

## Book Reviews

**Hogan, Pádraig, *Symposium on The New Significance of Learning: Imagination's heartwork***

London, Routledge, 2010

### ***The New Significance of Learning: Two pauses for thought***

Hogan has written a fine, timely book which deserves to be widely read. The main argument is for a remembering (re-remembering) of an idea of education in which it is understood as a practice in its own right, rather than just what Hogan provocatively and accurately terms a 'subordinate activity'. That is, he argues persuasively for an understanding that education has its own inherent purposes, rather than (or as well as) extrinsic religious or political ones. Hogan characterizes the current articulation of extrinsic purposes as (2010, p. 5):

an enforced acquiescence in government-imposed requirements for measurable performances ... In the early twenty-first century, effectiveness, as measured by performance indicators, remains a central priority in educational practice.

He argues (p. 39):

The integrity of a practice is that which entitles practitioners to the freedom to pursue co-operatively the inherent benefits of the practice to high levels of excellence, with due accountability to the public but without undue interference from outside interests.

The book is timely because this viewpoint is hardly represented in current policies on education, from pre-schooling to higher education. The view that a liberal education is desirable and valuable, a view that was orthodox only 40 years ago (Peters, 1966; Dearden, Hirst, & Peters, 1972), has almost disappeared. Indeed, the ubiquity of arguments for effectiveness in the service of the economy leads some commentators to resort to irony and satire. For instance, Gary Day in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* writes (17 March, 2011):

The heavier elements solidify in the heart of a supernova. It's stunning to think that a star's waste matter is the substance of a wedding ring. Gold is not a very useful metal, but it's our most valuable. I am sure there's a lesson here for those about to dismantle our education system but I can't think what it is.

Hogan encourages his readers to build on such rhetoric to develop ways of understanding, and of acting within educational contexts, in order to preserve the integrity of practice in the interests of nurturing the best possible education for pupils and students. I find his arguments powerful and convincing.

I like this book for reasons beyond the message and the insights it has offered me. I find that the argument invites engagement by setting up clear, argued, often controversial, certainly not currently orthodox, positions. And it does so in a language that eschews the deadening style of policy and report writing, as well as the exclusivity of much academic writing. In what follows I accept the invitation in a spirit of conversational critique, which is intended to be constructive as well as critical. In this spirit I offer two reasons to pause for further thought about Hogan's arguments, suggesting ways in which it is not radical enough, and also ways in which the argument as he presents it is not cognizant enough of the always specific but ever-changing articulation of the educational practices he discusses.

The first pause for thought which I offer relates to what Hogan describes as the inherent benefits of educational practice. I propose that the lines he draws between extrinsic and inherent benefits of educational practices are not quite as he describes them. The argument is fuelled by a value-laden dualism that is set up between the two terms. 'Extrinsic' is what pertains to established interests, such as 'the Church' or 'the Party', while 'inherent' benefits are found by attending to the integrity of education as a practice and are discovered through a critical reflection on experience. Further, it is clear from the examples he gives that 'extrinsic' is largely a 'boo concept' while 'inherent' is wholly a 'hurrah'. I distrust such a sharp dualism, partly precisely because it does not match my critical reflections on my own experience as a practitioner. Surely, insofar as practitioners themselves belong to 'the Church' or to 'the Party' they bring those values with them. Equally, both those institutions will include current and ex-practitioners within them. As Hogan himself argues, experience and understanding do not begin with a blank slate. Teachers are part of society's institutions and society's institutions include teachers. 'Inherent' benefits are no simpler. Hogan considers and dismisses the use of the phrase 'learning for its own sake', which, he says, tells us too little to make a convincing case. He goes on to draw an analogy between educational practices and other, what are loosely called, caring professions: nursing, social work and medicine. He also draws inspiration from the example of Socrates' co-enquiring search for virtue. There are also hints through the book that he approves the educational traditions which include Rousseau and Dewey. However, I note that all of these are what Jane Roland Martin (1985) calls production models of education. For sure, they are not models which aim to produce the human resources needed for a competitive knowledge economy. But they aim, as do Rousseau and Dewey, to produce good democratic citizens, or, in the case of Socrates, virtuous ones continually striving to perfect their souls. These can be viewed as extrinsic (and excellent) purposes. However, they miss the way 'learning for its own sake' draws attention to learning as a contribution to human flourishing, regardless of where it leads. Consider the popularity of the University of the Third Age, in which people past retirement age continue to learn because it contributes to their continuing flourishing.

In effect, I am arguing that Hogan needs to be even more radical. There are many benefits of education which are insufficiently acknowledged in currently orthodox

pronouncements and discussions about education. At the same time the hidden value systems in those pronouncements need to be brought out, acknowledged and refined. (For instance: Why is a competitive knowledge economy worth having?)

The recognition of the difficulty of drawing the extrinsic/inherent distinction gives me a second pause for thought. I shall now briefly consider the integrity of educational practice in relation to what Hogan calls 'best purposes'. Using Hogan's own example of examinations, I want to draw attention to how the 'best purposes' understood as 'social justice' might act against the 'best purposes' understood purely in terms of an individual teacher and her students. He allows that practitioners, whom, he argues, have a particular capability in regard to what is inherent, should be 'accountable to learners, parents and society for the trust and resources they receive' (p. 41). But he sharply distinguishes this accountability from acceding to control by others, and from accountancy, the counting of measurables.

Hogan argues that practitioners should follow their own best purposes, using the example of a fictional mathematics teacher who sees his main purposes in teaching mathematics as (p. 42):

to enable my students to experience the satisfactions of mathematical problem solving, to become proficient in mathematical reasoning and to develop an active mathematical imagination.

However, with the help of a colleague, he comes to realize that (p. 42):

an understandable tendency on [his] part to respond to examination and other external pressures sometimes obscures [his] own better purposes.

However, as I have suggested, education necessarily has a number of purposes, even if we only consider young people at school. These purposes are hard to disentangle, and all of them have claims. There are different sources of human flourishing. In my view one of these is, precisely, the experience of learning something that is held to be worthwhile, that is learning for its own sake. But, secondly, I also see the value of some production models. And, thirdly, I cannot ignore the effect of successful educational outcomes on an individual's chances of flourishing later. Further, fourthly, the distribution of educational outcomes is one influence on the social justice of a whole society. A socially just society is sharply related to the chances of any of its members being able to live good lives, now or later. Therefore, it is not that responding 'to examination and other external pressures' is a worse purpose. It is rather that such a response needs to be kept in balance with a range of other ones.

Integrity is an issue which arises in response to the chance that actions may not be consistent, that they may not be honest. Hogan is right in drawing attention to the significance of this for educational practice and for educational practitioners. However, he does not give sufficient weight to the kind of resolution that is called for. The practitioner is called to make a judgement in response to principles which are in tension with each other. This is a judgement that needs to be made in

context, with wisdom, and in response to changing circumstances. Consider, for example, how a mainstream primary school teacher, a teacher of children with severe learning disabilities, or a PhD supervisor may respond to the sometimes conflicting pressures of examinations, of acting with and for social justice, and of providing experiences of the satisfactions of learning. Consider too how none of these responses is ever made with finality. In relation to the examples I gave above, teachers in the UK in the past couple of decades have had to rethink their judgements regarding examining primary children, mainstreaming students with special needs, and the time taken to complete a doctorate. Best purposes are anything but fixed. Rather, they are judgements which are always already in question, in response to an ever-changing educational landscape.

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### **Teachers and the Politics of Teaching and Learning**

Pádraig Hogan has written a thought-provoking book which, in its complexity, is difficult to do justice to in a short response. He pronounces his unhappiness, with some justice in my view, with the way education is hijacked today to serve instrumental purposes, economic, political, and so on, that are external to it. Today, following Lyotard (1999), we tend to identify the hijacking agency largely with the discourse of performativity; the tendency to evaluate everything in terms of the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of output. The language of performativity belongs to a managerialist culture which has infiltrated deeply into the language of today's educational systems, as reflected in various policy documents. Hogan's book has to be understood, partly at least, as an attempt to unearth a counter-discourse in the premodern past, in antiquity, to challenge it with. In it he advances the thesis that an educational practice with its own inherent purposes and integrity, its own 'distinct family of undertakings' (p. 3), is traceable in the Socratic pedagogy of the early Platonic dialogues, and that it could save us from this new barbarism we are threatened with. A pedagogy that was largely lost early to humanity (obscured by the success of the Platonist influence), eclipsed before it had time to grow into a strong tradition, by the earlier colonization of education by predecessors of performativity, first for the purposes of religion, then for those of the state, and finally for those of state and economy combined.

The book gives an account of how this colonization (which now seems 'natural' to us because it has become ingrained in our minds so that it is difficult for us to see it as such) happened historically (to show that there is nothing 'natural' or inevitable about it) and attempts to recover that discourse and practice for today's world. The style of inquiry chosen for the purpose is 'conversational', the conversation being understood 'not so much [as] a dialogue(s) as an invitation to readers to an investigation that is in some real measure a joint one' (p. 7.) But I am never quite sure what this 'invitation' can mean. The idea of philosophy being

a kind of conversation immediately calls Gadamer (1988) to mind; his politics of conversation. And Hogan does, in fact, refer to Gadamer extensively in the book, but only to that aspect of his politics of conversation, whereby Gadamer insists that our 'prejudices' always condition our understanding of the world, where the word is not understood in its customary negative way but simply as 'biases of our openness to the world' (p. 101). I have no difficulty, like Hogan, with this Gadamerian usage or with the point of Gadamer's hermeneutics that our understanding of the world is always, in some way, filtered through our prejudices—biases, but I have difficulty with understanding conversation otherwise than as an *exchange* of views between *partners*, and I fail to see how one's readers become one's partners unless one engages them in dialogue; in other words, invites them to respond. As Lyotard (1985) has pointed out, the politics of reading necessarily implies the 'pole of the reader' and there are different kinds of relationships the author can set up with the reader. I am not sure how the 'investigation' Hogan sets out on is 'in some real measure as joint one' with his reader once he rules out dialogue. It seems to me rather that the reader is enjoined to follow the author's investigation very much in the way that a student is enjoined to follow the teacher's lesson.

This approach seems to find its reflection in the fact that, pedagogically, in the politics of learning, he defines education almost entirely from the pole of the teacher; the learner is simply represented as the one who is subjected to the practice of teaching (even if the teaching is intended to be in her best interest), and this cannot be unexpected coming from someone who declares himself an admirer of the Socratic method because Socrates never saw himself as simply an initiator of, or a participant in, a conversation between equals. He was always its central figure; the protagonist of the dialogue that gave it shape, setting its pace, and giving it its direction towards the conclusion he wanted it to reach. And I have difficulties myself with this model, which is formative of the old pedagogical tradition Hogan articulates in the book. I am more attracted towards the Rousseau-inspired pedagogical model (taken up later by progressive teachers) that makes the learner the protagonist of learning rather than the teacher. An approach that makes the question *how the learner can learn* (very much with the same purposes identified by Hogan), rather than how the teacher should teach its central pedagogical concern. Those purposes, in a nutshell, to quote him, are 'to uncover the potentials most native to each person, and to nourish these through forms of learning that bring benefits of mind and heart to others as much as oneself' (p. 2), and which involve 'a perceptive recognition of the individuality—both promise and limitations—of each human being ... endeavouring to advance the capabilities of each person in shared environments, where efforts at learning become co-operative, venturesome, and mutually respectful' (p. 3).

Which means that, unlike Hogan, I have no ambition to justify any educational 'practice' as universal, or compatible with the qualities of humanity, and would continue rather with a language in the philosophy of education that seeks to come to terms with different, competing, educational practices, traditional and progressive, instead—that continues to regard education as a contestable notion. Indeed, I have

difficulties with Hogan's notion of an 'educational practice', an expression he uses interchangeably with a 'teaching practice'. One difficulty is with the word 'practice' itself, the other with making educating and teaching interchangeable concepts and practices. Many are familiar with the special meaning MacIntyre (1981) gave the word in *After virtue*, and with his subsequent debate with Dunne (MacIntyre and Dunne, 2002) over whether *teaching* counts as a practice or not. MacIntyre replied in the negative when asked the question because teaching, he said, is always a *means* to achieve goods external to it, there are no 'goods' internal or intrinsic to teaching as such and, in my view, he is right. *Education* may well be a different matter (it is, in MacIntyre's books), but MacIntyre's point is that education is *not* teaching. Nor, I would add, is it good to *identify* education with teaching.

Teaching is always an intentional activity, which is what renders it a means rather than an end in itself. It is, in a broad sense, something everybody, or nearly everybody, is called upon to do to others at different times in their lives and in different circumstances, whether formally or informally; parents teach their children, instructors their clients, managers their employees, doctors their patients, and so on. In many circumstances where what is taught is of trivial or instrumental matter; teaching may have nothing to do with educating at all in the sense the latter term has acquired over the centuries in the West and to which Socrates himself undoubtedly contributed to a great degree, where it *is* thought of as having intrinsic value. The variety of circumstances in which it occurs indicates that there is not one teaching relationship or model of teaching, but several. It also indicates that the concept of teaching is normatively indifferent, and this fact also corresponds with its logical status as a 'means'. The term 'education' is, to the contrary, normatively charged, referring to the acquisition of certain goods, which is why it is also, unlike teaching, a process—what kind of process is partly what is contested about it. Moreover, it does not necessarily require the intervention of teachers; when it involves an activity and a *process* of self-education, for instance, except in the metaphorical sense in which one can be described as teaching oneself, or when it involves informal, or non-formal learning. When education involves teaching, it refers to a special sense in which it is appropriate to speak of the teacher not just as teacher but as *educator*—a normatively charged term also.

Hogan does not make these distinctions; he passes indifferently between talking about an educational and a teaching practice. If what he intends is teaching as an institutionalized practice that happens in schools, this is an activity that is required by society to *contribute* to the process of initiation, or upbringing, of children into a culture or tradition, a form of life from which the individual may, as commonly happens in liberal societies, subsequently break to establish her *autonomy*, or she may reidentify herself with another culture, which is also not rare in multicultural societies. It strikes me that he does not deal with the obligation of teachers to contribute to upbringing at all in the book. Does he regard upbringing as external to educational practice or intrinsic to it? What would a Socratic reply to that question be? Surely, if one concedes that teachers in schools must be involved in their pupils' upbringing then one must concede also that their teaching must involve external purposes; to teach their pupils to be happy, to become good citizens and productive contributors to their

society. Of course, these questions are asked in the spirit of dialogue, which is what he invited me to when he asked me to join this symposium.

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## **New Significance and Old Tensions in Education**

### *1. Teachers, Education and Power*

On 11 May 1762, a meeting of Faculty of the University of Glasgow decided to convert a College ‘chamber’ into a ‘class room’ for civil law. In attendance at that meeting where this decision was made were the physicist Joseph Black, the philanthropist John Anderson, and a certain Adam Smith. This may well be the first appearance of the term ‘classroom’ in any English language source. By 1813, when the university had created a new suite of teaching rooms in the West End of the city, the term ‘class room’—quite possibly as a direct result of the strong town and gown affiliations within the city of Glasgow—had become a designation of common currency well beyond the university for the teaching spaces in which children were being haphazardly taught in the frayed networks of parish, charity and day schools then reticulating chaotically across the sprawling industrial neighbourhoods of Glasgow (Hamilton, 1989, p. 84).

Key critical developments from the transitional period discussed in summary but not in detail at the end of Pádraig Hogan’s opening chapter amplified the kind of changes overtaking education in cities such as Glasgow. They included the ‘class-ification’ of pupils by the member-similarity taxonomies of age-banding or ability; the emergence of the pedagogy of ‘place-taking’ or gallery group-work; the subject periodization of the school day; the rise of simultaneous instruction; and the replacement of seriatem rank-order questioning by the signalling procedures of individual hand-raising (La Belle, 1972). Indeed, many features of classroom practice since prized—even taken for granted—by both traditionalists and progressivists emerge at this same historic threshold. They serve to disclose, I would suggest, the shared origins of what the Scottish pioneer of popular schooling, David Stow, revealingly named (in almost Newtownian terms) *The training system* of early nineteenth century education and the processes of industrial production (Vincent, 2009).

My initial response to this dimension of Pádraig Hogan’s argument might also be an impertinent challenge to the optimism of David Stow himself. To what extent can we as heirs of the industrial civilization, which perhaps for the first time in human history made serious progress towards the provision of mass public education, lay genuine claim to a *heartwork*, or mysterious communing of Wisdom and Ignorance, on which the administrative–bureaucratic state of modernity works its performative and pernicious designs? In other words, should we not question the hint there may be in this argument of an underlying dualism of pure, or even prelapsarian, educative idealism on the one hand and a dangerous supervening order of church or state or special economic interest on the other, allegedly seeking to appropriate, or control, education? Education might more advantageously be seen less as an innocent object of

ideological manipulation and more as an expression of a wider discursive and representational order in which all sorts of competing and mutually subversive values and interests are simultaneously at work and where meaningful philosophical and ethical interventions are therefore made possible precisely because of this volatility and cacophony. Schools are then not sites where rival regimes simply struggle to impose their irreconcilable visions of educational purpose, but zones where those purposes are themselves reproduced, contested, reinvented and disseminated.

In this analysis we would interpret an important element of Pádraig Hogan's argument in Chapter 10, the concept of teacher competence, as part of the same economy of mechanistic rationality in which the heartwork of industrial education is quite simply inescapably embedded. The revival of interest in competence-based models of initial teacher education began in the USA in the high-minded period immediately after the Second World War, when the nation faced an enormous shortage of teachers. Competence-based inventories supported accelerated entry into the profession for those who could demonstrate prior possession of some of the attributes expected of an effective teacher and who could then legitimately be offered telescoped programmes of initial teacher education, focused purposely on the features in which they were perceived to be in need of development. The initiative, indeed, according to Zeichner and Liston (1990), led to a great burst of reflective creativity in American school teaching, an extended receptivity to Deweyan ideas in the institutions of teacher education, and the emergence of a generation of school staff from multifarious walks of life who would go on to play a leading part in the civil rights and other liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Gage and Winne, 1975; Hodge, 2007).

This is not for one moment to defend the crippling and attenuated checklists of benchmarks and performance indicators with which a second wave of enthusiasm for competence-based training burdened teacher education on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1990s. But it may be to suggest that the underlying concept of the 'standard'—a defining and pervasive signifier of technological society since the advent of mass manufacturing—belongs inextricably with the 'industrial imaginary' of modern teaching, encouraging the profession to a new level of democratic agency and confidence in its interactions with the sources of power (public and hidden) in the educational system.

## 2. *Conversation*

Central to the professional ethic on the basis of which Pádraig Hogan would seek to rehabilitate an enriched construction of teacher education is the principle of *conversation*, developed out of his watchful reading of thinkers such as Gadamer and Oakeshott and captured in what he alluringly calls the 'to-and-fro of anticipation and disclosure'. It is this investment in enhanced conversation as the imaginative core, the beating heart, of learning and teaching that reconnects Hogan to the Euro-humanist values out of which he suggests a renovated understanding of professional education might legitimately emerge—one that is neither merely nostalgic nor optimistic, but charged with what Paul Hirst once memorably called the 'intellectual eros' of the teaching encounter (1998, p. 116). It is very hard to dissent from this description of the antiphonal appeal of the multiple voices of teachers, learners, texts, traditions, innovations, from out of which the felt textures of authentic educational satisfaction



and recognition are created in the living classroom environment. There is also something critically inspired about the proposal that the formation of the beginning teacher be seen as the steady initiation into the conversation of past and present, local and global, teacher and pupils, in the interactive yet watchfully attentive production of knowledge and meaning.

In keeping with the observations in my initial response above, I wish only to suggest that there may be something incomplete in this account. While the emphasis on *voice* is a welcome corrective to the tyranny of the visible and the ocular in the favoured systems of pedagogy and assessment, I am still left wondering if the assumption of vocal ‘transparency’ does full justice to the intractabilities and resistances of speech, listening and embodied self-presentation (particularly, one might add, among the young). In a recent contribution to this debate and its sometimes uncritical promotion of the ‘voices’ of the classroom as a democratic good, Carsten Ljunggren (2010)—through an exploration of Arendt’s conception of the promotion of ‘thinking’—reminds us of the extent to which the subject-self disclosed by thinking comes into existence through a necessary *confrontation* with others: an aesthetic self-authoring involving the rhythms of participation and withdrawal and which ultimately constitutes *being* within a classroom nexus of unpredictable and destabilizing encounters, exchanges, harmonious affirmations and troubling misinterpretations. This is bound up in a more deliberative form with what Chris Higgins (2008) calls ‘agonistic progressivism ...’: a kind of strategic or selective deafness, where ‘the teacher is a harsh taskmaster, but the task is a progressive one of facilitating the student’s personal insight and self-cultivation’ (p. 164). Such recognition might also alert us, of course, to the still more searching, Nietzschean critique of the conversation as simply another discursive strategy for the manufacture of consensus, subtly setting the internal parameters of the permissible and the iterable in ways which deprive the experience of teaching of a necessarily, *constitutively* agonistic or conflictual dimension (Jonas, 2010).

In the patterns of teacher education with which Hogan is concerned in Chapter 10, this may of course be another method for becoming professional beyond the bounds of a merely reflective, or even critically reflective, practice. At this liminal edge, we return recursively to the Socratic ideals at the moral core of Hogan’s book. Famously, of course, when the Delphic Oracle sets Socrates in an *agon* with the new professional group of teachers of his time, the sophists, Socrates’s peculiar or transgressive version of educated rationality is shown precisely to be dependent on such a contest for its actual emergence and demonstration. Socratic education comes into being relative to the sophists’ educational challenge and is hence articulated through competition with them rather than spontaneously. The specific mode of philosophical argument that expresses itself by eschewing the profession of knowledge—the Socratic *elenchus*—is predicated upon a pattern of agonistic encounter in which a character of *elenchus* challenges an assertive, voluble *antagonist*. It is the sophist opposition that provides Socrates with the necessary stimulus to reveal himself, from a seemingly inferior station, as in fact the wise questioner and teacher (Boghossian, 2006; King, 2008). Even this, of course, is not the whole story of the *agon*. In the shared construction of teacher identity, sensitivity to the voice and participation in the dialogue will inevitably draw beginning teachers into a conversation, the unspoken

rules of which they must learn and the histories of which they must quickly grasp if their own agency and self-presenting is to be sustainably autonomous and justly collaborative. Many of us will be familiar with the teacher for whom the shock of the classroom experience plunges them into a destructive underworld of alienated voices and broken relationships where there is only struggle and eventual defeat for someone. The building of resilience, like the nurture of creativity to which Hogan's work is so firmly committed, may demand something of Chantal Mouffe's 'agonistic pluralism' and individualized self-fashioning if it is to deal meaningfully and confidently with the high-decibel choruses of the school (Mouffe, 1999).

### 3. *Imagination's Headwork*

I have wondered throughout my responses to this absorbing book whether there ever was—or ever can be—education 'as a practice in its own right', rather than education as the effect of many practices (some cynically instrumentalized, others inspirationally transformative) in which a society argues—sometimes to the point of profound strife—over its purposes, goals and values. In highlighting the place of *conflict* in the dynamics of learning and teaching, I do not wish to contrive an exaggerated dichotomy with Hogan's preferred emphases on relationships, imaginative synthesis and consilience as the distinctive, compelling marks of education as a special kind of practice. If I have local points of dissent, they are all part of an urge to integrate into Hogan's convincing manifesto a keener sense of the degree to which education is interwoven into the fabric of a civilization the defining movements of which have been crises more often than enlightenments, and where the repercussions of these crises have shaped almost every element of the educational experience that Hogan wishes to prize, from effective classroom pedagogy to organic professional formation. For me, the convulsion from which education has not yet fully recovered is, quite simply, the crisis of industrialization, and where I depart most sharply from Hogan is in seeing his solutions for modern education as compensatory rather than interventionist: education making up for deficits elsewhere in a damaged culture. Education cannot in the last analysis provide these remedies alone because it is implicated in the condition it aspires to remediate. By the light of this judgement, we need to do, in short, everything that Pádraig Hogan recommends to us, and more—because we must recognize that the state education is in is, for better and worse, the state everything is in. And it is time to act. Always.

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### **Plurality, Possibility and Profusion in Human Learning: Response**

Listening to what others make of one's own thoughts and arguments is invariably an instructive experience; sometimes a gratifying, sometimes a sobering, occasionally a puzzling one. I am grateful to the three contributors to this symposium for the time and efforts they have taken to engage seriously with the paths of educational thought I

have sought to explore in *The new significance of learning: Imagination's heartwork*. There is so much in what they have offered, even in the short symposium framework, that I cannot do justice to all the points raised. What I have decided to do is to pass lightly over any points of agreement with the thrust of what I argue, and to focus in the case of each of the three contributors on a few key points where differences are in evidence.

The first of the two main issues raised by Morwenna Griffiths concerns her reservations about the way I draw the distinction between the inherent and extrinsic benefits of educational practice. 'Extrinsic', she paraphrases me as saying, 'is what pertains to established interests, such as "the Church", or "the Party", while "inherent" benefits are found by attending to the integrity of education as a practice and through a critical reflection on experience'. In voicing her criticism of a 'value-laden dualism' in this distinction she argues: 'Surely, insofar as practitioners themselves belong to "the Church" or to "the Party" they bring those values with them'. My initial response to this is to say: very true, they do: sometimes advantageously so, sometimes unfortunately so, but all too rarely self-critically so. A particular kind of religious or political upbringing might favour a practitioner with human qualities and virtues that are highly beneficial to his or her work as a practitioner—and not only in a practice like education. That is all to the good. On the other hand, the holding of certain kinds of religious or political beliefs might disfigure, or even frustrate from the start, the educational character of the practitioner's work. The latter might happen for instance if, among my first concerns as an educational practitioner stands the salvation of souls, or the fashioning of minds, hearts and skills to the design of the state. The history of education is replete with examples of both. Something similar, if less stark, might also happen, however, if my first concerns as a teacher are to 'deliver' the curriculum and assessment demands of a politically imposed performance management system. The point in arguing as I do for education as a practice in its own right is to highlight that there are values and practices that are *educational before they are anything else*; ones that might worthily earn the shared commitments and efforts of teachers as *practitioners*, notwithstanding their widely different backgrounds and beliefs.

Griffiths' second 'pause' calls attention to a possible conflict between the 'best purposes' of education, understood as social justice, and 'best purposes' understood 'purely in terms of an individual teacher and her students'. From what she writes, it would seem that I tend to concentrate on the latter and neglect the former. It is quite true that the main concern of the book is with practices that promote healthy and venturesome environments of learning rather than with practices of justice in the wider society. But the practices required to promote—or indeed 'produce'—the latter are themselves practices of learning, e.g. learning how to engage with and respect fellow humans of very different orientations and with very different values to oneself. And it is often the *collateral* dimensions of such practices that serve more powerfully to promote values of social justice, or perhaps their opposites. In this connection, philosophers as different as Aristotle and Dewey point out that it is by habitually engaging in value-laden practices that one acquires enduring dispositions influenced by the values in question. Many of the practices that contemporary education, as a newly reformed and subordinated undertaking, is required to engage in are ones that habitually cultivate

questionable values: values that may attract little explicit attention during a lesson in science, music or other subject, but that may be quite inhospitable to democratic forms of justice, or to any genuine recognition of the plurality of the human condition.

Kenneth Wain sees some justice in the book's critique of historical and more modern forms of colonization of education. But he is doubtful about a few of the book's key themes, not least the following two: first, my elucidation of education as a 'conversational' kind of practice; and secondly, my more specific claim that teaching is a distinct practice, or, as I would put it myself, that teaching is a practice in its own right. In relation to the first point, Wain explains, 'I have difficulty with understanding conversation otherwise than as an exchange of views between *partners*, and I fail to see how one's readers become one's partners unless one engages them in dialogue; in other words, invites them to respond'. He adds, rightly, that 'there there are different kinds of relationships the author can set up with the reader'. But he concludes, strangely, 'I'm not sure how the "investigation" Hogan sets out on is "in some real measure as joint one" with his reader once he rules out dialogue'.

It is true that I describe the book as conversational, and more particularly: 'not so much a dialogue as an invitation to readers to an investigation that is in some real measure a joint one'. Here I have to acknowledge a mistake. What I should have written there was: 'not so much a face-to-face dialogue, but still a very real one'. If I 'ruled out dialogue' I would contradict my whole argument from the start. Some of the richest, if sometimes unsettling, conversations we can have are ones that take place over a time-span of many years with books. Speaking personally in this connection, I can recall titles like *The republic*, *Émile*, *Democracy and education*, *The human condition*, *The postmodern condition*, to mention just a handful. I daresay readers will readily recognize here a genuine form of conversation, though the titles of the conversational 'partners' are likely to vary widely among different readers. To a question like 'Can Plato's *Republic* still invite one to think anew on some of its arguments after several readings?', the answer remains decidedly 'yes', not only through one's own fresh readings, but also through what the text addresses to one through the voices of others—alive and dead—who have read it differently. Genuine educational practice enables the imaginative neighbourhoods opened by such readings to be experienced, contributed to and reshaped by new generations of learners. The disclosure and pursuit of fertile possibilities remain central to it.

Such practice identifies responsibilities of a particularly *educational* kind for teachers, and this brings me to the issue of teaching as a practice in its own right. Kenneth Wain suggests that I 'define education entirely from the pole of the teacher' and that this represents the learner simply as 'the one who is subjected to the practices of teaching'. He says he has 'difficulties with this model', the source of which he identifies in 'the Socratic method'. Socrates, Wain points out, was always the protagonist of the dialogue: shaping it, pacing it and 'and giving it its direction towards the conclusion he wanted it to reach'. However much this last point may be true of the later Platonic dialogues—where 'Socrates' is mainly a literary device for Plato's metaphysical arguments—it tends to obscure the genuinely conversational, and *educational* Socrates of the early dialogues. True, this early Socrates had already considered at length the issues he now pursues with his partners, but, equally clearly, he *had not come up*

with *conclusive answers*. In venturing anew with Socrates into regions where he had been questioningly visiting before, the early dialogues show that new insights are to be found by learners; that new and promising pathways are to be discovered, sometimes quite unexpected ones. Equally significant, however, is the emergent awareness (for both the participants in the early dialogues and the readers of these dialogues) that no final destination is reached, from which affairs might henceforth be directed by any final or conclusive pronouncement. The genre of learning practices identified here acknowledges that there will frequently be an asymmetry between teachers and students. But these are nevertheless practices that place responsibilities of an active and participatory kind on students, from the youngest to the most advanced in years. The kinds of responsibilities they identify for teachers are different from the more incidental actions of teaching that everyone engages in to some degree, even many times daily. It should also be clear that they are different from the responsibilities of upbringing, though this is not to deny that there are some important common grounds between practices of education and those of upbringing.

Bob Davis is largely sympathetic to the case I wish to make, but he detects something incomplete in my account. He welcomes the emphasis I place on dialogue as a 'corrective to the tyranny of the visible and the ocular' in today's dominant regimes of teaching and assessment. Yet he is left wondering if practices of educational dialogue, as I elaborate them, do 'full justice to the intractabilities and resistances of speech, listening and embodied self-presentation', especially among the young. The main reason for his reservations seems to be the 'hint' of a dualism he discerns in my account. This suspected dualism is between a 'pure, or even prelapsarian, educative idealism on the one hand and a dangerous supervening order of church or state or special economic interest on the other'. True, I draw a marked contrast between education as a practice in its own right and education as a subordinate practice, or more precisely, as a subordinated practice. But there is nothing dualistic, or idealistic in a prelapsarian sense, in this distinction. Lessons from the record of Western educational history, as well as the insights yielded by self-critical educational practice, acknowledge the folly of any and all efforts to 'wipe the slate of human habits clean' and establish a pristine environment for education. But such efforts are not confined to utopian idealists, or indeed to Plato, from whom the remark just quoted has been taken (*Republic* 501a). In a remarkable, but largely unremarked way, they also characterize the reforming crusades of more than a few Western governments of recent decades; campaigns that would fashion the imaginative capabilities of the young to one or other variant of a mercenary design. Such campaigns rarely acknowledge education as a practice with inherent purposes of its own. More than occasionally, however, they endeavour conspicuously to wipe the slate clean of those designs entertained by the previous party in power.

Davis clearly gives to conflict a more central place in education than I do. He cites approvingly some agonistic themes in the writings of Nietzsche, Mouffe and others, and some combative actions of Socrates, to highlight a dimension of education which he describes as '*constitutively* agonistic or conflictual'. In addition, he 'departs most sharply from Hogan' in seeing my 'solutions' as 'compensatory rather than interventionist'. Taking this last point first, while I see both interventionist and compensatory dimensions in education as a practice (as can also be seen in practices like nursing,

social work and medicine), educational practice has, in the first place, its *own* distinctive purposes. These are concerned with the deliberate promotion of certain practices of learning rather than others: practices that seek to be adeptly attuned to the unearthing and cultivation of diverse human capabilities; practices that take account of the decisive social effects of collateral learning; practices that recognize, moreover, that each person needs to find his or her own way of becoming more fully human. Secondly, attempting to build educational environments that are hospitable to such practices of cultivation may well involve practitioners in frequent clashes: with educational and other authorities, with colleagues, with parents, indeed with students themselves. What makes the fight worth pursuing, however, is not any Nietzschean affirmation that a will-to-power must be embraced, or allowed to have its way. Rather, it is the conviction that an arena of exploratory, and *venturesomely conversational* experience must be continually reclaimed from the ever-renewed and ever-confident claims of sophism, whether in ancient, modern or contemporary forms.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that agonistic impulses in Socrates were invariably reserved for handling the obduracy of a conceited or arrogant interlocutor, sometimes with withering consequences for the latter. The lively irony of Socrates' more conversational encounters with youthful learners was invariably more gentle, while yet bringing to light overlooked assumptions that blocked the acknowledgement of real differences, and of fertile possibilities. What the early dialogues show—that some of these differences still remain intractable, or resistant to full transparency—carries a singular insight into the limitations of even the most advanced human capabilities. Such insight also intimates, however, a possible *profusion* of human flourishing that remains among the most worthy concerns of educational practice, properly so called.

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**Stewart, Georgina Marjorie, *Good Science? The growing gap between power and education***

**Educational Futures: Rethinking theory and practice**

Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010

Published within Sense's 'Educational futures' series, *Good science?* critically addresses the teaching of science, and the teaching of science in a Māori-medium curriculum as a political and philosophical problem. In this book a positioning in relation to science, and the gaps between power and education, are explored through various devices which ebb and flow through the text, structured coherently around: Stewart's own *whakapapa* (genealogy); a problematisation of the meaning of being indigenous; a complex deconstruction of the meaning of science and the relationship of science as a more or less discrete epistemology to indigenous epistemologies; analysis of the discourses of science curriculum policy and Māori education policy and strategies; and finally, Stewart's own experiences in the development of a science curriculum written in te Reo Māori (the Māori language).

For each of these devices the text is valuable in its contribution to thinking critically about science, education, culture and politics from a position that Stewart aligns with Kaupapa Māori. Stewart explains: