasoning and being reasonable. Accordingly, school leaders ought as far as possible to give people the benefit of the doubt and retain them in the community (Ayers et al., 2001; Kafka, 2011; Kohn, 1996). Indeed, if schools do not keep students around simply because they have views and reasons different from the presumed norm, there is a sense in which school people are failing to face the fundamental reasons for *having* a school in the first place. What Plato conceives as the humanity of reason means that we value our human capacity to set ends based on reasons, and that we acknowledge this ability in other people. We respect each person as an agent who can set his or her ends. People may and do fall short in this regard. Every teacher and school administrator can doubtless point to students who err in their judgment, act in irrational ways, are hamstrung by illness or other difficult circumstances, and the like. If a student is clearly out of control and in danger of harming others (or him- or herself), then reasonable constraint is essential. However, the philosophical baseline of the school is to treat every member as a reasoning being, a being whose reasons may at first be hard to discern, and indeed hard for the individual to articulate. Israel Scheffler (1973) argued several decades ago that teachers and administrators need to engage students as reasoning beings, and to provide them reasonable explanations for their own actions as adults. He pictured this as a core ethical norm constitutive of the school as a community. In our view, it is vital to take the time, which may mean to *make* the time, to give every person in the school a patient, open floor for thinking, reasoning, debating, and deciding.

CONCLUSION: SOCRATES GOES TO SCHOOL

Public schools and the educators who work within them have always been under pressure to justify themselves on instrumental grounds rather than, by way of

contrast, on the aesthetic, moral, and reflective grounds associated with the liberal arts. This pressure appears to have intensified in recent years as economic considerations increasingly elbow aside time-honored educational aims and values. Many have criticized what they see as an over-reliance on standardized testing, which to them suggests an excess in the assessment *of* learning rather than balancing it with assessment *for* learning (Shepard, 2000, 2005).

Plato would aver that we are in danger of becoming enslaved to this narrow, top-down auditing system. Like other contemporary critics, he would warn of its troubling resemblance to a larger, globalizing ethos of harsh, unyielding competition that has generated frightful socioeconomic and political inequalities, and with all these developments coming on top of a steady dissolution of a craft-consciousness in many fields of work. For Plato, mindless subservience and excess are symptoms of imbalance, i.e. of a sick society. Plato envisioned education as a cure for this illness. Education can actively shape cultural narratives and associated sets of norms. It can do so, in part, through foregrounding philosophical discourse in which people learn to reason and to think publicly – the very circumstances of the school, at least potentially, as a social space.

When we read Plato after Dewey, we recognize that the human potential and plasticity that Dewey works hard to preserve in his educational ideal is a value that works symbiotically with a specific kind of social life. That is, freedom isn't prized for its own sake and at any cost, but instead is a kind of measure for the exercise for our humanity, both in material and in intellectual terms. Human beings are characterized by their ability to choose – an ability they can perform rationally (that is, aesthetically, morally and reflectively) – and this ability to choose rationally would constitute an aim of a philosophically-minded school. This mode of choice, precisely through the use of critical reflection and dialogue, can fuse with what we earlier called conditions for discovery. The school can assist students to come to grips with what Jonathan Lear (1992) calls their constitution as “finite erotic beings.” They are finite because they are mortal and are always limited in their self-understanding and understanding of others. They are erotic – in the rich Greek sense of *eros* – not just because they have desires but because they can *educate* and *transform* them. With the provocation of a curriculum and pedagogy described in this chapter, they (and their teachers, we might add) can learn to desire not just what their appetites (and the advertising onslaught that fuels them) put on the table. Rather they can learn to think about what goals, purposes, values, and wants are *worthy*. They can learn to assess the options that, if they are fortunate, the world will present to them – seeing, perhaps, the difference between craft and vocation, on the one hand, and work that pays but *only* pays, on the other hand.

Plato insists that human beings are here by necessity: there is a reason, a purpose, for each person's existence. As we have suggested, he believes that for every person to realize their purpose, a ‘balance of power’ between reason, appetite, and spirit is required. An early education in music, poetry, and physical education is invaluable in support of this aim. Ultimately, as both he and Dewey contend, no one should

be telling another person what his or her purpose is for being in the world. Dewey remarks: “Plato defined a slave as one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct” (1985b, p. 90). Every person merits the experience of *arriving* intellectually at their purpose. When Socrates (figuratively speaking) walks through the doors of the philosophically-minded school we envision, he would see teachers and students engaged in inquiry into purpose. He would witness people focused on the academic subjects that embody human striving across the millennia, and engaging them in a spirit of grasping what they themselves discover is worth striving for and becoming.

To read Plato after Dewey is to position ourselves to philosophize with both of them, and to see, *pace* our earlier quote from Ryle, that it is we who harden their thought, not the texts themselves. Similarly, it is we who often accept hardened (or cynical) notions of what a school is and what it can be. We have argued in this chapter that school can be – as indeed it already is in some cases, or at least is at moments – a place for philosophizing deeply and systematically about things that matter. School can be a place to learn how to conduct oneself in what Plato calls the light of the Good, i.e. in light of that compelling, inextinguishable conviction people have in their bones that justice is *real* rather than a chimera. Plato and Dewey remind us that we do not need to “audit” our merit as participants in humanity. Schools are not places where teachers and students have to earn a place in the social balance. Schools are a platform upon which students and teachers can give an account of their dynamic place in that social balance. Through reasoned and reasonable discourse about the important things in life, school members discover, exercise, and come to love what resides at the heart of philosophy itself: wisdom.

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