Speaking of Teaching

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Introduction

Why is there almost no discussion of the activity of teaching in works of philosophy and education? Why does the topic of teaching seem to be avoided? My questions may seem preposterous. Are there not libraries filled with books on teaching?[1] Undoubtedly, there are numerous books and essays that concern teaching and teachers. What is seldom asked is: What does it mean to teach? What is the meaning of the verb "to teach"?

My interest is teaching as one of the most fundamental activities of a human being. In this Introduction, I am not trying to set forth the meaning of "teach." Rather, I wish to call attention to the absence of the discussion in philosophy and education books. If the act of teaching is not obviously a philosophical question, it is surely central to education. And yet, the question of teaching is seldom raised in books and journals on education. It would also be difficult to find a school of education that has a course built upon the question "what is the meaning of to teach"?[2]

One possible explanation for the absence of reflection on the act of teaching is that the answer is so obvious that the question need not be asked. Everyone has been exposed to the practice of teaching from an early age. Most people have indelible memories of teachers they have met; usually it is a mixture of good and bad memories, of good teachers and bad teachers. If they are asked what made a particular woman or man a good teacher, they tend to list a series of qualities, for example, fairness, patience, dedication, humor. The bad teachers are thought to lack one or several of these qualities.

The people who enroll in a school of education have presumably decided that they would like to follow in the path of the good teachers they have met. Their "teacher training" aims to provide them with the skills to teach math, science, literature, or history. If someone were to ask in a school of education "what does it mean to teach," the question would likely be dismissed as trivial, a distraction from preparing the prospective teachers to manage a room filled with children and to present lessons in their respective specialties. The teachers in training have available to them many works on mastering their areas of concentration and the skills needed to teach U.S. history in P.S. 51 or teach geometry to tenth graders.

The answer, then, to my question of why teaching itself is almost never discussed even in schools of education – or especially there – is that the answer is already known. Perhaps that is true, that everyone does have some knowledge of teaching. Nonetheless, it is still striking that books on education seldom devote a chapter or even a paragraph to the meaning of teaching.[3]

Even if everyone has an idea of what teaching is, some reflection on that idea would seem helpful if one is asking about education. The educational specialist, however, tends to hand over such abstract-sounding issues to philosophers. The people who write philosophy books these days are not inclined to accept the offer.

A second answer to the question of why teaching is not discussed may lie in almost the opposite direction. There could be a fear about what the question would reveal and it is therefore better to avoid asking the question. One might suspect that many people –including people who are called teachers – are uneasy with the idea of teaching. At some level they fear that if they did think about the nature of teaching, they might conclude that "to teach" is 1) impossible to do or 2) an unethical practice or 3) an unintelligible idea.

Occasionally, a "radical reformer" will bring the fear to the surface and launch a direct attack on teaching. Ivan Illich was one of the many reformers who wanted to do away with schools. In his book, *Deschooling Society*, he equated teaching and corruption.[4] In his brief role as a celebrity lecturer, he would develop the thesis "to teach is to corrupt" before an auditorium filled with school teachers, after which the listeners would return to their classrooms. A few may have quit their jobs in response but those who stayed did not get much help by being told that they were corrupting youth.

Another example of a severe critic of teaching was Carl Rogers, a popular writer in psychology. Rogers did not passionately attack teaching; instead, he simply thought it was an obstacle to learning and he advocated trying to avoid it. "There is *no* resemblance between the traditional function of teaching and the function of the facilitation of learning."[5] Unlike Illich, whose broadside against teaching left no discernible effects, Rogers' advocacy of replacing teaching with "facilitating" continues to influence books on education and school practice itself. Rogers, of course, was not alone in his dismissal of teaching as useless or worse. He would not have got a hearing except that there were many other writers saying similar things. The ground had been prepared during the previous century in the United States.

One place to get a glimpse of the negative meaning assumed for teaching is found in adult education literature. Malcolm Knowles was a leading theorist of adult education. He laid out a neat opposition between the way children learn and the way adults learn (pedagogy versus andragogy).[6] For example, it was said that children study subjects but adult wish to know how to solve problems. Central to the contrast of adult and child was the claim that children should be taught but adults wish to have their learning facilitated. Such a sharp dichotomy between child and adult is of doubtful validity but it provided a theory for why something called "adult education" exists.

What is revealed in these examples is an ethical ambivalence that teaching has for many people. If teaching is assumed to be telling people what to think, what is right and wrong, it seems to be a violation of individual freedom. However, society is possible only if the young do conform to some accepted norms, so therefore a group of adults is needed to oversee the maturing of young minds. Teaching, it is assumed, is not possible before the age when a young person has the power of rational thinking. Before that age, other controls have to be used, especially by parents.

Although the standard rhetoric is to bow in the direction of parents as "the first and most important teachers," everyone knows who the *real* teachers are: those who work with children in schools until they acquire the rationality and experience to think for themselves. Society is confused about whether these students become adults at age sixteen, eighteen, or twenty-one.

Wherever that line is drawn, the assumption is that people who have become adults no longer need teaching and it becomes unnecessary, ineffective, and insulting to try to teach them.

Society thus seals off the meaning of teaching. It is what a group of people certified as teachers do with children in elementary and secondary schools. Colleges are sometimes included, but more often than not professors are not counted as teachers. A National Education Association survey, which found that only two out of ten teachers are men, obviously excluded college professors. The survey's results were reported in the *New York Times* under the headline "Men in Teaching Falls to a Forty-Year Low."[7] In the same week, the *Times* carried a headline: "Professors Teaching? N.Y.U. President Says It Isn't Such a Novel Idea."[8] The idea is not entirely novel but different enough to draw a feature story.

There are endless problems connected with how to teach children and there is no shortage of reform measures to improve schools. What goes unquestioned is that teaching is an activity engaged in by a person called the teacher with a group of pupils (often just called children). When writers go about the serious business of discussing teachers and what they do, there is no ambiguity in who they are referring to: the women and men who staff the elementary and secondary schools of the country.

Historical Witnesses

In this book I wish to question this assumption on which most educational writing is based. The assumption is so deeply embedded in present educational literature, political discussion, and daily use that there is no direct way to unearth it. Rather than presume that I can state an answer when the language is not available to do so, I have called as witnesses some authors from both the recent and the distant past. Although these authors have had a powerful influence on our ideas of education, what they have to say about teaching may not be immediately evident. It is necessary to attend carefully to what they say, and more often what they imply, about teaching.

There are lessons to be learned from history. I have not chosen writers simply because they agree with me or because I can easily extract what I am looking for from their writing. For the most part, I try to let the authors speak for themselves, supplying interpretation only as needed. I do try in the conclusion to draw together some of what I have learned from these and other authors about the nature of teaching.

I refer in this book to reading and misreading these authors. Although a variety of interpretations is to be expected, what interests me is when views are attributed to an author that are at variance with the author's intention. When writers are misread by intelligent readers, the one who is at fault might be the writer. But readers do bring preconceptions to a book and they are often unwilling to let an unusual approach challenge those presuppositions.

Most schools of education used to have a course called philosophical foundations of education. It usually covered Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey. Why these three and only these three writers were studied was seldom explained. The case could be made that each of them thought that there is an intimate and essential relation between philosophy and education. More particularly, Plato was studied because of his portrait of Socrates, assumed to be the model teacher. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was studied as an impractical visionary but someone who is still invoked as the model for rebellious reformers. John Dewey was studied because his language dominates educational discussion in the United States and is presented as liberating the learner from the dominance of the teacher.

This book has chapters on Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey but with a different twist on each of them. I make no effort to present their overall views of education. I ask only what each says, or more often implies, about "to teach." For such an ambitious project, I have to rely on the body of scholarship that surrounds each writer. But I am trying to get at a question seldom asked. I am also trying to get at why distorted conclusions have been drawn from these writings.

I have said that Plato is usually celebrated for giving us the model of a teacher in Socrates. While I have no desire to belittle Socrates, I claim in the first chapter that in the argument between Socrates and the Sophist named Protagoras, the latter is more helpful for an understanding of teaching. Socrates has much to teach us but his lessons are best learned in a larger context of teaching and learning.

I make a somewhat similar case in the fourth chapter regarding Dewey and his opposition to "traditional" education. Dewey's unwillingness to discover the value of the traditional was part of the reason that his ideas on "progressive education" were (and still are) consistently misunderstood. Dewey's idea of teaching has to be dug out of more than sixty years of writing.

Rousseau's *Emile*, which I examine in the third chapter, is a different kind of problem. *Emile* is one of those books that people feel free to cite without ever having read all the way through it. The strangest assumption is that the book is an argument for "self-directed" learning without the need for a teacher. If there is a central character in the book, it is the tutor.

Between the chapters on Plato and Rousseau is a chapter on Augustine of Hippo. He is the founder of the Protestant and Roman Catholic theology that remains the chief source of religious terminology in the United States. He is also one of the most powerful influences in the history of Western education, though his name seldom appears in histories of education today. I examine Augustine's denial of teaching in favor of interior reflection, a position that has particular resonance in today's educational literature. I conclude the chapter with what I take to be Thomas Aquinas' deliberate misreading of Augustine's position.

Chapters five and six test the meaning of "to teach" in two controversial and confusing areas. Morality and religion run parallel in many respects though they have a few crucial differences. The terms "moral education" and "religious education" were coined at the very beginning of the twentieth century, signaling something new. Unfortunately, both terms have been used to avoid asking in the areas of morality and religion what can and should be taught, who should be taught, where and how the teaching should be done.

These two chapters are framed with the verb "can." The question, "Can something be done"? may elicit a logical, physical, educational, ethical, or legal response. I break down the question of can it be done into can morality or religion be logically taught, can it be taught in a classroom on sound educational grounds, and can it be taught in a public school classroom ethically and legally?

Morality and religion involve contentious issues but that is a good reason for each of them to be put into the classroom's curriculum. Although confusion in these areas is not surprising, I think the question of teaching morality or religion reveals ambivalence about the very idea of teaching. More specifically, many people are skeptical of teaching morality and their objection is in part moral. Is not teaching morality an unwarranted intrusion on a person's conscience? Who gives a teacher the right to tell others what is and what is not morally acceptable?

Religion is an even more complex issue because of a fundamental ambiguity in the meaning of "religion." I explore in chapter six the ancient and the modern meanings of religion. Religion in the sense of devotion does not belong in the classroom. Religion as a study of historical institutions is an appropriate subject for the academic curriculum. If people think that teaching religion in a public school is educationally and legally wrong, there may be confusion about the meaning of religion. There may also be confusion about what it means to teach anyone anything.

My seventh chapter is on Ludwig Wittgenstein. I could have placed this chapter first rather than last. I think Wittgenstein is successful at showing why we have a problem and where to look for help. I put him last because the childlike questions he asks might not be appreciated unless one has previously struggled with the problem that Plato first articulated and has been with us ever since. Wittgenstein does not supply the answer but if one follows the "signals" he offers, interest might be sparked in discussing what teaching is, the several languages of teaching, and the forms of teaching according to its context.

Is Gender Significant?

A further issue for this Introduction may or may not strike the reader as significant. The five main writers examined are men. I could offer as a defense of my choice that theories of education until very recently were a male prerogative. An attempt to correct that problem by adding some women (for example, Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori, or Jane Martin) might only result in tokenism.

More important, it might obscure what I take to be the heart of the problem: the absence of what women have known and done throughout history. Every mother has been aware that the roots of teaching-learning lie not in rational explanation but in bodily movements by both teacher and learner. My suggestion that women know this area better than men does not impute any deficiency in the rational intelligence of women; it does imply a general lack of contact by men with the messiness of dependent bodily life, especially at the beginning and at the end of life.

Instead of adding a woman writer to my list, I prefer to address the absence of women and the absence of concerns of women in theories of teaching. Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey are by no means the worst offenders in this area; in fact, they do better in their writing than most discussions of education conducted by men.

Plato is sometimes taken to be a proto-feminist because he included women in his guardian class. He reduced the essential difference between men and women to "one bears, the other begets."[9] That is a doubtful principle given our knowledge today. In any case, the composition of his guardian class left marriage and family life without any traditional support. Plato is rather vague about the young children of his superior class who are to be cared for by nurses. That is no small problem in reference to what teaching means.

Rousseau, who condemns Plato's view of the family, gets a bad press among women writers today. He was looking for a reform of family life in which men and women would have different but complementary roles. Rousseau, as a man who abandoned his own children and never had a healthy relation with any woman, is not a good candidate for defending the family. His complementary curricula for boys and girls do not have many takers today. Some of what he says about women comes across today as outrageous. Still, he actually addressed the question of the education of women which cannot be said about most writers until very recently. More important, Rousseau attended to teaching-learning at its very beginnings, which cannot be said of most other writers, including those who are writing today.

John Dewey, in contrast to Rousseau, is thought to be "progressive" in his views on women. He was deeply affected by many women, starting with his mother. His wife Alice, the young women he worked with in his laboratory school, and his daughter Evelyn, who wrote with him, profoundly shaped his mentality. After some early writing that asked about the differences between boys and girls in education, Dewey joined the ranks of those who were de-emphasizing differences in favor of equal rights. What Dewey said of "the child" applies to both girls and boys. But it has to be asked whether the insistence on equality had the unintended effect of obscuring an insight into the nature of teaching that has been preserved in history more by women than by men?

My suggestion that the place of women has been obscured may seem trumped by a curious fact, namely, that the great majority of people called teachers in the United States are women. What is also curious, and seemingly opposed to my argument, is that the metaphor of "mothering" became central to nineteenth-century images of teaching.[10] In doing so, the nineteenth century almost got it right but ended up making things worse.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, private and church-sponsored schools generally employed men as the teachers. It was not a high status job; teaching was viewed as an extension of the local constabulary. The *Maryland Journal* in 1776 advertised products available for sale from a ship that had arrived in Baltimore; the products included "various Irish commodities, among which are school masters, beef, pork, and potatoes."[11]

With the rise of a system of public or common schools, a remarkable change occurred in who were the school teachers. Between 1840 and 1865, those teachers shifted from a great majority being men to an overwhelmingly large percentage being women.[12] There was theoretical support for this shift, especially in the writing of Johann Pestalozzi, who was both a follower and a critic of Rousseau. Pestalozzi is not much read these days but he was influential in the nineteenth-century schools. His best-selling book was a novel, *Leonard and Gertrude.* That book, together with a treatise, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, put forth Gertrude as the model for teachers.[13] The way she conducted her household was the inspiration for the classroom instructor.

In the United States, Catherine Beecher was the leader of the woman's movement that viewed men and women as complementary. Woman's place was in the home. The vocation or profession of women was motherhood but that profession could find extension in being a school teacher. As Beecher saw it, "most happily the education necessary to fit a woman to be a teacher is exactly the one that best fits her for that domestic relation she is primarily designed to fill."[14] So much is school teaching women's work that Beecher says that one of the ugliest abuses women had to witness was children turned over to "coarse, hard, unfeeling men, too lazy, or too stupid to follow the appropriate duties of their sex."[15]

Teaching as an extension of mothering would seem to offer a fruitful path of reflection. However, it did not happen that mothers brought their experience to the job of school teacher. Paradoxically, until almost the middle of the twentieth century married women were banned from being school teachers. When Harriet Brooks was married in 1906, she was dismissed from the faculty of Barnard College because, as Dean Laura Gill informed her, "a married woman was expected to dignify her homemaking into a profession, and not assume that she could carry on two full professions at once."[16]

School teaching became not a continuation of mothering, as Pestalozzi's theory might have suggested; rather it was an alternative to motherhood. The image of teacher was the young, unmarried woman, who was supplied with some basic "teacher training" to oversee children in the classroom. Either that or a teacher was often portrayed as the "spinster" who had never found a husband to fulfill her true vocation of motherhood.

The explanation for this paradox – teaching as mothering but never by mothers – is suggested in a report of the Boston School Committee in 1841. Their reason for wanting unmarried women to staff the schools was because they were "unambitious, frugal, and filial."[17] The teacher would take orders from her male superiors. If a teacher should advise her superior "it is to be given as the good daughter talks with the father." The main mission of the school was moral rather than intellectual. “Women’s weakness,” as a New York legislator said, “makes them better teachers of children with their underdeveloped intellectual faculties.”[18]

The idea of the school teacher as a substitute mother had a positive side, especially for kindergarten and the first years of elementary school. It does not work as well when the student is older. There was also the danger of competition between school and family.[19] Many parents had to be pressured to accept the school, because they were wary of the school taking over the life of the child. The line between the family and the school has remained unclear throughout subsequent history. It is tragic that the two institutions have not been viewed as cooperating in the teaching of the children. We have had “parent and teacher organizations” instead of organizations to discuss the joint venture of parental teaching and school teaching.[20]

In the absence of clarity regarding complementary roles of parental teaching and academic teaching, the parent’s role of teacher is almost completely obscured. In their turn, the school teachers are then burdened with impossible expectations, starting with being substitute parents. A good teacher becomes identified as someone who gets along with children and can manage to keep the attention of a roomful of youngsters.

Is Teaching a Profession?

Many of the school teachers surmount the stereotypes and enthusiastically teach their pupils both school lessons and lessons in life. It is difficult work for which they do not get much support. There is regular talk of a teacher shortage in the country. Actually, there is no shortage of people who go into school teaching but there is a big exit by the fourth or fifth year. Despite the relatively low pay, the main reason why most of them leave school teaching is not money but the lack of support they have received from administrators, colleagues, politicians, parents, and society in general.[21]

My approach in this book may seem to be an attack on the one sure thing that school teachers have, namely, the title of teacher. My claim is that we avoid asking what teaching is by segregating a group of individuals and calling them “the teachers.” Then teaching is their problem not ours. To some extent, this ordaining of a group of experts is what happens in all modern professions. Many areas of modern life are just too complicated for ordinary people. We are pleased to have airline pilots, tax accountants, and civil engineers who master the details of their respective professions and are dedicated to doing good work.

Teaching-learning, however, is not just another specialized activity to be handled by experts. What underlies much of the criticism of school teachers is a belief that anyone can teach. The popular belief is correct, that is, every human being can and does teach. For the teaching-learning that occurs in the ordinary course of a day, we do not need specialists. As long as human beings are alive, they continue to learn because they encounter human and nonhuman teachers. It is a mark of adolescent immaturity when someone thinks that he or she is no longer in need of teaching and teachers.

Schools of education and educational literature talk incessantly about the “teaching profession.” There is indeed a need for professional experts to teach calculus, medieval literature, how to build a skyscraper or how to teach a young child to read. Understandably, school teachers desire to have the status and perks of a modern profession from which they have been unfairly excluded. But talking about “the teaching profession” says both too much and too little.

It says too much because a test of all genuine professions today is that they try to teach their clients rather than exploit the clients’ lack of knowledge. Every genuine profession is a teaching profession. Even the physicians, who got their status by rising far above the lay person, have been discovering that hoarding all the medical knowledge eventually causes serious problems for themselves. The physician’s role today has to include teaching healthy people how to prevent illness and teaching sick people how to aid the body in restoring itself. The title of “doctor,” which means teacher, can then be an appropriate description of the physician.

Just as a medical doctor is not simply a doctor in general, a professional classroom instructor is more than a teacher in general. In this sense, the phrase “teaching profession” says too little. It does not indicate the kind of preparation and commitment that school teaching involves. The work of a first-grade teacher or a teacher of Ph.D. candidates requires professional training and dedication. A profession of academic instruction deserves recognition and public support.

The “professional” preparation of school teachers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was scandalously inadequate. Today’s “teacher training” that concentrates on methods for classroom management is still inadequate. School teachers need to be lifelong learners whose professional preparation stimulates their own intellectual excitement. And the continuing stimulation of their minds through books, conversations with colleagues, and substantive in-service programs, is indispensable for retaining knowledgeable and dedicated school teachers in the classroom. Professional people have to keep learning on the job, not just keep repeating the same patterns.

One aim of this book is to provide support and encouragement to school teachers but I cannot do that without first prying away the idea of teaching from the professional problems of school teachers today. This is not a book on the “profession of teaching.” I want to explore why our view of teaching is blocked to such an extent that the activity of teaching, including but not restricted to the specialized work of school teachers, is almost never discussed. I invite the reader to reflect on what some of the great minds in Western history have had to say about teaching and why it is necessary to challenge the deeply rooted language of education today.

Chapter One: Plato and his Students

The students referred to in the title of this chapter are all of us. Alfred North Whitehead once said that all of Western philosophy "consists of series of footnotes to Plato."[1] Whitehead added that he did not just mean the kind of "Platonism" found in textbooks. There are easily two or three if not a dozen philosophical outlooks traceable to Plato. Even people who attack Plato cannot entirely escape from his initial shaping of the philosophical language we still speak.

Plato's own mentor was Socrates. At least Socrates is presented that way in Plato's writing. In the dialogues written early in Plato's career, the portrait seems to be of a real, historical character. Later, Plato seems to use Socrates as a literary creation, an instrument for articulating Plato's philosophy. There has been a never-ending debate about where to draw the line between the real person and the literary figure. However, there is a general consensus that Socrates in the early dialogues is close to the historical person, while the literary Socrates is found by the time of what is called Plato's middle period.

Socrates, real and fictional, occupies a special place in educational history. He comes as close as anyone does to being a secular saint. Paraphrasing Whitehead, one might say that all of Western writing on teachers and teaching consists of footnotes to Socrates and Socrates' work. As with Plato, even when writers try to get around Socrates, they find it necessary to tangle with this model of the teacher. His rational approach to philosophy and teaching seems impossible to reject without landing in irrationalism.

Some philosophers in modern times are fascinated by Socrates while at the same time they express ambivalence about the path which he offers. Nietzsche is perhaps the most famous critic. Socrates seemed to be a physician and a savior, wrote Nietzsche, and therefore, "one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent daylight – the daylight of reason." Otherwise, "every yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads downward."[2] But Nietzsche has doubts about anyone producing a permanent daylight.

Many writers in the twentieth century shared Nietzsche's intimation that reason's rejection of the "dark desires" cannot triumph. It must be added, however, that a popular assumption that Plato simply pits reason against emotion is an unfair characterization. Certainly by the middle period Plato has a much more complex psychology of the individual.[3] Nevertheless, my main interest in this chapter is what Plato's students – all of us – have taken from him about teaching, especially from the Socrates of the early and middle works.

On the meaning of "teaching," people seemed to have taken two nearly opposed lessons from Socrates. The two conclusions roughly correspond to the Socrates of the early works and the Socrates of the middle works, although that distinction is not always introduced in this discussion. The lesson learned from the early Socrates is that no one can teach anyone anything.[4] The lesson drawn from the later Socrates is that the "Socratic method" is the only way to teach.

Neither of these conclusions is especially helpful to teachers in their efforts to teach. The first conclusion is an obvious dismissal of that very effort. There are numerous books on education today whose message to the teacher is: Get out of the way so that the students can learn. Teaching is not the way to learning.

The second conclusion, which takes a method from Socrates, is, at best, highly reductive by fitting all teaching into one narrow mold. "Socratic method" may signify a genuine searching by teacher and student, but it is also the case that the popular version of getting to the answer by asking a series of questions can be as heavy-handed as simply telling people the truth. Alexander Nehamas, a Plato scholar, writes: "No mode of teaching is more dogmatic than what goes by the name ‘Socratic method’ today.”[5] This form of teaching is not a complete denial of teaching but it fails to recognize that teaching is more than a clever set of questions leading to a rational piece of knowledge.

Early Socrates: *The Apology*

For my purposes, I will concentrate among Plato’s early works on *The Apology* and *Protagoras*. The first is a literary gem that portrays Socrates before the court in Athens in 399 B.C.E. fighting for his life. He was accused of corrupting youth by his teaching. Athens had experienced twenty-seven years of war and political turmoil. An attempt at democracy had been overthrown by a group of thirty oligarchs. The two urgent questions at the time of Socrates’ trial were “Who is responsible for the immediate past”? and “Who is to improve the young”? Socrates was associated by many people with a group called the Sophists. He was intent on drawing a sharp contrast between himself and this group.

The trial became a forum for the question “Who is the true teacher”? One can puzzle out what the question means by listening to what Socrates denies. The fundamental charge, he says, is that “I am a teacher and take money”(19d). That is not so, he says, “anyone whether he be rich or poor may ask and answer me and listen to my words”(33b). Because Socrates makes no claim to teach virtue, he cannot be held responsible for anyone else’s moral failings, that “whether he turns out to be a bad man or a good man, neither result can be imputed to me, for I have never taught nor profess to teach anything”(33b).

The case, then, seems clear that Socrates does not consider himself to be a teacher. But then he slyly adds in reference to the Sophist claim to teach: “Happy is Evenus, I said to myself, if he really has this wisdom and teaches at such a moderate charge. Had I the same, I should have been very proud and conceited, but the truth is that I have no knowledge of the kind” (20c). Here the question of being a teacher is directly connected with charging money. Socrates claims that not even his accusers say that he sought pay from anyone. “I have a sufficient witness to the truth of what I say – my poverty”(31b).

Actually, the Sophists’ fee for teaching was sizeable. Socrates’ ironic reference to their “moderate charge” has led some commentators to conclude that Socrates’ denial that he is a teacher is an ironic attack on the people who claim to be teachers. Since he is the opposite of what is false about the Sophist claim, he is claiming to be the true teacher. Thus, he *says* he is not a teacher; he ironically *means* he is the true teacher. The great scholar Werner Jaeger draws that conclusion: “Socrates was right to say that he did not teach men – not by giving them information. But by asserting that virtue must be knowledge and making his way toward that knowledge, he took the place of those false prophets of wisdom as the only real educator.”[6]

Gregory Vlastos, like Jaeger, thinks that irony is a sufficient explanation for Socrates’ denial that he is a teacher.[7] Part of this issue concerns the nature of irony. Before Socrates, “irony” simply meant deception and lying. In Socrates’ hands, irony became an assertion of a conventional truth together with a sign that the speaker questions the truth of the statement. The sign can be a peculiar detail in the story line, the tone of voice used, or a raised eyebrow. The speaker playfully conveys to listeners that the truth may be quite different – even the very opposite of what is being said.

Although the term irony is overused and misused today, we are still heirs to the word and the idea that Socrates shaped. Ironic humor is indispensable for digging at hard truths. The playfulness hides the deadly seriousness of the matter at hand. Like oppressed people who use irony as a form of mockery together with a means of communication to those on the inside of the joke, Socrates was defending his life. On the surface, it seems a negative attitude. The speaker is not claiming to know the truth, only puncturing the pompous claims of self-satisfied people.

Not all Plato scholars are convinced. They insist that Socrates should be taken at his word, and he says in several dialogues, in addition to the *Apology*, that he is not a teacher (*Protagoras* 348c; *Gorgias* 506a). Gregory Vlastos and Alexander Nehamas disagree about the nature of irony and therefore whether Socrates considered himself to be a teacher. Their disagreement has its nub in this statement of Vlastos': "In the sense which he would give to "teaching" – engaging would-be learners in elenctic argument to make them aware of their own ignorance and enable them to discover for themselves the truth the teacher had held back – in that sense of "teaching" Socrates would want to say that he *is* a teacher, the only true teacher."[8]

Nehamas zeroed in on the phrase "the truth that the teacher had held back." Irony does not suppose that the truth is already in the teacher's possession and that the teacher simply withholds the truth as a pedagogical tactic.[9] Irony simply undermines someone's pretension to possess the truth. I think that Vlastos is vulnerable on the point. All that irony does is let the listeners become aware that there are other possibilities. The speaker does not claim to know the whole picture.

Although Vlastos has claimed too simple a reversal of meaning, his more general point can perhaps still stand. Socrates is – in some sense – a teacher. He was perceived that way by his contemporaries and described himself as driven by a more than human source to engage others in dialogue.

People who say that Socrates did not engage in teaching find it difficult to hold to that line all the way. For example, in an essay entitled "Nonteaching and its Significance for Education," James King argues that Socrates is not a teacher: "I have taken Socrates at his word that he was not a teacher and found in the theory of teaching presented in the *Gorgias* confirmation of this fact." Yet in the course of the article, King has to acknowledge that "we would misunderstand Socrates should we fail to recognize that by his example, his exhortation and relentless critique of beliefs, he strove to be a teacher of the love of truth. In most respects it is true to say that Socrates was not a teacher, but it would obscure the truth to say in this respect."[10] This "one respect" that King states as an exception would seem to be central to affirming or denying that Socrates is a teacher.

Sometimes authors introduce questionable distinctions so as to maintain the thesis that Socrates was not a teacher. Solomon Scolnicov writes that "Socrates saw himself as an educator. But unlike the Sophists, he did not consider himself a teacher, he professed to know nothing, hence to teach nothing."[11] It is unclear what connotations Scolnicov gives to the term educator. But since that modern word is used for today's "professional" teachers, I would think it easier to argue the opposite case, that is, Socrates considered himself a teacher of some kind but not a professional teacher or "educator" in today's language.

Authors regularly ascribe the term professional to the Sophists. "Professional" is a Latin-derived word without a Greek equivalent but it is used to indicate two things about the Sophists: they claimed to have special knowledge and skill and they required pay for their services. That seems to be the common meaning of "professional" in today's world and it fits the Sophists. An older meaning of "professional," still evident in most professional codes of ethics, emphasizes the dedication of the professional beyond monetary values. Ironically, professional meant not being paid. The professional was to serve the community and be supported in ways other than by salary. In the twenty-first-century meaning of professional, the Sophists are professionals; in the twelfth-century meaning, Socrates is the professional. The question of money plays a central role in *Protagoras* to which we now turn.

Protagoras

Plato's dialogue *Protagoras* is a portrait of a respected Sophist with that name. Plato seems to have a grudging respect for Protagoras, who is Socrates' opponent in the debate. As I indicate later, Plato may have incorporated some of Protagoras' educational program into his later writing. In *Protagoras*, however, the sympathy is with Socrates' side of the debate.

One should not forget that all of the Sophists' writings have disappeared and we have only second-hand knowledge of their views. Plato is a main source of this knowledge and a somewhat biased reporter. The term sophist is derived from the word for wisdom which also gives us the word for philosophy, a love of wisdom. But "sophist" has had a meaning almost the opposite of wisdom. In Plato's view, the sophists were not lovers of wisdom but deceptive rhetoricians. Plato triumphed insofar as "sophist," "sophistry" and "sophistical" have had negative meanings throughout history.[12]

A ray of difference may have emerged, however, in the twentieth-century use of the term "sophisticated." It shifted in meaning from deceptive and misleading to smart and elegant. The Sophists made a comeback in the twentieth century. Nietzsche was prescient in saying that "every advance in epistemological and moral knowledge has reinstated the Sophists."[13] Nietzsche's ambivalence about the rationalism of Socrates naturally led him to wonder whether the Sophists were the bad guys as they were portrayed by Plato.

My own judgment in what follows is that on the question of teaching Protagoras is more helpful than Socrates. I acknowledge that Protagoras probably made unwise and indefensible claims about his own teaching. Nevertheless, his approach to education properly situates the question of teaching. The way that Socrates isolates the issue of "teaching virtue" makes it almost impossible to attend to teaching as it emerges in early life.

The debate over who is the *true* teacher is in many ways diversionary. Whether or not Socrates considers himself to be the true teacher supposes that there is a class of people called teachers. If one can identify them, then the question of teaching is answered because what do teachers do but teach. And the standard for a true and genuine teacher is having both the knowledge of virtue and the skill to communicate it to others.

The criticism of the Sophists is that they claimed to be such a class of individuals. They taught or claimed to teach only paying customers, while Socrates talked to everyone. But the charge against the Sophists in ancient texts is that they sold their wisdom *to all customers*. By charging fees, they failed to discriminate and they lectured "before all kinds of people."[14] The democratic impulse in their approach was part of what made them suspect. The question of "who is the true teacher" is moot if everyone and everything teaches.

The specifically Socratic question is not how to teach but how to teach virtue. After reviewing the debate on whether Socrates was or was not a teacher, Nehamas concludes: "I still believe that he was not – that he was not, that is, a teacher of virtue."[15] Teaching and teaching virtue may be one question for Socrates but there is no reason why one has to accept that premise. Part of what Protagoras offers is that there is another place to start. Before one asks about teaching virtue, one can ask about teaching. And the most obvious place where humans are taught – and taught with success – is at the beginning of life. They are taught how to eat, how to point, how to talk, how to walk, and hundreds of other actions that are necessary for a full human life.

The peculiar conflating of teaching and teaching virtue is still with us in books on education and assumptions about teaching. Contemporary writers do not use the term virtue but they have inherited Socrates' question and a variation on his answer. That is, they assume that teaching is the conveying of rational knowledge, what Socrates thought to be the basis for a good or a virtuous life.

It is surprising that there is not much discussion about the translation of *arete* as virtue. Gregory Vlastos says that there is no doubt about the translation because whenever Socrates scrutinizes the teachability of *arete* he assumes it includes courage, justice, temperance, piety, and wisdom.[16]

The problem, however, is not in the Greek but in the English. "Virtue" had almost disappeared from scholarly discussions until recent decades when it has made a comeback of sorts. Even now its use is favored in select political circles and it has nowhere near the comprehensive meaning that it had in earlier centuries. After Cicero coined the Latin *virtus* with its echoes of strength and manliness, the Christian Church came to control the term. By the nineteenth century "virtue" was applied to women more than to men.

A more literal translation of *arete* as "excellence" comes closer to what unites the ancient Greeks and us: a search for a satisfying human life that is of the best quality. Socrates wins the argument if one asks whether anyone can directly transfer rational knowledge from one person to another. But the Sophists are not vanquished if one starts with teaching not as rational explanation but as showing someone how to do something. Perhaps in showing a small child how to dress himself or how to eat certain foods one is already engaged in teaching a child excellence, "the good life."

Protagoras begins with two premises about teaching. First, teaching starts very early in life. Second, teaching is done by a community and by all the individuals in the community. "Beginning from their earliest youth and continuing so long as they are alive, [parents] both teach and admonish them"(325c). Protagoras locates the beginning of teaching when the child can understand the spoken word. He might have begun even earlier, right at birth, when a person's nature begins to be shaped and reshaped. "As soon as he understands the spoken word, nurse and mother and attendant and the father himself earnestly strive to see to it that the boy will be the best possible, teaching and demonstrating with regard to every deed and speech that one thing is just, another unjust, and that is noble, that shameful, and that this is pious, that is impious"(325d).

Protagoras' conclusion to this passage sounds harsh to our ears: "If he willingly obeys [fine], but if not they threaten him with threats and blows"(325d). It should be noted, however, that Protagoras speaks of punishment as having value only if its purpose is educational. He is the first writer in history to clearly distinguish punishment and revenge (324a-c).[17] Protagoras was way ahead of his time and still ahead of ours in grasping that while revenge solves nothing, punishment can be salutary if it teaches the miscreant to behave better in the future.

A lifelong education does not cease with childhood. Protagoras thought that reading the poets was central to education for the good life. The young person should memorize the poetry and come to imitate the wise elders (325e). The law itself is a teacher that guides the behavior of everyone in the community (326d).

The heart of Socrates' attack on Protagoras is that a wise man cannot bestow virtue on his son. Socrates uses as an example the revered Pericles (320a). His two sons did not acquire the wisdom of their father. As for teaching wisdom or virtue, Socrates says to Protagoras, "I don't hold it to be teachable, nor something that humans can bestow on other humans"(319a). Instead of meeting Socrates' argument head-on, Protagoras tells a long story about the origin of the human race. Humans could not live together so Zeus sent Hermes to distribute conscience and justice to everyone (322c). Virtue is possessed to some degree by everyone, and everyone can be a teacher of virtue. People do not always teach by conscious and deliberate intention. Most teaching is done by community action. “You are spoiled, Socrates, because all are teachers of virtue, insofar as each is able, and none is apparent to you. Well, just as if you should inquire who is a teacher of Greek, no single one would be apparent” (328a).

His example of the teaching-learning of Greek is telling. To the question of who teaches a child to speak, there are two answers that can be given: Either no one teaches the child or else everyone and everything in the environment teaches the child. The latter answer is more persuasive in that little German children learn German; little French children speak French. The human mind has a capacity for language but the particular language (or languages) a child learns depends on the child hearing what is demonstrated and then responding to that particular way of speaking. Saying that everyone and everything can be a teacher means that the teacher shows how to do something and the learner responds to what has been shown by trying to do that in his or her own way.

Protagoras is most famous for a line cited by Plato and other writers: “Man is the measure of all things, of things that are as to how they are and of things that are not as to how they are not” (Theaetetus 161c). Plato’s problem was not “man” being the measure but that measuring is done by “man as user” rather than “man as contemplator.”[18] Protagoras has been condemned with a string of accusations. He is called a subjectivist, a relativist, a denier of truth, and the ancestor of modern education that makes social adjustment its aim.[19] Protagoras was famous for teaching people to argue on both sides of a question. It is claimed that he could not teach people the truth because he did not think there was any truth. Plato, it should be noted, also thinks that one can argue on both sides of an issue. However, Plato, at least in his later work, thinks that one has to push beyond the way things appear so as to grasp how things are in themselves, that is, the ideas or forms for which Plato is famous.

A lot of ink has been spilled over what kind of relativist or subjectivist Protagoras was. The proper context for understanding him is not Plato’s metaphysics but Protagoras’ educational framework. His metaphors for teaching come from farming, husbandry, and medicine. In caring for a plant, one is not interested in the idea of plant but in the particular conditions of a particular plant. The knowledge of how to aid the plant in its growth to maturity is relational; it includes a human subject’s response to another living being.

The derogatory terms subjectivist and relativist do not apply. The farmer has to act in relation to this plant under these conditions. For example, Protagoras says that manure in relation to a plant can be good or bad depending on how and when it is used. For the root, manure can aid growth; on the shoot, it is bad because it hinders growth. In an agricultural metaphor, a teacher deals with the true and the good, but they are found in relational and practical knowledge.

This metaphor for teaching as the taking care of a plant is useful and insightful. It has been used by numerous writers since Protagoras. Johannes Comenius, the first great writer in modern educational theory, uses more than a dozen metaphors for teaching-learning. But his favorite is a man cultivating a tree. Comenius carefully distinguishes between a wild tree that grows on its own and a fruit tree that is cultivated so as to bring forth abundant fruit.[20]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau toward the beginning of *Emile* writes: “Plants are shaped by cultivation, and men by education.”[21] Rousseau was referring to Comenius’ metaphor. However, because of the modern bias against teaching, Rousseau’s line has been cited numerous times in support of the view that Rousseau thought that the teacher should just get out of the way and let the child grow “naturally.” His use of “cultivation” and everything that follows the opening page show that Rousseau, like Comenius and Protagoras, argues that the teacher has to shape the behavior of the student.

The human-human interrelation is more complex than the human-plant relation. The metaphor of cultivating a plant or tree is limited, as all metaphors are. Nevertheless, it is better than the seventeenth-century metaphor of writing on a slate. The assumption in that image is that the teacher says things or writes them on the blackboard and the student by copying the words receives knowledge impressed upon the mind. Most university professors would claim to have rejected that image of teaching but quite obviously it can still be found in practice.

Another of Protagoras' metaphors – from medicine – has some advantages but also some drawbacks compared to farming. A teacher is like a physician who is trying to restore health to the organism.[22] But this metaphor should not be reduced to the supplying of medicine. This metaphor should focus not on medicine but on the care of the body that sometimes needs to be restored to health. The knowledgeable person can help to bring out the possibilities within the organism itself. In this way, the physician's work offers a helpful way to think about teaching. As we will see, Thomas Aquinas uses the body's healing of itself with the help of a physician as a metaphor for teaching-learning. Protagoras and Thomas Aquinas fit in with current practice in health care, which includes but is not limited to handing out medicine.

This distinction between medicine and health-care is relevant to the use of medical metaphors by the Sophists. Hippocrates is the most famous of the group; his oath for physicians is still taken seriously. Socrates voices what is Plato's objection to using the physician's work as a model for teaching. For Plato, medicine is a corrective art; one must first establish the proper state of the body. Otherwise, the teacher will substitute the actually desired for the desirable.[23]

Plato is right that the physician should understand health before assigning medicines. Plato's physician of the soul has to distinguish between immediate and urgent desires that are detrimental and the deeper desires that are for the long-term good of the soul. Plato's warning is well-taken but Protagoras thinks that we all have some sense of our own health without waiting for medical experts to tell us what health is.

We are often unsure of what enhances health but we can usually get signs of what is destructive of health. The standard of health necessary is mainly set by a community's experience and the best insights of individuals. We do need "professional physicians" with specialized knowledge of medicine and skill at surgery. Protagoras readily granted the need for this advanced knowledge but it is only a part of health and health care. Socrates in his formulation of the question wins the argument; but Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippocrates are the bigger help in pointing out the teaching that happens every day in every community.

A final significant point in Socrates' attack on Protagoras concerns money. What Socrates implies in the *Apology* and what runs throughout other dialogues is that the payment of money for teaching inevitably corrupts the process. After his effective description of how everyone in a community teaches to whatever degree they can, Protagoras concludes with a dubious claim. Within a community, he says, some people have specialized knowledge and "I am one of those who can advance toward virtue and therefore I am worthy of the fee"(328b).

He is surely right that some people are more advanced in virtue and become teachers of virtue to a degree beyond the average citizen. It is obvious that outstanding citizens inspire others to live differently. We learn to become virtuous, Aristotle would later say, by growing up in a virtuous community.[24] Not everyone learns the lesson; or rather, they learn other lessons. Teaching-learning requires an openness on the part of the would-be learner. As for the teacher, the teaching is not under his or her direct control. Paradoxically, the attempt to make oneself an exemplar of virtue is likely to be an obstacle to the teaching of virtue.

Protagoras is not claiming to be an outstanding example of virtue but to be someone who can instruct in virtue. That claim makes him vulnerable to the criticism that he is selling what is not his to sell. He establishes a contract with the student that guarantees knowledge of virtue in exchange for a fee. But no teacher can guarantee that result. Aristotle did not think that his work called *Ethics* would make a bad person into a good person.[25] He did think that with instruction a good person could be helped to pursue the good more intelligently. Protagoras should not have claimed more than Aristotle did. Protagoras could have stated his case more modestly as "I try to instruct people who are on the way toward virtue but the effectiveness of the instruction depends on the receptivity of the student." Admittedly, that is not a good advertising slogan.

Protagoras' restating of the contract would not likely have satisfied Socrates, who seems to reject the element of money altogether. Teaching is a gift offered to another. Demanding payment is proof that it is not a gift at all; what is most valuable is priceless. Love is not for sale and neither is the teaching of virtue. In back of this principle is a key premise of Socratic teaching, namely, that human beings find it painful to give up their illusions. They have to discover that they do not know what is for their own good. The road to true virtue is "ascetic," a fundamental reorienting of one's life. When the teacher is dependent on the student's fee, the hard truths will be avoided. The teacher will pander to the comfort zone and preconceptions of the student (*Gorgias* 521e).[26] The teacher will not wish to drive away the paying customers.

Although the Sophists were vulnerable to the charge that money can corrupt the process of teaching, I do not think that Socrates' premise is completely accurate. The teaching of virtue challenges the comfortable illusions of the learner only after those illusions have been learned. The oft-repeated principle of Socrates' followers that learning has to begin with unlearning is not true of the first learning.[27] The young child who is learning to eat with a fork or move on two legs experiences a physical struggle but the child's problem of learning is not the presence of preconceived ideas or self-deception.

Undoubtedly, the illusions start early in life but for teacher as well as student, life is not simply illusion versus truth. Teachers should not pander to the self-deceptive illusions of the students but they also have to be concerned about their own illusions. Who can certify that any teacher is free of self-deception and can be trusted to deal only in truth, goodness, and the ultimate welfare of the student? Whatever the age or the condition of the student, both teacher and student start with a mixture of truth and falsity, unexamined prejudices and rationally affirmed prejudices. Unlearning and learning is not a single sequence in the learner; it is a continuing process in both teacher and student. The teacher who does not learn from the student is not teaching well.

If Socrates is correct – that teaching is a gift offering which money corrupts – what of today's professional teachers? The fact that it was considered a scandal in the twelfth century when teachers began to be paid may be met with a smile today.[28] But the underlying issue is a serious, unarticulated problem for today's school teachers. To some extent it is a problem shared with other "helping professions" but for school teaching it is more severe. The person who comes to a law office or a physical therapy clinic really wants the services of a lawyer or a therapist. It cannot be said that millions of sullen youngsters in classrooms experience teaching as a gift that they are seeking to receive.

Even college students may feel coerced despite the fact that their parents are paying an exorbitant tuition for the privilege of their children attending a famous university. Before World

War II, one out of ten students got to college and generally these lucky ones were grateful for the privilege of exposure to college teaching. Today six out of ten students go to college and many of them feel coerced into undergoing this ritual for the purpose of getting a good job. The high school diploma has been replaced by the college degree.

The system that has grown up quickly and somewhat haphazardly is in need of reform and there is no shortage of reform packages on the market. Much of the sloppy reform goes in the wrong direction. It tries to overcome the boredom and/or rebellion by letting students study whatever they think they want to study and in no particular order. Learning is made entertaining, something pleasant and unthreatening. The inflation of grades is the way to keep everyone content; no low grades mean no complaints to the teachers and administrators. The teacher is considered an entrepreneur trying to sell a product; the student is the skeptical consumer. Teachers can be judged by how many satisfied customers they attract, especially as indicated by student evaluations.

Genuine reform would go in almost the opposite direction. There should be some freedom of choice throughout the school system that might lessen the feeling of being coerced into a particular learning environment. Nonetheless, there is a discipline to learning anything; a definite sequence of steps is usually needed. Internship could be an option in more settings than it currently is. Internship for a job would be a more sensible outlet for many youngsters, at least in college if not senior high school. They might appreciate the university classroom when they are age forty or sixty.

The school system should provide a protective barrier so that teaching-learning is not reduced to commodity exchange. In the actual encounter of teacher and learner, money ought not to be an issue. If the teacher of biology, medieval history, or statistics is to be prepared for the work and to persevere in doing it well, money is indispensable. But the teacher is not paid by the student. The student pays the institution which provides many services and pays many bills besides the teacher's salary.

A tax-supported school is an admirable way for a community to provide a buffer between teacher offering and student paying. Even in an institution where student tuitions pay most of the bills, the faculty need not be seen as being paid on a per-capita basis by students. That is, a course on Greek literature or Chinese philosophy that attracts a handful of students can be supported by courses that have large enrollments. That is what a university is supposed to be: the defense of important but unfashionable learning against the ravages of the market. There are "universities" today that have no campus, no library, no faculty, whose advertising pitch is send us money and you can get a degree with a minimum of effort. If universities continue in that direction of providing only courses that are best-sellers taught by popularly approved teachers, then we will have not learned much since Plato warned about the selling of knowledge.

Middle Works

Among the works attributed to Plato's middle period, I will concentrate on the *Republic*. However, one should note that there are works that are transitional to the mature politics, metaphysics, and educational theory of the *Republic*. I will refer here to *Gorgias* and *Meno*. In the early dialogues, Socrates seems content to leave the student frozen in a conceptual puzzle. Perhaps there is an implication that Socrates knows the right answer; nonetheless, he professes to know only his own ignorance.

In *Gorgias* and *Meno* there is at least the beginning of a theory that the truth can be found within a person who digs deeply enough. To this day, many of our terms concerning knowledge reflect this Platonic premise: remember, recollect, realize, remind. The knowledge is a going back to something which has been misplaced or not noticed (*Symposium* 208a). What is needed is a method to get behind everyday impressions and dis-cover what has been covered. Socrates' attack on rhetoric in *Gorgias* is based on rhetoric's incapacity to get at hidden truths.[29] Only dialectic or philosophy can lead the learner to the higher reaches of the mind.

The presence of knowledge which has to be recovered can suggest that knowledge is innate, that is, given at birth (*Phaedo* 73b). The *Timaeus* includes a scene (27d-29d) in which the forms or ideas are inserted by the gods at birth. However, one need not take this myth as Plato's final version of where knowledge comes from. A theory of knowledge as remembrance might also suggest metempsychosis – remembering what happened in a previous lifetime. Here, too, Plato offers a myth at the end of the *Republic* (614-16) which describes souls choosing new identities after crossing the river of forgetting. Rebirth explains the forgotten knowledge in this lifetime but not the ultimate origin of knowledge.

The dialogue, *Meno*, also suggests that knowledge is innate, perhaps from a previous existence (81c,d). The focus of the work, however, is not the ultimate source of knowledge but a teaching method to recollect it. Meno asks "Do you think there are no teachers of virtue"? to which Socrates replies, "I have often certainly inquired whether there are, and taken great pains to find them, and have never succeeded" (89c). Despite this seeming denial of teaching, Socrates proceeds to argue for the recovery of forgotten knowledge.

The way to knowledge is by way of right opinion which is a state in between ignorance and knowledge. Meno had posed the dilemma that one cannot learn because if you already know something you cannot learn what you already know, and if you are ignorant you don't know what you are looking for. Socrates' solution to that dilemma is "he who does not know may still have true notions of that which he does not know (85c). He says at the end of the dialogue that statesmen are guided by right opinion (99c).

A center piece of *Meno* is a dialogue within the dialogue. Socrates questions a boy who is identified as one of Meno's slaves. Socrates wants to show that even such an uneducated boy has knowledge that he is unaware of. Geometry is the crucial choice of topic for the conversation. For Plato, the royal road to knowledge is mathematics which disciplines the mind by way of abstraction from concrete phenomena and which leads to the intellectual forms.

Socrates first asks if the boy knows Greek (82b). That issue is more than a simple factual question. The learning of a language is the first great specifically human step in learning. The person who knows any of the world's developed languages implicitly knows a great deal that he or she cannot immediately articulate. It is not surprising that a slave boy has a world of knowledge inside his mind. Greek or a similar language embodies centuries of learning.

Socrates asks a series of questions about mathematical figures (rectangles, circles, triangles). The boy is able to respond, indicative of quite complex learning that preceded his encounter with Socrates. The boy might not have engaged in much mathematical reasoning but he has a grasp of mathematical shapes that are exemplified in the world of passing phenomena. For Socrates, the knowledge is both re-cognition and the connections between things that require abstraction from individual cases.

The conclusion to the dialogue still has a tentative quality to it. Socrates would seem to have demonstrated the power of a teacher to bring out knowledge in contrast to mere opinion and to show how ideas can be remembered in recollection. Yet, he seems again to deny the role of the teacher by saying "virtue is neither natural nor imparted by teaching but an instinct given by God to those to whom it is given"(99c).

Socrates realizes that this conclusion is unsatisfying and leaves open future progress in understanding. “We shall never know the certain truth until, before asking how virtue is given, we inquire into the actual nature of virtue. I fear that I must go away, but do you, now that you are persuaded yourself, persuade our friend Anytus”(100b). The teacher leaves the student neither too exhilarated by success nor exasperated by the incompleteness of the process. For Plato, teaching virtue still requires a metaphysical explanation of the source of our ideas.

Republic[30]

The *Republic* is our best source for Plato’s mature ideas on politics and education. Socrates is still the main interlocutor in the dialogue. But while Socrates is playful and clever with the language, he seems intent on convincing others of the truth of Plato’s metaphysics and its related educational theory.

The first book of the *Republic*, which some people think was a separate treatise from an earlier period, raises the question of what justice is. Socrates and his opponent, the Sophist, Thrasymachus, differ strongly. Thrasymachus says that justice is the rule of the stronger, a phrase that can be taken either as a realistic description of the way things are, or as a commentary on the misuse of the word justice. Socrates argues against a conventional meaning of justice as giving everyone his due, but he also criticizes Thrasymachus’ meaning. The remaining nine books of the *Republic* lay out what justice means for a community and for an individual. The realization of the just *polis* or community depends on education so that Plato develops a quite detailed curriculum. Some of the early educational curriculum may show traces of Protagoras and the Sophists but Plato still speaks disparagingly of them (493).

It has to be constantly kept in mind that Plato views the education of the individual as penultimate to the formation of the perfect community. He simply states that he will study the community or society rather than the individual because the society is the individual “writ large.” It is a premise readily agreed to by his hearers but one that can be doubted. His interest, in any case, is how the *polis* is constituted.

Plato does not cite numbers or percentages but it is obvious that the great majority of individuals in his society will receive only the most basic elements of education, enough to fit in as farmers, nurses, tailors, tradesmen, or builders. The full curriculum is only for guardians, a political, administrative class which is supported by auxiliaries, a second class that is both police and military force (415a-c). Plato elaborates a myth that will justify where each person fits in society. According to the myth, people are born as gold, silver, or bronze and that usually determines their place in life. The possibility of movement between classes is acknowledged but no mechanism is in place that would suggest that it is a regular occurrence. When he is asked whether people will believe this fanciful story, he answers somewhat ominously “not in the first generation but you might succeed with the second and later generations”(415d).

The first stage of education, which was apparently to be provided for everyone, is a combination of physical and mental education. “We shall begin by educating mind and character” (376c). He wants a guardian class in which individuals will have a harmonious balance of self-control and bravery. Nonetheless, the aim of both physical and “literary” education is “to train the mind”(410c). His section on physical education is disappointing. It is immediately made clear that he is referring to military training which comes after literary education. He wants a physical training that is simple and flexible, particularly in its training for war (404c). And then he goes off on a rant about physicians and makes harsh judgments about the sick (405-408).

Although he begins and ends the section on early education by speaking of a harmony of the physical and mental, a systematic look at the physical education of young children is missing. He thinks of physical education as something for eighteen-year-olds but not for eighteen-month-olds. One of his best lines plays upon the common derivation in Greek of the words child, play, and education. Accordingly, he says that the education of a child is play rather than compulsion. However, there is no description of the child learning at play (537a).

"Literary" is the usual translation of Plato's word which describes a main part of education. It is the word from which we get the word music. The literary education of a child could include both poetry and playing a musical instrument. Education as a whole must have the harmony of music.

Plato is aware throughout the *Republic* that rational knowledge can be overwhelmed by other forces within the soul (588). Plato is a strict censor of the stories told to children and what we call "plays." He wished to protect children from errors about the gods, telling children only stories about what is good. But keeping young people away from poets who offer a variety of stories about the gods and away from actors who portray unsavory characters does not seem to be an educational shaping of human thought and emotion.

A crucial proposal of the *Republic* is the elimination, or at least the radical reform, of the family. Plato does not exclude women from the guardian class even though he seems to forget that fact in some of his references to the guardians. The best offspring will be produced by matching guardians at mating festivals. To enforce the control of sex during the child-bearing years, Plato refers in veiled ways to abortion and infanticide (461). He is also vague about the care of the superior children born to the properly mated guardians. The nurses and surrogate mothers would seem to be in powerful positions of teaching and yet Plato has nothing to say about the preparation of these teachers and the performance of their work. His main educational interest remains the ascension of the mind to the world of unchanging forms.

The guardians have an education that is nearly lifelong. After the early period that has no direct correlation to age, Plato helpfully sketches his curriculum from about age eighteen to fifty-years-old and beyond. When the future guardian is eighteen, he or she is given military training for two years. Then the student spends ten years in mastering the existing branches of mathematics. Plato notes that studying math is not for practical purposes but to prepare the mind for philosophy proper (521c). At about age thirty the student would be ready to master the tools of philosophy with the study of dialectic. Plato holds off on philosophy until this age because, he says, younger students who learn to argue become arrogant (539b).

The thirty-five year old man or woman, now having a vision of the good, is required to give something back to the community. This service takes the form of what seems to be low level administrative positions. Today's common meaning of "community service," unfortunately, is court-imposed punishment. Plato would like his guardians-to-be to recognize that their mission in life is to serve the needs of a just community. When Socrates is asked whether the guardians will be happy, his brusque reply is that their happiness is not his concern (519e). His interest is a community in which justice will reign because each individual attends to his or her business. In this way the three classes in the community will play their respective proper roles.

Only after the long internship of service does the philosopher-king emerge to serve in the top position and guide the community. A kind of rotating system will include the guardians continuing to study philosophy and being the "watchdogs" endowed with both strength and gentleness. Eventually, they will retire to the land of the blessed, a place sufficiently attractive that they willingly give up the perks of high office.

The journey of this curriculum is beautifully captured in the famous allegory of the cave, (514-517) at the conclusion of which Plato offers his most precise description of teaching. Plato recounts a myth or story of prisoners who are chained in a cave. All that they can see are shadows thrown upon the wall by an unseen fire. Various games are played by the prisoners concerning the movement of the shadows.

Then one prisoner is freed, or more exactly, is dragged upward into the light of day. At first he finds the light blinding but gradually he adjusts and begins to see people. Eventually, he grasps a world of realties that is so different from mere shadows. He feels bad for his former comrades who are caught up in illusions. But he is fearful of returning to the cave because he would be blinded by the darkness and would no longer have either the skill or the interest in playing their games. So resentful would the prisoners be of someone trying to enlighten them that they might kill him.

Despite the danger to the liberated prisoner, Plato wants the best minds in the community to return to the prisoners in the cave and "share their labors and rewards, whether trivial or serious" (519d). Coercing the best and the brightest to be leaders seems strange in our world where politicians are supposed to have "fire in the belly," a willingness to sacrifice everything to their desire for high office. There were societies like that in Plato's time where it was thought desirable that leaders struggle to attain power. Plato says "the truth is quite different: the state whose prospective rulers come to their duties with least enthusiasm is bound to have the best and most tranquil government, and the state where rulers are eager to rule the worst" (520d).

From the myth of the cave, Plato derives a precise description of teaching. He begins that description with a denial of a false idea of teaching: "We must reject the conception of education professed by those who say that they can put into the mind knowledge that was not there before – rather as they could put sight into blind eyes." He then states his own premise for teaching: "The capacity for knowledge is innate in each mind." Not knowledge but a *capacity* for knowledge is universal and given at birth. The capacity needs actualization. Like the eye being turned to the light, the mind has to be turned from a world of change and after a while it will be able to perceive what is truly real.

Finally, Plato gives his description of the act of teaching: "This turning around of the mind itself might be made a subject of professional skill which effects the conversion as easily as possible. It would not be concerned to implant sight, but to ensure that someone who had it already was not either turned in the wrong direction or looking the wrong way" (518 c,d). This idea of conversion became a central idea in Christian history.[31] Philosophically, it returns in Wittgenstein's idea of knowledge.

In one respect, the teacher has a great responsibility to oversee the conversion of the mind to truth. From a different angle, the teacher's job is minimal: simply make sure the body is not turned in the wrong direction. Turning the whole body in the right direction implies more than either a passive looking-on or a forceful shove. As Plato notes, it requires a skill or art to gradually move the student to look in the right direction.

The ultimate teacher is the sunlight or the light that goodness casts in the interior of the student's mind. The human teacher has to lead the body in its external activity. Plato's own description of teaching seems to point up his inadequate treatment of physical education in childhood. Although the teacher cannot put knowledge into the mind, teaching can discipline behavior so as to make possible the mind's recognition of the truth.

In the *Republic,* Plato seems to play down language in the description of teaching. Silence precedes verbal instruction and silence is at the end of speech. In between the silences, dialectic is integral to directing the forces of the soul and body. Plato indicates in the *Republic* and the *Symposium* (211a-e) that the truth is beyond words, a contemplation of eternal forms. Speech is what leads up to the speechless.[32]

Conclusion

I began this chapter by pointing out the centrality of Socrates to most writing on teaching. Or, rather, most writing is about the teacher because one of the results of Socrates' dominance in the area is that educational literature is more concerned with teachers than the act of teaching. And in an irony worthy of Socrates, most educational writing identifies the teacher with the professional educator. Most writing that purports to be about teaching is actually about the professional problems of school teachers. To be sure, those problems are real and complex; and an analysis of teaching would not solve all of those problems. Still, there should be room for asking what it means for humans to engage in the activity of teaching.

A response to the question "what is teaching?" would start from an earlier time and a wider world than the faculty lounge of the local high school. Such a discussion could eventually provide some help to elementary and high school teachers but the Sophists as well as Socrates need to be allowed into the conversation. Protagoras may have been corrupted by arrogance and money, which was Plato's view of the Sophists, but he was on the right trail by saying that teaching is done by a community and each individual in the community.

One can understand from the Sophists that most teaching is nonverbal; when speech does emerge from the silence, it is in the mode of storytelling, poetry, and the commands of a parent or the law. Virtue or excellence of life is taught by example and everything of value that a person learns from childhood onward. Socrates' questions are important provided they a superstructure on a variety of virtues and several kinds of knowledge.

It is surprising that Aristotle has not exercised more influence than he has on the understanding of teaching. He articulated one version of Plato, but in his self-description, said he was more down to earth than Plato in philosophical speculation. While Aristotle, like Plato, does not have much good to say of the Sophists, his distinctions among the virtues and his emphasis upon practical knowledge have definite echoes of sophistic teaching.

"The object of our inquiry," Aristotle wrote "is not to know what virtue is, but to become good men"(*Ethics*1103b27). And to become a good man, one must develop the right habits. "If anyone wishes to make a serious study of ethics, or of political science generally, he must have been well trained in his habits" (*Ethics* 1095a29). The habits that we form from the earliest age make "a vast difference, or rather all the difference in the world" (*Ethics* 1103b25). Aristotle implies a preference for Gorgias rather than Socrates in his enumerating separate virtues and a multiplicity of goods (*Politics* 1260a25).[33]

In his ethical, social, and political writing, Aristotle does not demand demonstrable proofs. He says that to demand logical proof from a farmer or an orator makes no more sense than accepting persuasion from a mathematician (*Ethics*1094b25). Aristotle escapes the accusation of "relativism" because he accepts the possibility of a theoretical knowledge based on fixed forms. Nonetheless, for the practice of teaching, one is faced with a world of relativities and questions of making and doing in a relational context. "Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it"(*Ethics*1103 a14). The process of showing how to do something always depends on the concrete conditions of the learner and the kind of knowledge that is at stake.

The political philosopher, Michael Oakshott, writes: "Practical knowledge can neither be taught nor learned but only imparted and acquired. It exists only in practice, and the only way to acquire it is by apprenticeship to a master."[34] That is a strange contrast. The relation of master and apprentice surely qualifies as a teaching-learning relation. Oakshott is defending other kinds of knowledge besides the only kind that modern rationalism accepts. But in the process he relinquishes teaching-learning to rationalists. A more effective approach is to question whether rational concepts can be taught except on the ground of practical knowledge.

In the course of his writing, Plato moved away from a world in which only absolutes counted as knowledge. He seemed to recognize that most people do not live in a heady world of eternal forms (*Symposium* 202a). Although we hear little in the *Republic* about the education of the "third class," the laborers, there can be no justice or peace unless the whole community and the whole individual embody virtue. Plato's description of the teacher as one who turns the whole body toward the light is a description that can include farmer, shoemaker, tradesman, politician, and nurse, as well as the skilled speaker.

The metaphor for teacher that Socrates applies to himself in *Theaetetus* is "midwife" (150c-151e). Like the Sophists' use of agriculture and medicine, Socrates' midwifery image has rich possibilities. Not surprisingly, the metaphor has attracted feminist writers in recent years. The authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* appeal to that image: "Mid-wife teachers help students deliver their words to the world."[35] The link between giving birth to knowledge and giving birth to a child is an ancient one that has continued throughout history. Knowledge is conceived and the result is concepts.

Socrates is more than just an example of those who spoke of the birth of ideas. The Hellenistic Age, so rich in philosophical concepts, was itself the birth of a new order in which individual, rational man would ascend. Aeschylus signifies this new order in having the god Apollo declare Orestes innocent though he murdered his mother Clytemnestra: "The mother of what is called her offspring is no parent but only the nurse to the seed that is implanted. The mounter, the male, is the only true parent. She harbors the bloodshoot, unless some god blasts it. The womb of the woman is a convenient transit."[36]

Like Plato's advocacy of sexual equality, Socrates' claim to be a midwife is suspect. A comparison of knowledge and newborns is an attractive idea that can bring together intellect and emotions, individual and community, men and women. But Socrates is portrayed as giving birth to ideas and definitions of words. Immortality is now sought in the ideas that men conceive.

It seems that Socrates' midwifery became interpreted not as an application of a metaphor but a replacement of the primary meaning of midwifery. Rationalistic philosophers and university professors have been comfortable with being at the birth of grand ideas so long as the messy details of a baby coming forth are not included. Socrates without the Sophists can be dangerous. Socratic dialogue can be a powerful teacher if all the other teachers, starting with mothers, are recognized.

Chapter Two: Augustine despite Aquinas

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) form an intellectual bridge between ancient and modern worlds. Their contrasting views on teaching are still with us. Augustine is the more complex character and he more directly influences modern thinking; I will focus attention on him. Thomas Aquinas is one of the most profound thinkers in history but I will deal only with his essay *Truth* in which he responds to Augustine's essay, *The Teacher*.

Most histories of philosophy and of education omit a discussion of Augustine and Thomas. The reason is that both men wrote within the framework of Christian theology. They believed in a God revealed in the history of the Jewish people, culminating in Jesus, called the Christ. Unlike some Christians they do not describe faith as a substitute for reason. Nor was their writing of theology simply an exercise in applying reason to "revealed truths," or "Christian revelation," modern phrases that collapse the tension between faith and understanding.

What makes both authors interesting is that they bring together a long religious tradition and the resources of classical philosophy. Augustine worked his way through Manichaeism and Neoplatonism before becoming Christian. He never left behind his immersion in the rhetoric of Cicero and the philosophical imagery of Plotinus' Neoplatonism. Thomas Aquinas is known for his integrating Aristotle into Christian thinking but his dependence on Plotinus is just as profound. The Augustinian and Thomistic ideas of teaching are inspired by the New Testament but they are given expression in the images and concepts of Greek philosophy.

I wish to show that Augustine and Thomas agree that God is the ultimate teacher but they draw sharply divergent conclusions about human teaching from that principle. That fact is not immediately evident in reading Thomas' comments on Augustine's *The Teacher* because Thomas always tried to avoid contradicting Augustine who was and is revered as the father of Western theology. Nevertheless, the difference is profound.

The neglect of Augustine is a barrier to understanding modern thinkers from Descartes to Wittgenstein. Augustine has been called the first modern man. He was a man at war with himself and he possessed the talent and originality to reveal the personal struggle in his writing, especially in the *Confessions*.[1] Plato had described philosophy as a conversation that the soul has with itself and Socrates emerges from the dialogues as a reflective individual. Augustine represents what Charles Taylor calls "radical reflexivity," in which the individual not only thinks profoundly but thinks about the origin and nature of thinking.[2]

Augustine, however, is not a Cartesian, though he is often seen to be a predecessor of the French thinker of the seventeenth century. Descartes isolates thinking from the world of objects and even doubts the existence of "world." Augustine in his *Confessions* is a man turning inward and wrestling with his memory, but the book is also a rich source for our knowledge of the late fourth-century Roman Empire.

Much of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writing is unintelligible without some knowledge of Augustine. Rousseau was intent on getting rid of the doctrine of "original sin," first conceptualized by Augustine. Rousseau was well aware of Augustine's place in the history of western ideas of freedom, knowledge, sin, guilt, grace, politics, and apocalypticism.

In one of Augustine's most famous books, *The City of God*, he built a contrast between two cities around the "love of God" and "love of man." [3] Rousseau adopted the idea of conflicting loves but made them into a true and a false love of oneself.[4] And toward the end of his life, Rousseau wrote his own *Confessions* in imitation of Augustine. However, the meaning of "confession" had shifted from Augustine's testimony before God and praise of God's blessings to Rousseau's and our more modern meaning of confession as telling secrets, admitting faults, and settling some scores along the way.

Wittgenstein begins his major work, *Philosophical Investigations,* with a long quotation from Augustine's *Confessions* .[5] Augustine is describing how as a small child he came to know the names of things. Wittgenstein uses that description to set off his own understanding of language. Wittgenstein does not entirely disagree with Augustine. But what Augustine uses as background, such as the bodily gestures of the adults, is what Wittgenstein brings to the foreground. Given that Augustine does think that ideas are more important than words and that words are expressions of inner ideas, Wittgenstein has some basic differences with Augustine.

I will use two of Augustine's works to examine his view of teaching. The first is entitled *De Doctrina Christiana* which exists with several English translations of the title. Its literal translation *On Christian Doctrine* does not convey the purpose or content of the book nor does an edition with the title *Christian Instruction*. A recent edition has the title *Teaching Christianity* which has the virtue of indicating it is about teaching, but the object "Christianity" is an unhelpful anachronism.[6] I think the most accurate title, and the one I will use, is *Christian Teaching*. The first three books of the work are about the teaching(s) of the Christian Church. The fourth book, the most relevant for my purposes, is on how to teach.

The second work that I focus on is entitled *De Magistro* which is adequately translated as *The Teacher*.[7] It covers the same ground more briefly than *Christian Teaching* but has a more pointed opinion about the people in Augustine's day who were called teachers. *Christian Teaching* had more prominence in the Middle Ages, appealed to by opposing schools of thought in the early Renaissance.[8] Nevertheless, the brief treatise, *The Teacher*, is the one that resonates today on the possibility or impossibility of teaching.

Life and Themes

Augustine was an African living in the waning days of the Roman Empire. He spent some time in Rome and Milan but he spent most of his life in a backwater place in northern Africa, Thagaste, removed from Carthage which was the metropolitan center. Through his nearly one hundred books and numerous letters and sermons, he shaped Christian theology with reverberations that continue to the present. It was not a triumphant theology, confident of Christian success. It was seemingly a cramped view of human possibilities, emphasizing sin, guilt, and the desperate need for outside help.

This outlook reflected his personal conflicts as well as the cultural collapse occurring in his lifetime. As a young man, he assumed that the empire was eternal. In his later years, as he wrote *The City of God,* Rome was being ransacked. In that work, he pictures all human cities as ephemeral; only the City of God is permanent. The book fed into apocalyptic tendencies several centuries later.

Much of Augustine's life as a churchman was taken up with fighting intra-church battles against groups called Donatists and Pelagians. I will not attempt here to explain the subtleties of these Christian heresies but a person's writings usually reflect what he or she is opposing. Augustine, for example, has a bad reputation for his views on sexuality, but as Garry Wills points out, he was defending the "liberal" position against his opponents.[9] Reading his sermons, one finds much more concern with greed than sexual sins. It is true that he thought that the human inability to control sexual desire was a sign of disorder, but the problem was the lack of control not the sex itself.

The doctrine of an original fall is at the heart of Augustine's writing. He is credited with or blamed for inventing the doctrine of "original sin." While he was the major force in conceptualizing the doctrine, he was bringing together elements of Christian belief that include the Genesis story of Adam and Eve, the denunciation of moral failures by the prophets of ancient Israel, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and the formation of the church as an ark of salvation in a world of violent conflicts.

Augustine's personal struggle to come to grips with his own past and with the conflicts that surrounded him is recounted in one of the great works of all literature, *The Confessions*. This book invented the genre of autobiography, the search in memory for the key events of one's life. Without knowledge of its context, some readers are put off by his giving importance to seemingly trivial incidents. But for Augustine, these flaws in his own character are symptomatic of human failings on a larger scale. The reflection on his past leads to a brilliant reflection on the nature of time itself.[10]

I will not use *The Confessions* as a main source for my reflection on teaching. However, the work is unavoidable for what it implies about philosophy and education. Most relevant for my concern is his concept of memory that links him to the Platonic tradition. Like Plato, Augustine thinks of knowledge as recollection, a locating of ideas buried deep in consciousness.[11] He thinks that these ideas are divine in origin; human ideas participate in God's ideas. Plato's *Timaeus* has a picture of ideas being inserted in each newborn human. The *Timaeus* was favorite reading among early Christian writers and led them to believe in a neat fit between Platonism and Christianity.

According to Augustine, humans are born with "seminal reasons," that need actualizing. One could imagine an educational program of Augustine's similar to Plato's *Meno* in which the young boy is shown to possess pre-existing knowledge of geometric shapes. Augustine even has some of the Platonic-Pythagorean fascination with numbers as pointers to eternal truth.[12] Where Augustine pushes beyond the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions is in positing God as the principle of knowing, the healer of a wounded faculty. For Platonists, the human being can turn toward the light and be confident of grasping the truth; for Augustine, the humans are in need of a "grace" (gift) to overcome their penchant for disordered desires that block a clear view. Education thus takes on the character of therapy. Augustine does not separate knowledge and love.

A Socratic view of education is usually described by referring to an opposition between knowledge and ignorance. The concept of "will" had not been developed. At the end of the *Republic* Plato does have the myth of the man confronted by a tiger and a hydra. The hydra needs to be kept in check lest its multiple graspings bring down the man. The faculty of knowing operates within conflicting elements of a human life.

The idea of the will emerged with the Stoics and their fatalistic perception of the human condition. The human's one choice is to assent or not to assent to what nature dictates. Humans will be happier if they simply accept what is, instead of being dragged kicking and screaming by nature.[13] Augustine agrees that the range of freedom is narrow; nonetheless he has a more expansive idea of will than the Stoics. His is a wounded will, one that is not as free as it is imagined by deluded human thinking, but it is a free will nonetheless.

Augustine does not take choice to be the essence of freedom; in fact, choice is a sign of the fragmenting of one's perception of the good.[14] The modern attack on free will glances off Augustine whose idea of freedom is the coalescing of knowledge and love. The separating of freedom and choice may seem Orwellian if one does not understand that Augustine is taking a view from the end of history. The saints in heaven do not have choices because they finally have what they have been seeking.

Even with this proviso that knowledge and love perfectly fuse only beyond history, Augustine's view of freedom is vulnerable to authoritarian abuse. Governments, civil and ecclesiastical, are inclined to distrust the choices of people who are not rationally competent to exercise freedom. Augustine has often been invoked in defense of repression, censorship, and corrective punishment.

Augustine did develop a theory to justify repressive activity. Garry Wills notes that others were practicing repression but Augustine gets the opprobrium for trying to explain it and justify some forms of religious coercion.[15] Augustine may not have been familiar with Protagoras' distinction between revenge and punishment but he was in agreement that punishment is acceptable only when it has an educational purpose. "For if they were only being terrorized and not instructed at the same time, this would be an inexcusable tyranny on our part."[16] Although he rebelled against the physical beatings he received in his early schooling, he believed that the will needs some coercing to settle into the hard work of learning.[17]

Before I examine my two main texts on teaching, I will comment on a few practices and themes relative to teaching that frequently occur in *The Confessions* and elsewhere in his writing. I will comment on dialogue, friendship, and interpretation; these themes run throughout his work. I will then examine three metaphors for teaching and Augustine's image for the human journey which encapsulates a meaning for teaching.

Themes

The first theme is dialogue, a practice that implies an attitude to teaching-learning. The teacher and the learner are within a process in which their respective roles can be reversed. Dialogue as a literary form is artificial unless it is the actual report of an oral exchange. If a writer is taking both sides of the conversation, a give and take in argument is mostly pretense. Still, a thinker who writes dialogues is making an attempt to understand what a reader may be thinking. The give and take within the writer's own mind is a sign of respect for another point of view besides the one that the writer deems to be true.

During his first ten years of writing (387-397), Augustine's chief literary form was the dialogue. Similar to Plato's early dialogues, Augustine seems to use a genuinely dialectical approach for trying to get at the truth. Plato had Socrates on whom he was reporting; Augustine has friends, patrons, colleagues, and church officials in the company of whom he was working his way toward a synthesis of a philosophical position and Christian teaching. The later works of Plato use dialogue more as a literary instrument to convey Plato's mature thinking. Once Augustine is a bishop, his style of teaching, while still indicating a searching within, often takes the form of homily or sermon.

Before Augustine was a church official he was a school teacher for more than ten years in Rome, Carthage, and his home town of Thagaste. He apparently was not very successful as a classroom instructor. He describes one difficult environment in Carthage: "Outsiders, looking almost crazed, barge shamelessly into classrooms and dispel any atmosphere for learning the teacher may have established."[18]Under such conditions the student may not learn much about school subjects but the teacher is forced to confront some realities about teaching. Naïve assumptions about transmitting knowledge to waiting minds are quickly undermined. Minimal conditions need to be established for teaching-learning.

A second theme, that of friendship, is related to the first. One of the most obvious characteristics of friendship is conversation, a less technical term than dialogue. Conversation suggests some degree of friendship while dialogue need not. A friendly conversation has a much looser form than the dialogue of diplomacy. Much of the conversation between friends has no purpose beyond itself. Close friends sitting in the same room can be said to converse even when no words are being spoken. Both dialogue and friendship point to the relational character of teaching-learning.

Friendship was a major theme in Augustine's life and he regularly refers to it in his writings. That was especially true when he was a young man surrounded by a group of loyal friends. Later in life, easy going friendships were still important but difficult to sustain. Presidents, governors, bishops, CEO's, and similar officials are isolated by their roles. The presence of a couple of honest and truthful confidants is usually the best that they can hope for. But even in his middle-age-years Augustine was privileged to have "that most unfathomable of all involvements of the soul – friendship."[19]

Especially in his early searching, Augustine delighted in friends and cherished their help. His early works were "reflections of his view that all thought is an effort best pursued with others." In the ordinary play of friendly exchange they were "teaching and being taught by turns."[20] In his *Soliloquies,* he converses with his reason about the value of friendship. To reason's question of why we want friends, he replies: "That we may together scrutinize our souls and God, so that whoever discovers anything can help the others to it more readily."[21]

The third theme of interpretation is similar to friendship and dialogue in bringing out the relational character of teaching-learning. Someone who claims the role of teacher places himself or herself in the position of interpreting a relation. As soon as language plays a significant part in the relation, there is ambiguity. A teacher has to try to explain what the words mean, but learning depends on the response of the potential learner. For the knowledge encoded in books, the teacher needs rules of interpretation. Augustine developed rules that dominated education for a thousand years and some of those elements are still with us.

A popular phrase such as "reader response theory" has its beginnings with Augustine. He recognized that the intention of an author to communicate knowledge to a reader has to be complemented by a reader's interpretative ability and a readiness to be taught. Plato was hard on the Sophists for selling knowledge; Augustine is hard on audiences for wishing to be titillated by sophistical teachers.[22]

Many of the problems in the nineteenth century concerning the reliability of the Bible had already been wrestled with by Augustine fifteen centuries earlier. In his commentary on the Book of Genesis, he distinguished between what God's intent is and the vehicle of human language.[23] He readily acknowledged that creation in six days is a truth in the form of a story. God could not create light on the first day if the sun was not created until the fourth day.[24] Always one has to go back to a "literal" meaning but then decide how to interpret the text on the basis of other texts, the work as a whole, and the divine purpose of love.

Augustine drew on a legal tradition for interpreting texts that came down from Aristotle through Cicero, Quintillian, and Pliny the Younger. [25] There could be a difference between what words seem to say and what the lawmaker intended. For Augustine, a Christian's "spiritual reading" of the Old Testament finds a figurative meaning as well as a literal meaning in many texts. A neglect of the literal meaning leads to flights of allegory as happened in the Middle Ages. Augustine's theory of interpretation was an extraordinarily complex mixture of literary and legal traditions. Most of his successors were not schooled in those traditions and so they read the Bible in a way that brought on a crisis in the nineteenth century and a fundamentalist reaction in the twentieth century.

Metaphors for Teaching

As a skilled writer and orator, Augustine employed all sorts of literary devices, including puns, jokes, pithy sayings, irony, and a rich store of metaphors. For understanding teaching-learning, I comment on three of his metaphors.

The first metaphor is feeding. A metaphor is an action rather than an image of a thing. In Augustine's writing, teaching is compared not to food but to feeding. He describes his activity while bishop "as feeding men as much in need of nourishment as he now felt himself to be."[26] The Greeks, with their emphasis upon visual metaphors did not usually compare teaching-learning to feeding-eating. In Jewish and Christian traditions, however, it occupied a central place.

Oral metaphors can refer either to speaking or eating - and occasionally to both. In the Old Testament, the prophets Ezekiel (33:1-9) and Jeremiah (1:9) are required to eat a text and the strange act is repeated in the New Testament by the prophet in *Revelation* (10:1-11). In less direct fashion, reading during meals has always been a practice in monasteries. The monk digests with mind and body at the same time. In the Eucharist, the liturgy of the word, read and preached, is followed by the liturgy of the meal.

For Augustine, therefore, it was an obvious connection to associate teaching with the provision of food. He points out that Jesus did so, distributing loaves and fishes along with his preaching to the multitude.[27] The relational character of teaching-learning is again highlighted by this metaphor. The best cook cannot succeed unless there are eaters who can appreciate a well-prepared meal. Teaching is nourishing only if someone is nourished by digesting what is offered.

Augustine accepted the human tendency to be attracted to tasty food that does not provide nourishment. A teacher has to cope with this weakness, sweetening the teaching with attractive side dishes. "There is a certain similarity between feeding and learning; so because so many people are fussy and fastidious, even those foodstuffs without which life cannot be supported, need their pickles and spices."[28]

Augustine's second metaphor is healing. Augustine, like the Sophists, imagined teaching as the treating of illness. The ultimate success of the treatment depends on how the body responds. More closely for Augustine than for the Sophists, this metaphor flows directly from his view of the humans' wounded condition. Plato complained about the limitation of a medical metaphor because it presupposed knowledge of a standard of health. Augustine does not assume that some of us are healthy and some are sick. All teaching is therapy, not the recovery of a previously healthy condition but the stemming of disease. Peter Brown writes that "the amazing Book Ten of the *Confessions* is not the affirmation of a cured man; it is the self-portrait of a convalescent."[29]

This attitude may seem to be negative and depressing but Augustine is just trying to be realistic and also sympathetic to human weakness. The human situation is not merely ignorance that can be overcome with knowledge delivered by a skilled lecturer. On that score Augustine agrees with Socrates. But the way out of illusion requires healing by the medicine of friendship and love, accompanied at times by harsher tasting medicines of physical coercion.

Augustine's ultimate earthy image for teaching is spreading manure. I cited Protagoras' use of this metaphor and his careful distinctions of how and when the manure is to be applied. This metaphor may seem too vulgar for a description of teaching-learning but it is an appropriate relative to teaching as feeding. Humans are prone to forget or to deny that they live in a cycle of birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth. As billions of humans now inherit the earth they are being forced to learn that excrement from living creatures cannot and ought not to be hidden away. It is integral to the cycle of life. Avoiding the subject of what to do with what is inaccurately called waste, leads to ecological and health disasters, starting with the pollution of drinking water.

Augustine does not shy away from using earthy metaphors in his lofty sermons on the soul's condition: "Dung heaped on a field brings forth shining wheat; penance heaped on the soul brings forth virtue."[30] Out of seemingly unlikely resources the teacher has to fashion growth, nourishment, and integration of life.

Finally, there is one metaphor, ascent, that is so pervasive it may not be recognized as a figure of speech at all. "Higher is better" is deeply embedded in language. The assumption is that the movement toward truth and goodness is by way of ascent. Plato is not the only source for this imagery but he strongly reinforced in philosophy what may be a primitive feeling of looking skyward for help. The image is closely tied to a belief that in the experienced duality of human life the better and higher half has to keep down the lower half. Salvation is *from* the body not *of* the body. The spirit must eventually shed the body in order to ascend above.

Jewish religion challenged this image by looking for the meaning of life in history, community, place, and memory. Sometimes this Jewish view of history is said to be horizontal as opposed to vertical but that can be just a ninety degree change of vector. A more accurate contrast would be three-dimensional imagery as opposed to two dimensional pictures. Space and time are easily represented with images on paper. Place and memory cannot be so imagined. Place is where a community has sunk roots, where babies have been born and the dead are buried. Memory swirls backward, downward, and inward. There are no "high gods" in Jewish religion; instead there is the God of our fathers who promises to be with the people in the future. The truth is to be found in the depths of the present.

The Christian movement took over most of the Jewish imagery that gives strong affirmation of the human body and its place in the physical world. The Christian message proclaimed God to be "incarnate." Like most religious reform movements, Christianity tried to simplify and interiorize religious practice. God is to be found in the movement of the heart; God is with us, God is within us. The sacramental life is a lifelong series of outward expressions of interior grace. The body is not to be escaped from but to be transformed, in St. Paul's paradoxical phrase, into a "spiritual body."

Christianity's problem from the start was how to convey this complex understanding of community, body, and memory. Without a long, disciplined education for its members, Christian religion tends to shed its Jewish roots and become a religion in which God appears in human disguise to leave a secret formula for the good life. The performance of magic-like rituals under the watchful eyes of those who preserve the formula promises a salvation of the soul rather than a transforming of the bodily self.

Augustine was a meeting point of these two tendencies inherent in Christianity. He had first been attracted to Manichaeism with its dualism of body and spirit, evil and good. His escape was through Neoplatonism with its chain of being from the highest to the lowest. The suggestion in Plato's *Republic* (509b) that there is a "beyond being," which is the source of truth and being, found its philosophical expression in Plotinus' One who is the source of all. The One overflows into mind, and the world soul participates in the divine ideas.

The Neoplatonic language was almost irresistible for Christian writers who found the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation present in Neoplatonic philosophy. In Plotinus' Neoplatonism there is movement inward as well as upward, but it was the latter that attracted philosophers for more than a thousand years.[31] In the crudest application of this image, the world becomes a ladder of ascent to a realm above matter, community, and history.

Some of Augustine's best known phrases refer to God being in the interior of the soul, "deeper than my most inward being." "God was closer to me than I was to myself."[32] This language cannot be understood as literally referring to physical space. What can he mean by saying that he was "outside of himself," or saying that God was within but he was far away? A modern reader does not have much trouble understanding the paradoxical image as a psychological feeling. A person "comes to his senses" in the experience of feeling he has not been "present to himself," lost among trivial concerns.

The journey to the truth therefore leads inward. "In the inward man dwells truth." [33] I earlier contrasted Augustine's inwardness to Descartes' isolation from an external world. Augustine's autobiography is vibrant with details of his world. The process of teaching-learning would seem central to this kind of inward journey. The teacher working with external factors awakens an internal response.

Augustine never left behind a philosophical assumption that the truth is "above" and therefore the movement inward is a first step on the way upward. God speaks to "that part of him by which he rises above the lower parts he has in common with the beasts."[34] Not only Neoplatonism but a trace of Manichaeism remains in the disparagement of the human body. A wise man, according to Augustine, has to rise above material things to "an ineffable reality grasped by the mind alone."[35] Jesus had said "my kingdom is not of this world"; Plato had said the same of his ideas.[36]

These two images – the interaction of outer/inner and the ascension from inner to above – are not complementary. The second overrides the first. The interior life is threatened by the glitter of the external world but it is also threatened by a world imagined above community, place, and history. When the interior life is itself transcended and God is found beyond the mere material world, there is no longer a need for the soul to be nourished by interaction with friends, memories, and bodily experiences. Caught within a lifelong struggle for the integrity of his life, Augustine's failure to notice this conflict of imagery is not very surprising.

What is surprising is that commentators on Augustine do not seem to notice the conflict. They follow Augustine in assuming that "the road from the lower to the higher, the crucial shift in direction, passes through attending to ourselves as *inner*."[37] The journey is assumed to be from outer to inner, and then inner to above. Such a movement is not a cyclical journey constantly re-nourished by teaching-learning. It is a straight line that includes a ninety-degree angle. The image of up and down may seem to be a minor issue but I think it explains a conflict in Augustine's attitude to teaching-learning. Despite a rich flow of material on teaching and some good practical advice, he ends with a denial that so-called teachers teach at all.

Christian Teaching

The two main writings I will comment on were written, or at least begun, at about the same time. *The Teacher* was written in 393; *Christian Teaching* was begun in 397 and Augustine worked on it for three decades. With its positive assumptions about teaching, *Christian Teaching* might seem to provide Augustine's more mature and considered opinion. However, in *Reconsiderations*, written at the very end of his life, Augustine strongly endorses his negative attitude toward teachers in *The Teacher*.

Christian Teaching is a treatise addressed to preachers. For many people today, that fact would exclude it from a book about teaching. However, Augustine clearly envisions the preacher as needing to engage in an interaction with the minds of his hearers. He is not describing a man in elaborate dress declaiming from a high pulpit. As a preacher, Augustine dressed simply, sat in his chair (*cathedra)* facing at eye level the standing congregation.[38] He did assume that behind the individual preacher was the church, the mother teacher.[39] Nonetheless, the preacher was not a mechanical transmitter of preformed truths. The preacher had to engage in a performance art in order to enter the minds of his hearers and evoke a response.[40]

Christian Teaching consists of four books, the first three on teachings or the content to be taught. The fourth book is about how to teach (including preach) and is filled with down-to-earth suggestions based on his own experience. Augustine also draws upon the tradition of Roman rhetoricians. Augustine quotes Cicero approvingly and uses a framework largely supplied by Cicero. He does retain an ambivalent attitude toward the techniques of the rhetorician. Augustine has been called an anti-rhetorical rhetorician, freely drawing from the tradition while downplaying rhetoric's long-term importance. Augustine plays a significant role in undermining the meaning of the term rhetoric. Despite some twentieth-century efforts to rehabilitate the word rhetoric, a "rhetorical question" is still taken to be a question that does not invite an answer and "mere rhetoric" is a way of dismissing a person's argument.[41]

Whatever the philosophical limitations of rhetoric might be, the teacher can learn much from the practices of the rhetorician. Augustine frames the discussion around three styles of preaching: grand, moderate, and plain. A teacher might use all three styles depending on the situation of the hearers and the purpose of the teaching. Cicero said "that man will be eloquent who can talk about minor matters calmly, about middling ones moderately, about grand matters grandly."[42] Augustine combines that statement with another of Cicero's that "to be eloquent you should speak so as to teach, to delight, to sway"[43](IV. 12).

Augustine correlates a simple style with the wish to achieve understanding, a moderate style with the desire to delight an audience, and a grand style with the intention to produce action. In the simple style, a teacher persuades his hearers that what he is saying is true; in the grand style he persuades them to do the things they know should be done but are not being done (IV. 25.55). These two styles have a clear and legitimate basis depending on the setting. Today we would associate a calm style intent on understanding a text to belong in the classroom; a grand style trying to initiate action belongs in the church pulpit or at the politician's podium. Augustine is skeptical of the second style – the intention to delight an audience. Today one might sympathize with his fear of turning teaching into amusement, living as we do in a world in which "entertainment" means endless trivial distractions.

Despite his negative attitude to a moderate style operating on its own, Augustine does acknowledge its necessary part in a teacher's striving for understanding. "After all we do not want even what we say calmly and plainly to bore people and thus we want it to be heard not only intelligently but also gladly, with pleasure"(IV.26.56).

The right style is needed when the aim is to move the audience to act. In that situation, he thinks a simple style is inadequate and a moderate style is misleading (IV.13.29). Only a grand eloquence will do the job when action is called for. Perhaps unwittingly, Augustine helped to create the stereotypical preacher thundering from on high, denouncing sin, and demanding submission to the word of God. Most people today are steeled against the loud claims of television ads and other preaching. Perhaps plain speech laced with a touch of pleasurable irony is more effective in today's world than is Ciceronian grand rhetoric.

A teacher needs a clear, external sign that the hearer accepts teaching that aims at action. If one sets foot in a Christian church it is presumed that one is willing to be moved to action by the speaker. In contrast, crossing the threshold of a classroom is not a sign of such an agreement.

Instead, one agrees to having one's words examined but not to being told to go forth and change the world. Today's reader might wish that Augustine had been clearer on this distinction among venues, instead of addressing teaching from the standpoint of preaching. Still, his view of teaching is open to distinctions among modes of teaching and different settings for different kinds of teaching.

Although Augustine might have to rethink his three styles were he alive today, his fundamental principle remains true. Depending on whether the purpose of teaching is either understanding or action, one has to know the audience and use a variety of linguistic forms. Augustine says that a person teaching "will avoid all words that do not in fact teach" and use words that are understood, even "use words that are not so correct, provided the matter itself is being taught and learned correctly"(IV.10.24).

He thinks that the words of the teacher cannot be separated from the teacher's life and good example. "For to be listened to with obedient compliance, whatever the grandeur of the speaker's utterances, his manner of life carries more weight (IV.27.59). For Augustine, the final word is always love rather than knowledge. His words on teaching link back to everything he said about friendship. The preacher as well as other teachers have to be joined to the learner by a bond of love.[44]

Augustine's view of teaching in *Christian Teaching* is an interaction between teacher and learner. The teacher represents a community and embodies a tradition. The learner's life has already been shaped by innumerable factors. Teaching does not begin with a learner's blank slate on which the teacher can inscribe true knowledge. The teacher has to evoke a relation of loving trust so as to enter mind and heart. The main question is: Do you understand? If not, the burden is on the teacher to find the words that link into the hearer's previous understanding.

How does it come about, then, that he ends with a negative view of teaching in *The Teacher*? I think one gets a glimpse of that conclusion in a passage of *Christian Teaching* where he comments on St. Paul: "After saying that teachers are made by the working of the Holy Spirit, he [Paul] goes on to instruct them about what and how to teach." While Paul does not think that the function of human teachers is cancelled out, yet "not one who plants or waters but God gives growth"(I Cor 3:7). Augustine adds that nobody can correctly learn unless "he has been made docile to God by God" (IV.16.33). That still sounds as if humans are teachers while God supplies the potential in the learners.

Augustine, however, then employs a comparison to medicine in a way that short-circuits teaching. "Medicines for the body, after all, only do good to those whose health is restored by God and he can cure without them while they cannot do so without him." (IV.16.33). Notice that in his comparing healing to God's action with or without a human physician Augustine has left out the healing potential of the human body itself. In Augustine's version of the relations between physician, medicine, illness, body, and God, the interaction between the physician and the healing possibilities present in the body is subverted. God can cure without medicine, and learning can occur without human teachers.

The Teacher

Augustine's treatise, *The Teacher*, begins with a celebration of teaching and the centrality of dialogue to teaching. However, the affirmation of teaching through dialogue is immediately qualified and the dialogue ends with sour notes on the role of teachers. The dialogue is between Augustine and his sixteen-year-old son, Adeodatus, who died a year later. His serving as interlocutor in the dialogue may explain some of the contents and direction of the work. Garry

Wills notes that “Augustine proudly shows off his son’s prowess in *The Teacher* while assuring us that he did not teach the boy. Boys learn with God’s own inborn instruments.”[45]

The most compact summary of the dialogue is by Augustine himself at the end of his life. In *Reconsiderations* (1:12), he writes: “I wrote a work entitled *The Teacher*. There it is debated, sought and found that there is no teacher giving knowledge to man other than God. This also is in accordance with what is written by the Evangelist: ‘Your teacher, Christ, is unique’.”

Augustine’s view of teaching is here traced to Jesus’ words in the Gospel of Matthew that there is no teacher except God. What Augustine derives from this New Testament passage is consistent with his Platonic assumptions. Whether his philosophy led to his interpretation of scripture or vice versa is not clear. In either case, he has taken a political dispute in the gospel as a basis for a philosophy of teaching.

Contemporary exegetes of the passage in question agree that Jesus is speaking to an inner circle of his followers. He is warning them, the future leaders of the Christian community, to avoid the trappings and honorific titles current at the time. The leaders of the Jewish community were called “rabbis,” an Aramaic term meaning teacher. Jesus was himself commonly identified as a rabbi. But when the Jesus movement had separated from the synagogue, rabbi as a title for Jesus was played down. “To the Christian disciples of the first century the conception of Jesus as a rabbi was self-evident, to the Christian disciples of the second century it was embarrassing, to the Christian disciples of the third century and beyond it was obscure.”[46]

Matthew was writing his Gospel at the time of conflict between the leaders of the synagogue and the emerging church.[47] He has Jesus forbid his disciples to take on the title of a Jewish leader, “teacher.” As sometimes happens in the New Testament, the statement is made twice in chapter twenty-three, once with the Aramaic word, and once with the Greek:

“You are not to be called teacher (rabbi), for you have one teacher, and you are all students.”(v. 8)

“And call no one your father on earth, for you have one father – the one in heaven” (v. 9)

“Nor are you to be called teacher (*didaskalos*) for you have one teacher, the Messiah. (v. 10).

Between the two warnings against the title of teacher, Jesus says that they should also avoid the title “father.” It seems unlikely that he was speaking of biological fatherhood. Like teacher, the term father could be an honorific title to express the superior status of a religious leader. Jesus wanted his disciples to be as “servants” within the community and not to be lifted above the community.

The dialogue’s opening exchanges establish teaching and learning as reciprocal activities (1.1.5 – 1.2.45). Augustine’s first question is to ask what we seek to accomplish when we speak. Adeodatus’ reply is “either to teach or to learn.” Augustine then says that he understands that by speaking we may wish to teach, but how can it be to learn. Adeodatus’ clever reply is that we learn by asking questions. Augustine’s paradoxical reply to that is: “Even then I think we want only to teach. I ask you: do you question someone for any reason other than to teach him what you want [to hear]”?

Augustine then distinguishes between speaking “undertaken for either the sake of teaching or reminding.” Adeodatus in reply says he is confused by the fact that prayer is speaking but we do not teach God or remind God. To that, Augustine answers that God is to be sought in the “inner man.” The dialogue then proceeds to a discussion of teaching with words in contrast to “the things themselves by means of the words.” The human teacher has only words to remind us of the reality within. Learning is not from the sign but from the reality.

By making language only an instrument to signify things and ideas, Augustine makes teaching to be secondary to an examination of the truth within the soul. At best, teaching is a reminder but it is not a reminder of truth but a reminder to look within. The treatise ends with a frontal attack on the school teachers of the time. “Who is so foolishly curious as to send his son to school to learn what the teacher thinks”? (14.45.5). After the teachers “have explained by means of words the disciplines they profess to teach,” the students have to look upon the “Inner Truth,” according to their abilities. “That is therefore the point at which they learn”(14.45.10).

A dialogue that seems to begin by joining teaching and learning as a single process ends with their complete separation. “Men are mistaken in calling persons ‘teachers’ who are not…they suppose that they have learned externally from the one who prompted them”(14.45.15). Augustine concludes that we can “begin to understand how truly it has been written on divine authority that we should not call anyone on earth our teacher, since there is one in heaven Who is the Teacher of us all (14.45.20). Adeodatus then sums up what he has learned, “that words do nothing but prompt man to learn….It is He alone who teaches us whether what is said is true”(14.45.30).[48]

Augustine’s denial that so-called teachers really teach has had a powerful effect. In most religious traditions, the founder is called teacher and what is passed on by the tradition is teachings. The Greek “fathers of the church,” such as Clement of Alexandria or Gregory of Nyssa, refer to Jesus as teacher. By Augustine’s time, Jesus as teacher had been overshadowed by Christ as savior. The Christian life became skewed away from teaching-learning. The need for intellectually grappling with the paradoxical teachings in the New Testament became secondary to performing rituals for grace and redemption.

Augustine’s separation of teaching and learning, together with subsequent Christian ambivalence about teaching, fed into a modern skepticism about the role of teaching. Augustine’s attitude is a comfortable fit with the twentieth century’s attention to learning together with its lack of interest in teaching. As in Augustine’s view, teachers have been seen at best as an added factor in learning; at worst they are seen as an obstacle to learning. The truth is found in the “inner man,” although in modern times Augustine’s God was replaced by the psychological drive to know. Students are thought to have a natural capacity for learning. Teaching is seen to be mainly a process of getting out of the way or one of using techniques that facilitate the student’s own process of self-learning. God was the only teacher left by Augustine. If God is found silent, then no one can teach anyone anything.

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas in his treatise *Truth* is directly concerned with Augustine’s denial that teachers really teach. In Question Eleven he asks: “Can a man or only God teach and be called Teacher”? His answer is a resounding yes but as usual he goes about getting to an answer by carefully looking at all sides of the issue.[49]

In the asking of the question he has already conceded that Augustine is correct that God is the ultimate teacher. His concern is Augustine’s denial that a man is a teacher. Thomas’ view of the human teacher is the opposite of Augustine’s. But someone who quickly reads Thomas’ text without some background can easily miss that fact because Thomas is careful to avoid a direct contradiction. Augustine’s position is that God is the ultimate teacher; therefore no one else is. Thomas’ position is that God is the ultimate teacher; therefore everyone and everything can be a teacher.

I note first some of the principles in Thomas’ philosophy that place him at odds with Augustine on the matter of teaching.[50] Thomas created a philosophical synthesis of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian traditions. The Neoplatonic element came through a writer called Dionysius whom Thomas cites seventeen-hundred times, second only to Aristotle. The Neoplatonic framework lifts Aristotle's distinctions of act and potency from the physical to a metaphysical level. Every question is raised to the level of "being." Thomas composed the first metaphysics of knowledge in which to know is not simply a "remedy of nature" but the "presence of being to itself."

His philosophy is one of participation in "to be" (there is no simple way in English to distinguish "a being" from the "act of be-ing"). That means, for example, that a person not only has a nature which specifies *what* he or she is; a person has an act of being that distinguishes *who* he or she is. A distinction between nature and person came out of theological disputes in the early church but Thomas puts the distinction to good use in philosophy.

Augustine has human knowledge as a participation in divine ideas; Thomas has human knowledge participate in divine knowing. That makes a difference in the understanding of teaching. Humans and other creatures participate in divine creativity, including teaching. God works through what Thomas calls "secondary causes." There is no competition, no zero-sum game, in the relation of divine and human causality. A human teacher is not the ultimate source of truth but is nonetheless a genuine teacher.

Related to this metaphysical principle of participation is Thomas' resistance to the dominance of up/down imagery. In Augustine, the movement to the inner is a first rung on a ladder leading upward. Knowledge is a search for the pure idea untarnished by a material element and the world of sensual experience. In contrast, Thomas' image of the creaturely journey is movement out, around, and back. In one of his early works, he writes: "In the emergence of creatures from their first source is revealed a kind of circulation in which all things return as to their end, back to the very place from which they had their origin."[51]

In Thomas' philosophy, a person exists only in the integrity of body and soul. Spirit did not have an original fall into matter. Earth is the home of the humans; human knowledge is never removed from the experience of the senses. Human knowledge is a constant circling outward and a return to the intellect. Understanding takes place in the passive or receptive intelligence, always fed by the "active intellect's" return to sensual material. Knowledge is not the possession of ideas but the presence to oneself mediated by a constant dialogue with all creation.

In the dialectical method that Thomas uses he begins with difficulties or objections to the position that he is about to take. After he states a view contrary to the objections, he replies to each of the previously stated objections. In Question Eleven of *Truth*, he lists eighteen objections to calling a man a teacher. Most of the eighteen have some reference to Augustine but I will concentrate on those in which Augustine is explicitly named. In each of these points of disagreement, Thomas does his best to avoid a direct contradiction.

The first objection cites the key scriptural text that Augustine used "do not call anyone a teacher." Thomas' response is in accord with the modern exegesis of the verse, namely, that the warning is to Jesus' disciples not to take on the titles and trappings of high office.

The second objection cites Augustine's opinion that knowledge cannot be imparted through signs. Thomas agrees that the signs do not impart knowledge but maintains that "principles" of knowledge are proposed by signs. A teacher employing the signs of language does not convey knowledge but does evoke the principles of knowing.

After the third through seventh objections that obliquely refer to Augustine, objection eight quotes Augustine: "God alone, who teaches truth on earth, holds the teacher's chair in heaven, but to this chair another man has the relation which a farmer has to a tree." Thomas' response is typical of the way he expresses disagreement with Augustine. He simply says that "when Augustine proves that only God teaches, he does not intend to exclude man from teaching exteriorly, but intends to say that God alone teaches interiorly." Such a distinction is not one that Augustine clearly intends. At least in *The Teacher* he excludes external teachers, affirming that teaching takes place only interiorly.

Thomas could have questioned Augustine's interpretation of this agricultural metaphor which has been fruitfully used by numerous writers on teaching. The farmer's cultivation of the tree is not in competition with God's creation of the tree. A teacher "cultivates" a student according to the precise conditions in the environment and the readiness of the potential learner. The teacher does not only "prepare the mind" but acts on the mind to draw a response.

Objection ten has another quotation from Augustine that wisdom cannot be changed. This objection is easily dismissed by pointing out the difference between divine and human wisdom. Objections thirteen and fifteen also refer to Augustine by name; the former refers to certitude not being attainable by signs, the latter says that only God can give form to the human mind. Both objections are answered by continuing the theme that the creative power of God invites rather than excludes human activity to realize or actualize the capacities of living creatures.

After this long list of objections, most of them Augustinian in character, it is startling to find Thomas invoke Augustine for the contrary view. One might suspect it is an ironic joke to quote Augustine in support of the thesis that man as well as God can be called a teacher. But in typical dialectical fashion, Thomas is acknowledging that there is more than one side to Augustine and that, despite his sometimes dismissing human teachers, Augustine wrote many things supportive of human teaching and provided an example of a teacher by his own life.

Thomas cites a text in which Augustine claims that before the Fall water was abundant in earthly fountains; after the fall, water comes from clouds and needs gathering by human effort. The logic here is not entirely clear but Thomas draws out Augustine's distinction to mean that "at least since sin came into the world, man is taught by man." Thomas probably believed that teaching would have been part of creation even before the Fall. He had described the vocation of a Christian teacher in his inaugural address at the University of Paris using the text which Augustine had in mind: "Watering the earth from his things above, the earth will be filled with the fruits of your work"(Psalm 103).[52]

At this point in the dialectical back and forth, Thomas shifts into his own language to affirm human teachers and teaching. He cites Aristotle as holding a middle position between knowledge as coming from a power beyond the human individual and knowledge as pre-established in human nature. For Thomas, "certain seeds of knowledge pre-exist in us"; these are principles of knowledge that require external actualizing.

Although Thomas develops his view in Aristotelian language, one can find an echo of Plato's middle works, such as *Meno* and *Gorgias*, in the need for a state between ignorance and knowledge. In the *Republic* the learner has a capacity for knowledge and the teacher has only to turn him or her toward the light. For Thomas, the truth is found not mainly in the image of light but in the word spoken and responded to. Thus, the teacher has a more active role of stimulating the learner's capacities through bodily signs.

Thomas introduces a helpful distinction between two kinds of capacities or "potencies." Paradoxically, one can speak of passive potency as opposed to active potency. His example of passive potency is unfortunately unintelligible to a modern reader ("the internal principle does not have sufficient power…when air becomes fire"), A contemporary example of what he means would be the gasoline tank of an automobile in contrast to the engine. Both have capacities but the gas tank's capacity is simply empty space while the engine has an "active power" which only needs to be put into use.

Thomas' own metaphor for active power is the human being's natural power of healing. The external agent helps the internal agent, providing the means by which it enters into act. "Thus, in healing, the physician assists nature, which is the principal agent, by strengthening nature and prescribing medicines, which nature uses as instruments for healing." Despite the chasm which separates thirteenth- from twenty-first-century medicine, Thomas' principle of healing holds up remarkably well.

The analogy between teacher and physician remains one of the most helpful comparisons for understanding teaching-learning. Thomas summarizes: "Just as the physician is said to heal a patient through the activity of nature, so a man is said to cause knowledge in another through the activity of the learner's own natural reason and this is teaching. So, one is said to teach another and be his teacher."

Thomas Aquinas provides a modest but realistic place for teachers. Teaching is a humble activity, central to human beings and extending to at least every living being. The human teacher remains beholden to natural powers, listening and responding to learning situations. The teacher can only perform certain movements, none of which is guaranteed to bring about learning in the student. David Burrell, a commentator on Thomas, writes: "The temptation consists in taking credit not for the movements we may in fact have made, but the action we are prone to describe in terms far more inclusive than mere movements."[53]

Burrell goes on to link this distinction between movement and action both to Wittgenstein in twentieth-century philosophy and to Hindu mysticism. A human teacher has to try his or her best and then let go. The "fruits of the action" are not his or hers to claim. The teacher cannot be puffed up if the student succeeds nor despair if the student fails.

Chapter Three: Rousseau: Teaching Emile and Sophie

If one could choose only a single book to understand today's politics, ethics, religion, education, and sexual issues, a good choice would be Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book with the English title *Emile or On Education*.[1] But when a book is thought to be obvious in meaning, people freely cite it without bothering to read it. The frequent references that are made to Rousseau's book assume that the message of the book is obvious.

Usually what is obvious is that the person either has not read the book or perhaps has read the first five pages and decided that further effort was not needed. Rousseau's catchy epigrams ("I hate books") serve him badly when it comes to understanding the book as a whole. The problem with this book starts with the title which is nearly always shortened to *Emile*. A better title would be what was used for the English translation in Rousseau's time: *Emilius and Sophie*.[2]

Emile seems mainly confined these days to schools of education where parts of it are assigned reading. While Rousseau's influence on politics since the eighteenth century is analyzed and debated in a steady flow of scholarly literature, the educational theory that was integral to his political thinking is usually summarized in a few sentences. And what is assumed to be his educational theory makes no sense at all in relation to his political theory.

A first fact to notice about *Emile* is that it was published in 1762, the same year as his *Social Contract*. Like Plato in the *Republic*, a work that Rousseau imitates and criticizes, Rousseau saw politics and education as a single project. Unlike Plato, Rousseau split the project into two books. The typical reference to *Emile* assumes that it is an apolitical book, which is concerned with letting a student grow up in a natural state. If the child is allowed to follow where nature leads, the result will be an "autonomous individual." Learning is all, teaching is suspect, a message that has played well throughout the last century in the United States.

Emile has thus been credited with, or blamed for, the origin of "progressive education." That phrase itself suffers from stereotypes associated with it, a further complication in understanding *Emile*. What many people know about "progressive education" is that it is connected to John Dewey. Like Plato and Rousseau, Dewey saw education and politics as intimately related but the popular understanding of Dewey's educational philosophy makes it apolitical.

One reason, then, why *Emile* is not read is the assumption that Dewey says the same thing, but in twentieth-century English. Why bother with eighteenth-century French? Actually, Rousseau and Dewey seriously disagree in their educational theories.

At the center of *Emile* is the conflict between the individual and the social. Although Rousseau helped to invent the modern meanings of society and social, he uses the words negatively throughout *Emile*. In contrast, Dewey's insistence from beginning to end is that the individual is social and that education is always a social affair. Dewey is not Rousseau's successor in the twentieth century; Piaget and Freud are.

Writing in 1762, Rousseau thought of the social as conformist in character, an unwarranted restriction on the individual. His successors, Freud and Piaget, saw a conflict between the hidden world of the child and the social requirements of adult life. In Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, the conflict was inescapable and permanent. Rousseau did look forward to the overthrow of monarchy and a new kind of society in which the will of one would be the will of all. Dewey distrusted anything which sounded that mystical but he did think that a revolution had occurred since 1762; it had ushered in the United States of America.

It is not clear how carefully Dewey ever read *Emile*. He does give Rousseau five pages in *Democracy and Education* and the first chapter of *Schools of Tomorrow*. Elsewhere, Dewey, like other writers, is prone to simplistic summaries of *Emile*. In a 1934 essay, Dewey writes: "Some of the early educational philosophers, like Rousseau and his followers, made much use of the analogy of the development of a seed into the full grown plant. They used this analogy to draw the conclusion that in human beings there are latent capacities which, if they are only left to themselves, will ultimately flower and bear fruit. So they framed the notion of natural development as opposed to a directed growth which they regarded as artificial."[3]

I presume that grammatically Dewey meant "such as" rather than "like," that he is referring to Rousseau himself as well as his followers. What Dewey says may be true of the followers but the point that Dewey makes of natural development is one that Rousseau makes (that a plant has to interact with the environment in a direction that nurtures its growth in a *proper* direction) (39). The irony in Dewey's criticism of Rousseau is that what he accuses Rousseau of holding is precisely what Dewey is still accused of, that is, advocating that children grow up according to nature without adult direction. A Herblock cartoon captured the popular image: A group of children are saying to their teacher: "Do we always have to do what we want to do"? The attack on Dewey was unfair and I would think that by the 1930s Dewey himself would have been careful not to attribute to Rousseau a simplistic understanding of education as natural.

It is the usual fate of complicated theories to get reduced to slogans and two-sentence summaries. Most people are too busy with the necessities of life to read the stylish eighteenth-century prose of Rousseau or the not so stylish English of Dewey. But one expects better of historians, philosophers, and professional educators. Before I turn to the text of *Emile,* I cite one particularly surprising example of how *Emile* is treated. Diane Ravitch is a noted historian of education and a severe critic of sloppy educational reforms. Her book, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reform*, is a 500 page criticism of twentieth-century attempts at reform in education. Only a few writers escape her biting attack.[4]

Ravitch finds one culprit in back of all the bad ideas of progressive reform: "The seminal text of the child-centered movement was Rousseau's *Emile*. Since its publication in 1762, it has inspired educational reformers in Europe and the United States who sought alternatives to routinized and formal schooling."[5] In *Left Back*, Ravitch has three paragraphs on Rousseau, only the second of which summarizes *Emile*. Granted that *Left Back* is about twentieth-century education, but if *Emile* is "the seminal text," one would expect at least a chapter about the book. Furthermore, the three footnotes in the three paragraphs are not to the complete text of *Emile* but to a book with selections from Rousseau's text.[6]

Here is Ravitch's complete summary of *Emile*: "Rousseau opposed teaching either habits or lessons: his pupil would learn by experience, and the role of the tutor was to 'do nothing and let nothing be done,' so that the child would learn whatever he needed to know without instruction, keeping 'the mind inactive as long as possible.' His pupil would never learn anything 'by heart,' nor would he learn to read until he needed to. 'Reading is the greatest plague of childhood,' wrote Rousseau. 'Emile at the age of twelve will scarcely know what a book is.' Rousseau's strategy for learning was to rely on his pupil's needs and interests: 'If nothing is exacted from children by way of obedience it follows that they will only learn what they feel to be of actual and present advantage, either because they like it, or because it is of use to them. Otherwise, what motive would they have for learning? Present interest: that is the great impulse, the only one that leads sure and far'."[7]

Ravitch's carefully selected phrases from *Emile* are nearly all from very early in the book. In light of what the whole book is about, many of the statements are utterly misleading. By leaving out most of the book, there is no effort to understand what Rousseau argues is the direction or the purpose of education. My intention in what follows is not to puzzle out some hidden message, but simply to respect all of the book's contents.

The Book

The book *Emile* consists of five books that chart the educational development of the boy named Emile. Isolated phrases and sentences about the teaching-learning of Emile are unclear or misleading unless they are correlated with his age. Rousseau begins each of the five books with a precise noting of Emile's age. That is a practice that one might expect in any attempt to describe the overall process of education. However, many writers, including John Dewey, simply refer to the student. And very often "student" and "child" are used synonymously.

Rousseau was among the first writers on education to think developmentally. Human development begins no later than birth and continues until death. Rousseau was way ahead of his time on this point: "Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given by education" (38). "The education of man begins at his birth; before speaking, before understanding, he is already learning" (62). To this day, most uses of "education," despite talk about "lifelong learning," refer to elementary and secondary school.

Attacks on *Emile* mostly employ quotations from book one; occasionally the writer gets to book two. Actually, book one made important contributions to the way young children have been subsequently treated. He opposed the practice of swaddling and the severe restriction of the child's movement, practices common until the eighteenth century (43). Rousseau's plea for the liberation of the infant from unhealthy constraints is the backdrop for people such as Benjamin Spock in the twentieth century. But it is crucial always to keep in mind that in book one Rousseau is speaking of the education of the *infans* (77). To assume that what Rousseau says of a six-month-old child is his educational strategy for a sixteen-year-old student indicates that one has not read the book.

Even in books one and two, the child is not left on its own but is carefully monitored by the teacher. At the beginning of book one, Rousseau says there are three kinds of education: by nature, by things, and by men. Only the last is under our control. Nature, or the inner drive of the pupil, has to be respected by the human teacher. Early education is "negative," meaning that the tutor has to set up a protective barrier around the child's nature so that it is not distracted by such things as politics, sex, and religion (93). If the child's early education is not distorted, reason will be able to govern later.

The sharpest contrast in Rousseau's theory of education is between the useless and the practical (68). The warnings to a teacher are not to impose anything on the pupil before its usefulness is evident. His dismissal of reading is aimed at attempts to get the child to read before the child sees any usefulness to it (117). If one relies on isolated phrases or sentences, it can seem that Rousseau is forbidding the tutor to teach but it is the attempt on the teacher's part to arbitrarily intervene that Rousseau opposes. "It is not by teaching the names of these virtues that one teaches them to children. It is by making the children taste them without knowing what they are" (131).

Rousseau's view of "habit" can be confusing. He says "that the only habit that a child should be allowed to contract is none" but he advocates in the same paragraph "leaving natural habit to his body" (63). Toward the end of book two, Rousseau says of Emile, "he does not know what routine, custom or habit is" (160). But in a footnote Rousseau adds: "The only habit useful to children is to subject themselves without difficulty to the necessities of things, and the only habit useful to men is to subject themselves without difficulty to reason. Every other habit is vice." His view of habit here is similar to the medieval notion that natural powers require habits for their smooth execution. Habits that follow from nature are virtues; habits that do violence to nature are vices.

For the child to submit himself "without difficulty to the necessities of things" may suggest that there is no effort, hardship or pain involved. But there are aspects of Emile's early education which are harsh. Rousseau wants his boy to become manly not effeminate. Emile needs training, for example, in listening to gun shots: "I accustom him to rifle shots, to grapeshot explosions, to canons, to the most terrible detonations" (64). Like Plato, Rousseau has nothing good to say of physicians. He prefers to "let the child know how to be sick" (55). The body has to be hardened by exposure to the cold and other inclement weather. If the child breaks a window in his room, he should learn to cope with the result. "It is better that he have a cold than that he be crazy" (100).

The role of punishment is a good indicator of Rousseau's overall theory of childhood education. In book two, he says: "Inflict no kind of punishment on him, for he does not know what it is to be at fault" (93). The prohibition is clarified by a later statement that "punishment as punishment must never be inflicted on children, but it should always happen to them as a natural consequence of their bad action" (101). Still, a simplistic picture of just letting nature direct the child is not what happens when the child is out of line. In one example, a child in Rousseau's care several times disturbs his sleep. When general admonitions do not work, Rousseau locks the child in his room and lets him holler until he is exhausted and falls asleep (123).

The most striking example of how punishment is to be exercised according to nature is found in a footnote concerning corporal punishment. Rousseau and John Locke were opponents of physically beating the child, a common practice until the eighteenth century.[8] Both authors, however, still accepted the need for sometimes hitting the child. "If he seriously dares to strike someone, be it his lackey, be it the hangman, arrange that his blows be always returned with interest in such a way as to destroy the desire to revert to the practice" (97). One of the things that nature teaches is that if you hit human beings they are likely to hit back. If the blows are "returned with interest," the child will learn not to do that again.

The nearly universal practice of quoting only from books one and two fits the stereotype of *Emile* but it is especially misleading because of the reversal of method in book three. The last three books that do not fit the stereotype are therefore dismissed or not read at all. An early manuscript of *Emile* described birth to age twelve as the age of nature; the period after age twelve was called the age of reason. The full emergence of reason at about age twelve means an entirely different approach to teaching. "This is, therefore, the time of labors, of instruction, of study. And note that it is not I who arbitrarily make this choice. It is nature itself that points to it" (166). Thus, the teacher following nature after age twelve means that he or she has to rely on reason and reasoning.

A sharp contrast of nature and reason by Rousseau could be misunderstood. For Rousseau, reason does not replace nature; instead, reason is an element of (human) nature but it emerges slowly and in stages (as Piaget showed). Rousseau first ridicules John Locke for saying that one should reason with six-year-olds: "I see nothing more stupid than these children who have been reasoned with so much (89). Later, he qualifies that criticism by admitting that six-year-olds "can reason very well in everything they know that relates to their immediate and palpable interest" (108).

Before age twelve the child should be shielded as far as possible from the distractions of society. The task for the teacher is to lose time; learning has to be leisurely as the child interacts with the physical environment. By age twelve, the student has a clear sense of self and a control of his emotional life. Now the task of the teacher is to use time efficiently so that Emile can rapidly learn what he has to know about history, politics, science, religion, sex, and how to practice a useful trade.

As the student gets older, the teacher continues to manipulate the physical environment, but now plenty of verbal instruction is needed: “Up to now our care has only been a child’s game. It takes on true importance only at present. This period, when ordinary educations end, is properly the one when ours ought to begin”(212). Anyone who has read that passage would not quote from books one and two as a summary of Rousseau’s view of education.

Emile’s sexual education, which is unrealistically delayed until age fifteen is found in book five. In the same book, the educational pattern for Sophie is described. Much of what Rousseau says about the education of girls is dismissed these days as embarrassing, but it is a key to understanding *Emile*. I discuss this issue below.

Throughout the stages of Emile’s development and the joining of Emile and Sophie, one character remains central: the tutor. It is ironic that *Emile* is said to be child-centered. The only one at the center of the book, who knows where both Emile and Sophie are going, and also knows the proper route to leave childhood behind, is the teacher. Of course, this teacher is no ordinary mortal. He spends twenty-four hours a day for over twenty years to see that Emile and Sophie become the perfect parents. At the least, that seems obsessive and unhealthy. What Rousseau imagines for a tutor is Plato’s philosopher-king. Plato speculates that if only we could produce one such wise man, a whole society could follow.[9] The problem for both Plato and Rousseau is where to get this first perfect model on which a whole new society can be constructed.

The nearly omniscient tutor prepares Emile’s encounters with the physical world. Then, when Emile is ready, the tutor arranges social encounters (99) (174). Only in a few passages does the tutor tip his hand and reveal the nature of the game. Diane Ravitch, in the above passage, says that the role of the tutor was “to do nothing and let nothing be done.” Actually, the full sentence is a conditional not an imperative statement: “If you could do nothing…” (93). The quotation is from book two where the tutor is trying to create a safe cocoon of learning. The claim that the teacher does nothing is an ironic joke. As every expert teacher knows, the trick is to seem to be doing nothing while carefully arranging all the interactions in and with the environment.

Emile, in the first few years of life, should discover himself away from people who would distract him with envy, jealousy, and other social vices. Freed from those influences, the child would develop a healthy self-love. The one social interaction allowed to Emile is with the tutor who is apparently free of vices. The tutor knows Emile’s nature better than Emile does. Thus, Emile can do as he wishes so long as his wishes are what the tutor wants: “Doubtless he ought to do only what he wants, but he ought to want only what you want him to do…Let him always believe he is the master, and let it always be you who are. There is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom” (120).

How does the tutor guarantee that Emile will follow the program in every detail? Only once does the tutor candidly admit the basis of his control: “Do not command your pupil to do anything in the world – absolutely nothing. Do not let him even imagine that you claim any authority over him. Let him know only that he is weak and that you are strong, that from your respective stations, he necessarily lies at your mercy" (96). That basis of control works well when the learner is age six months or six years. At sixteen-years-old, when perhaps the student is as strong and tall as the teacher is, the basis of control will have to include reasoned argument.

The teaching in books three, four, and five manifests this appeal to the student's reasoning power. By the end of book five, the tutor is a consultant to Emile and Sophie (480). He gives up control of their lives shortly after their marriage. The tutor continues to teach in a kind of grandfather role but Emile asserts that he, the father, will be the teacher of his son. Robert Wokler blurs this point when he refers to "the gestation of a fresh pupil… whose care will be entrusted to a new tutor similar to his own."[10] It is true there will be a tutor for Emile, Jr. but the father, Emile, will have been prepared to play this role.

Human Nature

I said above that many people seem to be familiar with only the first few pages of book one. That material is the usual source for quotations that are presumed to summarize Rousseau's educational philosophy. At the beginning of book one, Rousseau does set out some general principles. But given his dialectical method, some of these positions are almost reversed by the end of book five. For example, in book one, Rousseau attacks the patriotism that would place devotion to the fatherland over the life of the individual. One can educate either a citizen or a man but not both (39).

Toward the end of book five, after Emile has been required to travel to other lands, he concludes airily that he can be a free individual anywhere; the place one lives is unimportant. In one of his sharpest rebukes, the tutor tells Emile that his answer shows his immaturity. When Emile is a husband and a father he will appreciate the importance of where one lives (473). The tutor tells Emile that he should be grateful to the country that has nourished him and he should be ready to serve his country if he is asked to do so. (Rousseau was miffed at his countrymen for not appreciating him so he says that his talented and dedicated student is not likely to be called upon for service to his country)(475).

The misreading of *Emile* is likely to begin with the book's first paragraph. The famous first sentence begins: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things…" (37) The rest of the paragraph is a paradox. "Man" is accused of corrupting the pure good of creation. The natural things that are spoiled include man himself. The puzzle is how "man" can be both subject and object. "Man" would be good – except for "man." The second paragraph adds to the paradox. Despite the fact that man turns everything bad, he must continue to do so because if he stopped things would get even worse (37).

Today's reader can be left confused by Rousseau's conflict between man and nature. Starting with Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century, "nature" came to mean what is outside human beings, or more exactly, what is confronted by individual, rational, controlling "man." Today's reader might think that a conflict between man and nature refers to human versus nonhuman.

Rousseau is aware of this meaning of nature as what is opposite to man, what man has the vocation to conquer. Rousseau is also heir to the meaning of "nature" that the middle ages took over from Greek philosophy: nature is the inner principle of a living being, including the individual human being. Most often for Rousseau, "nature" refers to what the human being is born with, the innate capacities of the individual. In Rousseau's conflict of man and nature, "nature" is individual man, while "man" is human beings in the aggregate, that is, society.

This clarification of man and nature does not dissolve the paradox of how man (society) corrupts nature (the individual). But Rousseau has located what he believes to be the central educational problem: how to resolve the conflict between individual and society. It is not a trick question that has a simple and clear answer. Rousseau takes five hundred pages to pursue an answer while holding on to both sides of his puzzle. For achieving a resolution of the problem, he relies on a psychological dialectic within the individual and a sexual dialectic between Emile and Sophie.

The success or failure of the journey depends on the ethics and religion of book four. Everything in *Emile* lives in the shadow cast by John Calvin, founder of Rousseau's beloved Geneva. Rousseau was intent on eliminating the Christian doctrine of original sin, formulated by Augustine and applied with rigorous consistency by Calvin in sixteenth-century Geneva. The first sentence of Emile may seem to dismiss sin, vice, evil, and all the constraints of conservative religion. But Rousseau was no twentieth-century liberal; he was acutely aware of the evils men do.

His dialectical approach is already evident in the first paragraph which begins with the fact that everything is good and which ends with the horrors and crimes that human beings commit. The way to address the problem is by education but it has to be an education that is always aware of humanity's inner conflicts. And despite the best efforts of educators, humans cannot completely solve the problem because they, the humans, are at the heart of the problem.

The Christian explanation of the problem was the doctrine called original sin. In Adam's sin – or the result of that sin – all people share. Rousseau rejects this explanation but he is forced to do his own explaining of the origin of evil. The doctrine Rousseau supplies is actually very close to Christianity's original sin. Thoughtful Christian commentators did not think of original sin as a black mark on the soul or a personal failing. In the Christian story, humans were originally born good but every generation, after the first, has lived in a tainted world. Humans are born into a messy world because previous generations have messed up things and no one knows how to prevent bad consequences for today's children.

Seventeenth-and eighteenth-century political theorists, including Rousseau, posited the myth of a state of nature that preceded historical experience.[11] The biblical inspiration of these social contract theories is evident: an Eden before the conflicts of history. Neither the Bible nor any of the political theorists has a convincing explanation for why the human beings moved out of the state of nature but all agree that they did.

The silliest summary of *Emile* is that the boy grows up in a state of nature and that he innocently avoids all conflict. Rousseau repeatedly tells the reader that Emile is not in a state of nature, that he is being prepared to live in society (202,205) and he is going to have to deal with society's corrupting ways. The obvious reason that Emile is not in a state of nature is clearly stated by Rousseau: "The man who speaks of 'the state of nature' speaks of a state which no longer exists, which may never have existed, and which probably never will exist."[12]

Why do Rousseau and others talk about this non-existent state? Because, says Rousseau, it is "an idea to judge correctly our present condition."[13] Influenced by the Christian belief of a three-stage story in which the last stage will be a restored paradise, Rousseau has Emile journey toward a new kind of society that is similar to the beginning stage, the imagined state of nature. His redemption depends on Sophie who embodies a human closeness to that imagined natural state.

The psychological mechanism that operates throughout the whole of *Emile* is the conflict of two loves, one that is genuine – an immediate relation to one's own bodily self – and one that is false – a relation to oneself dependent on the opinion of others (92, 214). Augustine had described the two loves as the love of God and the love of man. At his most dualistic, Augustine seems to hold that the love of oneself is opposed to the love of God and is the source of the evils in the "city of man." When Augustine trusts his own psychological insight, he recognizes that there is a proper love of man and woman within the "city of God."

Both Augustine and Rousseau describe with keen insight the psychology of human love. To this day, the insights of both thinkers remain valuable. Rousseau goes beyond Augustine in providing an explanation of why humans create an illusion of the self separate from their actual bodily selves. Augustine presupposed this explanation - the awareness of mortality - as part of the Christian theology of death and redemption. Rousseau describes the psychological mechanism that follows from a fear of death.

What lies at the root of the human incapacity to accept and to love oneself is the awareness of death. Human beings put up layers of defense to avoid this most obvious of facts. Rousseau posits that one of the two instincts we are born with is self-preservation or the fear of our own mortality.[14] Every human vice is traceable to our inability to accept the fact that one out of one dies (92). Despite every advance in civilization the death rate is still one hundred percent.

Crucial to Emile's education is that the boy should learn to accept death as a part of life. Like today's proponents of "natural death," Emile is supposed to view death as simply a natural phenomenon (208). But here Rousseau slides too easily over the conflict. On Rousseau's own principles, death is natural but human death is not, that is, human death is historical, moral, and religious. Human death is what all humans experience but each human being experiences a personal search for the meaning of a life that includes dying. The problem of death for the young Emile cannot really be solved in book three. Rousseau has to bring to bear the ethics and religion of book four to make the thought of death bearable.

Ethics and Religion

Rousseau believed that besides the fear of mortality, the other instinct that humans are born with is pity (221). On the basis of pity, Rousseau builds his ethics and moves Emile into a kind of social responsibility. Pity is a well defined idea, related to but clearly distinct from sympathy or compassion. These latter two words have a meaning of "suffering with someone." Sympathy or compassion is likely to lead to action aimed at reducing the suffering that we share.

Pity is a response to suffering but it is a one way reaction rather than a mutual relation. It is a feeling that a superior can indulge in while viewing a creature of lesser status. An animal often evokes more pity than a fellow human being because the animal is not suspected of being personally responsible for its plight. Human beings do not like to be pitied by other humans who consider themselves superior.

Rousseau goes to great length in book four to describe the extent and the limits of pity (223-30). Because humans are born with an aversion to suffering and with pity for sufferers, pity is not itself a virtue. As an isolated reaction, pity is just an instinct that does not initiate action to relieve suffering. People are said to "wallow in pity," responding to outside stimuli but in a way that turns inward.

Having led a sheltered life until his teen years, Emile has a surplus of pity to direct toward others who have not had his privileged upbringing. He is like Gautama on his first trip beyond the comforts of his household, encountering the human situation of suffering and death. Like Gautama, Emile feels a call to serve suffering humanity, a vocation that is in tension with his first love of a human being, Sophie. On one occasion, when Sophie is upset that Emile is late, due to his helping someone in distress, he says to Sophie: "Do not hope to make me forget the rights of humanity. They are more sacred to me than yours. I will never give them up for you" (441).

What Rousseau is suggesting here is that pity can be transformed so that it does lead to action. Emile's innate feeling of pity has to be caught up into a large project; otherwise, it will corrupt the soul. "To prevent pity from degenerating into weakness, it must therefore be generalized and extended to the whole of mankind….For the sake of reason, for the sake of love of ourselves, we must have pity for our species still more than for our neighbor"(253). Instead of just pitying one's neighbor, the feelings have to be the driving power within a large scale movement toward justice. A person has to learn how to be ethical, which in turn requires ethical models and teachers of ethics.

Rousseau is one of a few thinkers who offer a bridge between two competing approaches in modern ethics. For David Hume, ethics was all about passion or emotion. Reason as the "slave" of passion was almost irrelevant. We are ethical only to the extent we can feel for the sufferings of those we know. In reaction, Immanuel Kant based ethics on abstract principles. Feelings are untrustworthy. What we need are universal maxims for our actions. We should not act according to feelings but from a requirement of duty.

Contemporary ethics continues to be plagued by this dichotomy. Kant is popular with writers on ethics. It is unclear that Kant, or his successors such as John Rawls and Lawrence Kohlberg, have had much influence on business, politics, and the general public. In the United States, an ethic of pity dominates the news media and popular imagination. A lost child or a stray puppy can engender an outpouring of feeling and be the lead story on the nightly news. The concentration on an individual's suffering can obscure policies in business and politics that devastate the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Rousseau recognized the problem of integrating big and small pictures, sensitivity on the small scale that is not lost in the grand designs of geopolitics. Rousseau wants his pupil to act ethically, to move from exclusive concern with his own desires and development. What motive does Emile have that would dislodge him from his comfortable self-satisfaction? While Hume's metaphor of reason as a "slave" seems to give too little to rationality, Kant's belief that reason can trump feeling seems unrealistic. Emile has to undergo a kind of conversion, what Christianity called a change of heart.

For making such an ethical conversion, Rousseau has to turn to religion, his own version of Christianity. Why should Emile move out of his self-centeredness? Rousseau provides this image: "The good man orders himself in the relation to the whole, and the wicked one orders the whole in relation to himself. The latter makes himself the center of all things; the former measures his radius and keeps to the circumference. Then he is ordered in relation to the common center, which is God" (292). This key passage in book four is the conclusion that follows from the religion that Rousseau calls "natural religion" which he equates with pure Christianity (294).

This outlook of Emile's place in the universe needs underpinning. For that purpose, Rousseau makes a radical shift in style to provide a forty-seven page apologetic for natural religion. Rousseau puts a long sermon into the mouth of a disgraced but wise priest, the Savoyard Vicar (266-313). The convoluted style of presentation is presumably so that the views are not stated as Rousseau's own (260). The ruse did not work; the condemnation of *Emile* by church officials centered on the exposition by the Savoyard Vicar.

Rousseau expresses contempt for teaching religion through the lifeless catechism of the time (378). But the Vicar's sermon is a mostly boring argument for religion based on seventeenth-century science. Famous scientists, including Isaac Newton, believed that the new science provided rich evidence for a God in the Christian image. "Nature" was the handiwork of God;

we are born with a sense of the creator. “Natural religion,” a phrase coined at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the source for God’s revelation. The Bible supplied additional information, especially for the uneducated.

In the course of the seventeenth century, “natural religion” moved from innate sentiments to rational arguments for a first mover of the heavens. By Emile’s time in the eighteenth century, this kind of natural religion was in trouble. The Declaration of Independence still made appeal to “nature and nature’s God,” but most of the French philosophers saw redundancy in that formula. “Nature” became another name for God. The attributes thought to be divine – eternal, necessary, and immutable – were now a description of nature.[15] Rousseau, in his fights with Voltaire, Diderot, D’Alembert, and Holbach, insisted on the need for a nature’s God but the best he could come up with was Paley’s “great watchmaker” in the sky to which the Vicar several times adverts (272, 275).

A watchmaker would not inspire religious fervor but Rousseau did succeed in employing Christianity in support of an ethic of pity. Rousseau thought that “the best way to protect that faith, and thus morality, is to reinterpret it in subjective terms and root it in our moral sentiments and conscience.”[16] The Christian religion could lend itself to that interpretation insofar as it centers on the sufferings of the Christ. The emphasis after the twelfth century on the crucifixion, paired with the nativity scene, could convey a religion of pity. Nietzsche’s contempt for Christianity as a glorifying of the weak was mediated through Rousseau’s version of Christianity.

Part of the paradox of Rousseau is that he is also one of the main sources of the rationalistic theology of modern times. While Rousseau had a sentimental attachment to Jesus, his Christian religion was a dry system of rational arguments. Karl Barth, in his history of modern Protestant theology, had no doubt about its origin: “It is from Rousseau onwards and originating from Rousseau that the thing called theological rationalism, in the full sense of the term, exists.”[17]

Rousseau’s *Emile* was immediately condemned by the church. In the words of the Paris parliament, the book is “subversive of religion, morals and decency; seditious, impious, sacrilegious, besides much more.”[18] Rousseau had to flee for his life and spent his remaining fifteen years as a wanderer. At first sight, the church attack on *Emile* seems to be out of proportion. In a letter to the Archbishop of Paris, Rousseau had asked a simple question, typically self-centered but nonetheless legitimate: “Is it simple, is it natural that God should go in search of Moses to speak to Jean-Jacques Rousseau”? [19] Instead of rethinking the idea of revelation - Did God speak to someone in the past and then retire in silence? - the church simply condemned *Emile*.

The irony is that Rousseau has had the last laugh. Although he was condemned, his language has dominated Christian theology ever since. In particular, his contrast of “natural religion” and “revealed religion” was completely absorbed into Christianity. It is assumed by Christian writers to be traditional language, the obvious description of Christianity. In fact, “revealed religion” is a strange invention of the seventeenth century that cuts off Christianity from whatever is “natural” in religion. Before then, there was nothing called “Christian revelation.” Instead, there was a divine revelation embodied among other places in the objects and forces of the natural world. The God of “revealed religion” or “Christian revelation” is that of Herbert, Locke, Butler, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Kant. [20]

Gender Difference

Emile was instructed in the “dogmas” of natural religion via elaborate philosophical reasoning. His partner Sophie gets a very different religious education, centered on family rituals and passed down by the mother. Rousseau gives too little detail of Sophie's education but he does make a point of describing her religious upbringing (377). Rousseau is widely condemned for describing Sophie as having an education in which her reason is not fully developed. The criticism is undoubtedly valid but on the religious issue Sophie gets the better of it. Religions, including Christianity, and more obviously Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism, have not survived on dogmas taught in the classroom but on ritual, family, codes of conduct, and inspiring models of holiness.

Sophie does not appear until book five of *Emile* but she is integral to the nature and purpose of education. The reader cannot find out from book one what Rousseau conceives education to be; only at the end of book five is that clear. Some schools of education do not read book five because it is considered offensive to women. That is like reading a mystery novel but skipping the end where the murderer is revealed.

Sophie is not a murderer but Rousseau's portrait of her is thought to be egregiously condescending or worse. The first two pages of book five do seem to locate all women as inferior. And some of the subsequent catchy phrases - "she awaits the moment when she will become her own doll" (367) – seem to seal the case. However, book five recapitulates the whole book in having the form of a dialectical argument. In the course of book five, weakness is revealed as the real power. The man who appears to be in control of the woman turns out to be the one who is controlled by the woman. "Everywhere men are what women make of them," Rousseau wrote in a letter to Toussaint-Pierre Lenieps.[21]

Rousseau was always in search of human unity, and in *Emile* Sophie the woman holds the key to unity. She is the one who begins by seeming to be a slave but who knows how to turn the relation to her advantage. Rousseau was the source of Hegel's and Marx's parable of the master-slave relation. The dynamic of that relation leads to the slave triumphing by the clever manipulative tactics that slaves require for survival.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Rousseau was not seen to be misogynistic. On the contrary, he was, said Lord Byron, "the birthplace of love."[22] Couples came to him to have their love blessed. His romantic novel, *La Nouvelle Heloise*, was one of the best-selling books of the eighteenth century. Rousseau was a main inspiration for the "woman's movement" of the nineteenth century, a reform in which the man would run the public world while the woman controlled the man in the private world. (There was also a women's rights movement in the nineteenth century that opposed this romantic view). The problem with Rousseau's romanticism was not that he considered women inferior. Dependent on strong women all his life, he held womanhood in awe, an attitude that did not exclude shabby treatment of Theresa, his common-law wife.

In book five, Rousseau propounds a sharp difference between boys and girls. The twentieth-century women's movement was intent on emphasizing sameness, but recent decades have brought back a more complicated picture of sameness/difference. Rousseau tries to encompass the issue by saying: "In what they have in common, they are equal. Where they differ, they are not comparable" (358). Note that the choice is not between equal and unequal; the issue is a matter of equality and incomparability. For Rousseau, equal/unequal is too crude for describing the sexes. Nonetheless, he does proceed to say many things that would be outrageously offensive today. The fact that he presumes to toss out generalizations about women at all is his first offense.

Book five provides a sketch of education for girls, an ideal education for a perfect young woman. Sophie as an ideal of womanhood is introduced before the girl, Sophie, appears. Anyone can argue with the details but Rousseau deserves credit for acknowledging the existence of women. Until very recently, and even sometimes today, educational writers don't ask the question of gender relations. One of Dewey's first educational essays in 1885 was about differences between boys and girls. By 1911, however, he assumes that there is no significant difference.[23] After that, he simply does not discuss the question. Maybe the later Dewey was right but, as Jane Martin notes, you first have to notice the gender difference before deciding it is irrelevant.[24]

Even if Rousseau was right in emphasizing the difference, his dividing line is too crude. It opens him to the charge of making Sophie inferior. Although Sophie is said to be more precocious than Emile (368), she does not have her rational powers developed. Rousseau put great value on human emotion but he nonetheless thought that intelligence and freedom of choice were the distinguishing marks of human nature. Sophie remains childlike, which can be a compliment only if one's adult capacities have already been developed.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was written in direct opposition to *Emile*.[25] Wollstonecraft criticizes Rousseau's portrait of Sophie for her lack of rational competence. However, the positive qualities that he attributes to Sophie – patience, gentleness, zeal, affection – are ones that are indispensable to human families. Jane Martin writes that Mary Wollstonecraft's attack on *Emile* is in danger of ignoring those qualities.[26] Still, Wollstonecraft's anger at Sophie's undeveloped rationality is understandable. How to create whole persons in livable communities remains a problem to this day. To those who emphasize only sameness, Rousseau's warning still has some force: "The more women want to resemble men, the less women will govern them, and then men will truly be the masters" (363).

The dialectic of book five, within the dialectic of books one to five, has the intention of bringing about integral persons in a healed society. The project is stymied both by Rousseau's confused sexual life that he brings to the study and philosophical presuppositions built into eighteenth-century language. Women are introduced as having no purpose in life except to serve man, but that quickly appears to be the cover story for how women manipulate men. Manipulation may be an effective strategy for women winning some battles but it is not the basis of healthy, mutual relations.

Sophie – the wise woman – rises above the common lot. Her parents say she may choose her own husband - while they do some manipulating of their own (401). On their wedding night, Sophie makes it known that she will be the decider (478). And finally, after the tutor discusses with Emile and Sophie true love and a happy marriage, the tutor makes Sophie the teacher of Emile. The tutor says to Emile: "Today I abdicate the authority you confided in me, and Sophie is your governor from now on" (479). Karl Barth is therefore incorrect in writing that Rousseau "believed that his Emile, having completed his education, will actually have become his own educator."[27] Emile remains in need of a tutor throughout his life and it is Sophie who will play the main role.

Conclusion

Rousseau's heart was in the right place, but joining two half persons, a public self and a private self, do not create a human unity. Unless the power relation can be conceived in another image than dominative power versus manipulation, there is no hope for human freedom. The starting point for *Emile* of one teacher/one student may sound like the perfect educational situation but it is hopelessly distorted. Sophie comes to the rescue but she is too little, too late, and she also suffers from a similar isolation. Emile needs some classmates, both boys and girls. He also needs some other adult figures.

Young children do need protection from bad example but the solution provided for Emile is unrealistic and unhealthy. The fact that Sophie is Emile's first real encounter with a girl does not bode well for the marriage he immediately envisions. The tutor demands a three year separation to test their love (448), but both lovers need some friends.

There is a beautiful passage on friendship in book four (220) but it is not exemplified in Emile's actual education which is totally lacking in friends. Rousseau was right to criticize Plato for basing community on the dissolution of the family (362). In the *polis* envisioned by Plato, everyone would be called comrade.[28] But Rousseau's family unit of Sophie, Emile, and Emile, Jr. is also too fragile a basis for a new society.

Rousseau seemingly recognized that his story of Emile and Sophie would not have the happy ending suggested on the last page. Rousseau left an uncompleted manuscript of a sequel, *Les Solitaires*, in which Sophie becomes promiscuous and is pregnant with another man's child. Emile, unwilling to accept this child, runs off. The two solitaries are still in search of the other half of their selves.[29]

Even for Rousseau, then, *Emile* seems to have been an ambitious failure. That may suggest it is not worth reading. The book is certainly not to everyone's taste and it is not an educational model to be applied in the classroom or anywhere else. People who wish to try radical experiments in education often invoke *Emile* as an inspiration and guide. The fact that such experiments usually end in chaos is not the fault of *Emile*.

Part of the fault does lie with assuming that *Emile* is the story of a boy who discovers all by himself everything that he has to know. The assumption is that lacking all rules, habits, and authority, Emile becomes a free and autonomous individual. If that were the story of *Emile*, it would not be worth reading. But as an ambitious book about teaching-learning that includes struggles over politics, ethics, religion, and sex, *Emile* is revelatory of today's struggles in all of those areas.

Chapter Four: Dewey: Why So Misunderstood?

John Dewey, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, is often cited for his view of education but, like Rousseau, Dewey does not seem to be much read. Like Rousseau, Dewey's writing style is part of the problem – more on that shortly. However, much of the problem is that Dewey's influence on U.S. education in the twentieth century is assumed to be obvious. Didn't he give us "progressive education," a phrase that can still divide writers on education, as well as the general population?

While Rousseau's view of education is largely captured in the single work, *Emile*, Dewey's ideas are scattered throughout a prolific writing career of more than sixty years. Dewey is widely regarded as the preeminent philosopher in the history of the United States. He wrote dozens of books and hundreds of essays that did not have education as the main topic but might imply a theory of education. Two commentators on Dewey's work say that the books, *Experience and Nature* and *Quest for Certainty* are his most lasting legacy.[1] Dewey himself on his seventieth birthday referred to *Democracy and Education* as the place "in which my philosophy, such as it is, was fully expounded."[2]

It is important to note Dewey's belief that "philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education."[3] Like Plato and Rousseau, but unlike most philosophers today, Dewey did not think of "education" as a peripheral topic nor did he think of education as a place where philosophical conclusions are merely applied. For Dewey, education is at the center of philosophical reflection: "Education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested."[4]

Of course, what the word education means is itself a philosophical problem. Some writers on education think that Dewey moved away from any intimate connection with education when he became a philosophy professor early in his career. Dewey surely did not think that being in the philosophy department of Columbia University rather than teaching philosophy of education at Teachers College Columbia excluded him from a realistic involvement in education.

For anchoring this essay on Dewey's view of teaching, I will use a 1900 essay, "The Child and the Curriculum," and a 1938 book, *Experience and Education*. I will supplement these two works with material from other books and essays. The context of each of the two main texts is indispensable for understanding what Dewey was opposing and what he was offering as an alternative.

One reason for choosing works which are thirty-eight years apart is to see how the author's views have changed over time. Unlike some philosophers who do U-turns in the course of a long career, Dewey was generally consistent. One might even say that it is surprising how little he changed in his theory of education. The world changed dramatically in the first third of the twentieth century and Dewey's political and economic thinking evolved considerably in that period; his view of education had a steadier course.

My main interest in this essay is not Dewey's idea of education but his meaning of teaching. Here the problem is not an excess of material but a surprisingly thin body of material. Of course, assumptions about teaching run throughout his writing on education. Similar to other writers, Dewey seems to think that with a good theory of education, teaching almost takes care of itself. It is surprising that a philosopher writing on education does not have any extended reflection on what it means to teach someone something. Even in *Democracy and Education,* which overflows with a multiplicity of angles and perspectives on education, the words teach, teaching, and teacher appear infrequently.

Dewey does often use the word educator in referring to the professional school teacher. If that term were used to spell out a distinction between professional school teachers and other teachers, that language would have been helpful. No such contrast is drawn; "educator" simply occupies the whole ground of teaching. Dewey casually refers to "parents and teachers," a phrase that excludes parents from being teachers.

The Distant Background of "The Child and the Curriculum"

Before examining the text of "The Child and the Curriculum," it is necessary to comment on a few European theorists that Dewey was familiar with and to take note of what was happening to education and schools in the nineteenth century. Jean-Jacques Rousseau hovers over the century-and-a-quarter between Rousseau's *Emile* and Dewey's early writing on education. Writers in the nineteenth century generally credit Rousseau with influencing their thinking, even when taking a critical distance from him. The development of a state school system, especially in the United States and France, created a narrower focus for educational writing than at the time of *Emile.* Johann Pestalozzi, for one key example, did not have much success at running schools for poor children but he highlighted the possibilities and difficulties of the classroom.[5]

Another writer to whom Dewey gives some credit is Johann Herbart who concentrated very specifically on the classroom instructor's procedures and lesson plan. Instruction, Herbart argued, builds on the foundation of experience already gained in or out of the school. In practice, that usually meant reviewing the previous day's lesson. Dewey insisted that education in the classroom should start from "life-experience," by which he seemed to mean anything outside the classroom. Despite this difference with Herbart, Dewey generally praises him. In one of his infrequent uses of "teaching," Dewey says "Herbart‘s great service lay in taking the work of teaching out of the region of routine and accident."[6]

Dewey inherited an educational language that was being shaped by the ideal of "universal education," that is, a school-based education for every child. In the United States, this kind of education was dominated by the need to "Americanize" millions of immigrants and prepare them for productive work in their new country. Dewey's attitude to the school was decidedly mixed. He opposed an educational institution separate from the rest of life but he accepted the school's mission to prepare children for the new world of the twentieth century.

In an early and popular book, *School and Society*, Dewey looked back nostalgically to a few decades previous when the family, apprenticeship, and religious communities had formative influence.[7] He believed that all of those forms of education had lost their power in a fast changing world. In his "Pedagogic Creed" of 1897, he announced that "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform."[8] Correlated with this article of faith about education (=school) is an even more grandiose belief that ends his creed: "I believe that the teacher is the true prophet and the usherer in of the kingdom of God."[9]

Was that last phrase meant to be tongue in cheek? If by "teacher," Dewey was referring to Moses, Jesus, Socrates, Gautama, and other "prophets," the case might be made. There is no sign here that "teacher" means anybody other than an elementary school teacher in the U.S. state school. It was an unsupportable burden, as Dewey later realized, that a young woman, in addition to preparing and presenting a lesson for a few dozen school children in P.S. 121, should also have to usher in the kingdom of God. Having dismissed other educational institutions as irrelevant, Dewey had to identify education with school. He expected great results from the disciplined work of school teachers and a sophisticated school curriculum.

It is something of a mystery why Dewey's name is so often linked to Rousseau's. Both men are often categorized as romantics who thought that the teacher's job is to get out of the way. Rousseau did speak negatively of the colleges of his day, but his alternative was a carefully structured curriculum that started at birth and was directed by a nearly omniscient tutor. Dewey disparaged what he called "traditional" schools, but he wished to replace them with better schools and with teachers trained in science.

Dewey's most extensive treatment of Rousseau is in *Schools of Tomorrow*. The entire first chapter of that book is filled with excerpts from *Emile,* and Dewey credits Rousseau with being "just about the first person to realize that education is a developmental affair."[10] If one stops at the first chapter, one might think that Dewey is following Rousseau. But by the fourth chapter, Dewey is dismissive of *Emile*: "If Rousseau himself had ever tried to educate any real children he would have found it necessary to crystallize his ideas into some more or less fixed program." Rousseau's book, according to Dewey, is "his account of the impractical methods he used to create that exemplary prig – Emile."[11] Dewey faults Rousseau for neglecting curriculum. Rousseau in fact has a detailed curriculum of education, starting at birth, but he does not have a school curriculum which is what Dewey was looking for.

The starkest contrast between Dewey and Rousseau is their attitude to the "social." Rousseau regularly uses the term negatively; the social is the enemy of individual development. In Dewey's writing, there is no word used more frequently or more positively than "social." He never tires of saying that the aim of education is the "socializing of intelligence." He wrote that way in the 1890s and by the 1930s he was even more insistent that "it's [education's] end is social and …the criterion to be applied in estimating the value of the practices that exist in school is also social."[12]

It was a continuing struggle to socialize individuals into American democracy but that was precisely the point of education in school. Children had to be convinced that their interests were best served by cooperating with their neighbors in a democratic way of life. By 1890, a science of society had been born. Eventually, "society" would become a big container within which politics, economics, education, and religion are particular aspects. How could education be anything other than learning to be social or becoming a productive member of something called society.

The Immediate Context of "Child and Curriculum."

The "progressive movement" in the United States coalesced about the year 1900. John Dewey's name became intertwined with progressivism and progressive education. The progressive movement was concerned with economics and politics before it included education. But the phrase "progressive education" held on long after the political/economic movement had flamed out. World War I gave a fatal blow to the progressivists who naively thought that the expansion of government for the war effort would later be turned to progressive, domestic programs. After World War I, "progressive education" took a sharp turn away from urban reform and toward experimental schools in the suburbs. A simplistic opposition between traditional and progressive has survived to the present, at least in schools of education.

The progressive movement in the United States was not home-grown. The United States was somewhat late in picking up the themes of economic and political reform from England, France, Germany, New Zealand, and elsewhere.[13] The main concern of the movement was that many of the poor were being left behind in the technological and corporate revolutions. Two nearly opposite solutions appeared in the United States under the rubric of progressive. One route was for the corporate business world to control and discipline workers so that they would be efficient cogs in the new industrial machine. The other route, which eventually got control of the term progressive, thought that government had to intervene and provide protection for workers and for people displaced by progress.

What had up to then been called "liberal" nearly reversed direction. In the nineteenth century, liberals believed that government was the enemy from which individuals needed protection. Suddenly, they realized that industrial trusts, the power of capital, posed the greatest threat to individual liberty. The only force able to withstand this threat was the state; government became the protector of liberty. It had not been inevitable that "liberal" and "progressive" would become synonyms. To this day liberalism remain in tension with government programs to help the needy. Right-wing Republicans who are always calling for less government are the original liberals, that is, believers in the liberalism which preceded its confusing reversal under the tag of progressivism.

John Dewey occupied a central position in this confusion. He was at the center in trying to reconcile the tension between liberal and progressive. Educationally, this tension is between the wisdom which the older generation wishes to transmit and the novelty-seeking younger generation who are sure that they can do much better than their elders. It has been said that the 1950s was the last decade in which children still looked to adult models. While the 1960s did embody a dramatic revelation of the split between generations, the rebellion was there from the beginnings of the United States, even at the time of its colonial period. The start of the twentieth century was when the split became evident.

Emile Durkheim stated the classic or traditional view of education: "Education is the influence exerted on children by parents and teachers."[14] The adult world passes on its wisdom to children; thus, the aim of education is the socialization of the young. Dewey, as I have indicated, accepted this traditional meaning of education; it was embodied in the educational vocabulary of the time. And yet, he realized it was not working, particularly in the United States with its advertising slogan of "progress is our most important product." In his early writing, Dewey does not refer to traditional versus progressive but simply to old versus new. Dewey put his own stamp on what the "new education" was but there were sharp differences among writers of the time as to what this new direction should be.

An aspect of the progressive movement often downplayed but now explored by many historians is the religious roots of the progressive movement.[15] This theme is relevant for getting at Dewey's meaning of teaching because of Dewey's personal religious search that intersected with progressivism. Dewey assumed a meaning of teaching that came from Christianity even though Dewey rebelled against the church. Dewey's mother, it has often been noted, was an evangelical Christian whose concern was that her son "would be right with Jesus."[16] In today's context, that image can be misleading. Evangelical Christianity was a driving force of social reform in the late nineteenth century. True, by the 1920s, evangelical Christianity had shifted toward fundamentalism (a word coined in 1920), but before that there was the "social gospel" movement on the side of compassionate programs of political and economic reform.

William Jennings Bryan epitomizes what happened to the evangelical movement and the way that its history has been distorted. Bryan is most identified by his role in the Scopes trial of 1925. As reported by H.L. Mencken and portrayed in the play and movie, *Inherit the Wind*, Bryan was an ignorant and reactionary fundamentalist who opposed evolution. But in a fuller picture of history, Bryan had been a leader in progressive reforms (social security, disability benefits, direct voting). His opposition to evolution had little to do with biological theories. He rightly feared that "social Darwinism" (which Mencken embraced) represented a vicious attack on the poor. Bryan's disgrace at the Scopes trial – at least as northern newspapers judged it – drove evangelical Christianity underground for half a century.[17]

Dewey's religious journey, which at the beginning was similar to Bryan's, quickly veered off into a non-church religiosity. Several of his philosophy professors at the University of Vermont were products of Union Theological Seminary.[18] A philosophy not entirely distinct from theology allowed Dewey to move toward a philosophical absolute in place of the Christian notion of God. Dewey seems to have remained a practicing Christian up to his time at the University of Michigan in the late 1880s. By the mid 1890s he was still using most of the same religious vocabulary but he was by then outside the boundaries of the Christian Church. His wife, Alice, was no doubt a major factor in that move.[19]

"Religion" became for Dewey a negative term but the adjective "religious" remained a positive description that could be applied almost anywhere. "The opposition between religious values as I conceive them and religion is not to be bridged."[20] The fact that he thought the public schools should be religious is something of an embarrassment to today's opponents of all things religious in the public school.[21] Whether or not his sharp opposition between "religion" and "religious" makes logical sense, it allowed Dewey to cling to a sense of the unity of all things while criticizing the church as an obstacle to progress.

Dewey's lifelong religion/religious conflict affected his belief about the purpose of education and the place of the teacher. Dewey absorbed the progressivist assumption about the passionate preaching of reform. At the same time he came to distrust the preacher who tells people what to believe. He repeatedly says that the teacher's job is not to tell the pupils what the truth is.[22] What was the alternative? He suggests bringing "things" into the classroom, material different from words.[23] The teacher should talk less and let pupils work out the truth for themselves. He also thought that the school's walls should be permeable if not removed entirely. The pupil could then be dealing with real "life-experience" and the teacher in the classroom could imitate Emile's tutor in arranging and guiding life experiences.

Dewey railed against the school as an institution separate from ordinary life, and having a distinct character of its own.[24] He seems not to have considered the possibility that without walls the classroom's fragile relation of teacher and students might be overwhelmed by "ordinary life-experience." Bringing things into the classroom (today it would be the computer, the cell phone and accompanying technology) can sometimes be helpful but words are unavoidably at the center of what the classroom can do. Words in a carefully prepared conversation can be powerful, but, like others of his time, Dewey tended to identify verbal teaching with preaching.

Teaching in the schools of the middle ages included lecturing (reading a text, usually the Bible), followed by the "disputation" (interpreting the text), and then the preaching of the text (application to life situations). By the nineteenth century, the academic lecture had absorbed both interpretation and preaching. Instead of reading from sacred scripture, the professor read his lecture from his notes on modern science. The student's job was to copy what the lecturer said. The classroom was always part theater and the teacher's acting style was part of the package. It was not only a reading of science; it was a preaching of science as the way to truth.

The lecture took over the U.S. university in the late nineteenth century. It has never had the strict liturgical formality of the German university but it still occupies the center of classrooms in the universities of the United States. In elementary and secondary schools, reading at students is more difficult. The preaching format is challenged when a classroom teacher is confronted by a couple dozen squirming youngsters. Nonetheless, teaching understood as lecturing seeps down into high schools in a modified form.

Dewey is not the only culprit in the lack of imagination concerning teaching but he never directly challenges the assumption of what teaching means either in the old or the new education. He did praise Johns Hopkins University where "the student is treated not as a bucket for the reception of lectures nor as a mill to grind out the due daily grist of prepared textbook for recitation."[25] He likens the old education's teaching "to inscribing records upon a passive phonographic disc to result in giving back what has been inscribed when the proper button is pressed in recitation or examination."[26] He advocated as an alternative that "our schools truly become laboratories of knowledge-making."[27]

What he was opposed to is fairly clear; but whether "knowledge-making" says much about teaching is not clear. Reforms in the twentieth century that began by opposing teachers as the tellers of truth have most often ended in disillusion on discovering that students either are unwilling or unable to discover the truth (or "make knowledge") on their own.

Before looking at an essay in which Dewey does wrestle with the issue of teaching, a few words are needed about his writing style. Dewey, like Rousseau, had a problem with people misreading him. Rousseau's problem was his use of pithy phrases that are assumed to summarize his views. Furthermore, reading five hundred pages of eighteenth-century French prose requires a commitment from today's reader.

Dewey's problem is different, a case of tangled syntax. Dewey's friends made fun of his writing style but without giving us much insight into the cause and nature of the problem. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. said that Dewey wrote "as God would have spoken had he been inarticulate but keenly desirous to tell you how it was."[28] William James commented that "Dewey's style is damnable; you might even say God-damnable."[29] H.L. Mencken, no friend of Dewey's, engaged in some hyperbole when he wrote of Dewey: "I believe he is the worst writer ever heard of in America, and probably the worst philosopher known to history."[30]

Dewey's defense of his writing style was to claim that other writers "achieve a specious lucidity and simplicity by the mere process of ignoring considerations which a greater respect for concrete materials of experience would have forced upon them."[31] Dewey has a point here that his style is complex because his thinking is complex; but as a total justification for his style, the argument is not persuasive.

Dewey's form of arguing is not so different from many other philosophers. He uses a dialectical form of arguing, as does Rousseau ("on the one hand, but on the other hand"). Dewey's dialectical format, however, is much more compressed than Rousseau's. Dewey's movement from one side of an argument to the other is not spread over hundreds of pages but is within a few paragraphs or sometimes within a single sentence. And when he moves from one side to the other, he very often does not tell the reader he is doing so.

In Dewey's way of thinking, if "a" and "b" are opposed to one another in an argument, the answer is: "c." However, the road to "c" is a convoluted journey; it is not the middle of the road. People who say that the answer is "both/and" instead of "either/or" simply restate the problem. Instead, in Dewey's dialectical movement, when the choice is assumed to be either "a" or "b" Dewey negates both "a" and "b."; the answer is on neither side of what is being argued. Dewey's next step is that the resulting "not a" and "not b" are also negated. The negation of the negation of both "a" and "b" has the effect of restoring "a" and "b" but now in new meanings which are compatible and which constitute "c." I will illustrate how this method functions in "The Child and the Curriculum."

Jay Martin says that Dewey always tried to go beyond his teachers, with the result that he is driven to negative solutions.[32] I don't think Dewey saw it that way. He did try to supersede other writers by negating the opposite views in an argument. The result was not a negative solution but a double negative solution, which is Dewey's way of being positive. Still, it must be admitted that Dewey's complexity often seems unnecessary and the writing cries out for an editor. He sometimes uses a quadruple negative where a double negative would seem to be just as precise.

"The Child and the Curriculum"

I turn to a particular instance of Dewey's style of argument. The essay "The Child and the Curriculum" has some helpful comments on the role of the school teacher and the nature of academic teaching. It is also an essay that helped to fix the public image of Dewey as educational reformer. The mystery that needs explaining is why Dewey to this day is assumed to be the main source of the "child-centered movement," even though that is not what the essay advocates. There are sentences or fragments of sentences that are quoted to support the view that in a choice between child and curriculum Dewey took the side of the child. One might guess, even before reading the essay, and it should be abundantly clear after reading the essay, that Dewey's answer to the question of child or curriculum is: neither. If he does unwittingly tilt in one direction it is toward curriculum but that is a defect in his terms not his intention. I would add, however, that Dewey is not entirely blameless in the fact that his essay is misread. I think he makes a bad choice within the essay in describing the role of the (school) teacher.

First, however, is the question: why the question? Why would Dewey write an essay on child and curriculum? It is not obvious that education should be described as a conflict between these two. In the first four paragraphs, Dewey refers to a dispute in the 1890s, but as is common with Dewey, he does not name names. The essay quickly jumps to an abstract level where Dewey appears to be engaged by a solely logical problem instead of his trying to mediate a political dispute that was occurring between some of the country's intellectual leaders.

On one side of this debate in the 1890s were William Torrey Harris and Charles Elliot. On the other side were G. Stanley Hall and Francis Parker. The usual typecasting of conservative versus liberal does not do justice to the debate. If the terms that were emerging at the time are used – traditional versus progressive – traditional as a description for Harris and Elliot cannot be equated with reactionary or thick-headed opponents of progress. William Torrey Harris was one of the leading U.S. philosophers, as well as U.S. commissioner of education. Charles Elliot was the dynamic president of Harvard University. Their concern was "curriculum," a fairly new term for what the school teaches.

Elliot headed a committee which published a report on curriculum in 1893. The report has often been ridiculed and it does sound rigid and reactionary today. The report says that "every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be or at what point his education is to cease."[33] The concern that prompted this statement was that students judged to be less capable were shunted off to vocational schools and not given the challenge of intellectual study. The committee was defending the right of access to good school-based education for all pupils, whatever the expectations for their social class.

On the other side of the debate was the "new psychology" most notably led by G. Stanley Hall. He had received the first U.S. based Ph.D. in psychology from the new kind of university, Johns Hopkins. Psychology was seen as the key to unlocking the mysteries of the human mind, a breakthrough of incalculable importance for education. Comenius, Rousseau, Locke, and others had offered their insights into human development, but the new psychology promised to chart in detail exactly how a child progresses into adulthood. Educational psychology was child psychology.

Speaking before the National Educational Association in 1901, Hall said: “The guardians of the young should strive to keep out of nature’s way and to prevent harm; they should feel profoundly that childhood, as it comes from the hand of God, is not corrupt….We must overcome the fetishes of the alphabet, of the multiplication table…There are many who ought not to be educated and who would be better in mind and morals if they knew no school.”[34]

Aligned with this new scholarship was the work of Francis Parker, one of the most famous educators in the country. He was showing in practice that if the school removed artificial constraints, the child’s natural appetite for learning could lead the way. He agreed with Hall that “The spontaneous tendencies of the child are the record of inborn divinity. We are here, my fellow teachers, for one purpose, and that purpose is to understand these tendencies and continue them in all these directions, following nature.”[35]

John Dewey recognized what would be evident to many outsiders to this conflict, namely, that child and curriculum need not be opposing terms. Why couldn’t psychological insight be at the service of an intellectually challenging curriculum? Dewey’s response to the debate is that there should not be a conflict between child and curriculum but, since a conflict is perceived to exist, it is necessary to “reconstruct” the argument. Thus, there is a real problem in the statement of the problem. “Solution comes only by getting away from the meaning of terms that is already fixed upon and coming to see conditions from another point of view, and hence in a fresh light.”[36] That is just what he tries to do in this essay.

Notice that he says “getting away from the meaning of terms that is already fixed.” He does not offer new terms but new meaning(s) of the terms already in dispute. One can immediately see from this principle of Dewey’s why he was often misunderstood, with both sides claiming his support. He was on neither side of the argument while at the same time he was using the terms of both sides – the terms but not the meanings of the terms that the debate assumed.

His principle is a good one for theorizing but not always applicable. Sometimes the term itself may be wrong. In the case of child and curriculum, he is able to change the meaning of the second. Curriculum, argues Dewey, is not school subjects but the “mature experience of the race” which is partially embodied in school subjects. In contrast, the word child did not offer the same ambiguity. He needed a different, more flexible word; “learner” or “student” would have been an improvement.

In the third paragraph of the essay he writes: “The fundamental facts in the educative process are an immature, undeveloped being, and certain social aims, meanings, values incarnate in the mature experience of the adult” (92). The word child does not appear here. An immature, undeveloped being could be twenty-five or fifty-five years old. But if one were to call into question “child” as the recipient of education, it would also force a rethinking of “adult” as the end of education.

Dewey does not pursue another word for “immature, undeveloped being” and reverts to using “child” throughout the essay. When only a small fraction of students went beyond elementary school, equating “child” with learner or student was somewhat understandable but nonetheless unfortunate. Educational writers today who continue to refer to the recipient of education as the child, when six out of ten students go to college and tens of millions engage in adult education programs, is scandalous.

Instead of changing the meaning of child, Dewey’s solution is to speak of the child’s “experience.” The word experience is one of Dewey’s richest and most ambiguous terms. Education, as Dewey describes it in this essay, is a movement from the experience of the child to the experience of the adult. But what is lacking here is the “interaction” that Dewey thought was at the heart of education. The movement in his solution is all in one direction. I said above that if there is a bias in his comparing child and curriculum it is toward curriculum. The child disappears; curriculum is forever. That is, the movement is from immature experience (embodied in the child) to mature adult experience (embodied in the curriculum).

A frequently quoted passage in this essay is “The child is the starting point, the center and the end. His development, his growth, is the ideal. It alone furnishes the standard….”(95). One author who quotes this passage then follows with the comment: “In theory, this ideal is unassailable. In practice it has proved largely unattainable.”[37] She apparently thinks these words are Dewey’s view of education although it is one side of the debate that Dewey is criticizing. The problem is not that the theory has not been put into practice but that the theory is in fact very “assailable.” In this quotation from “The Child and the Curriculum,” Dewey is putting forth the “child” side of the argument in preparation for negating it.

The assertion that “the child is the starting point, the center and the end” does not make much logical sense.[38] For Dewey, the child – or rather, experience embodied in a child – might be called the chronological starting point. But the child cannot be the end because, as I have noted, the child disappears in the end. As for the child being the center of education, that is a different image from starting point and end. If there is a center for Dewey it is not the child but “experience,” which functions as bridge, mediator, or gap-closer for the perceived conflict.

The most fateful sentence in “The Child and the Curriculum” is: “It may be of use to distinguish and to relate to each other the logical and the psychological aspects of experience – the former standing for subject-matter in itself, the latter for it in relation to the child”(102). At first glance, the contrast of logical and psychological may seem to be an example of the dialectic that runs throughout the essay: the psychological is on the side of the child, the logical is on the side of curriculum; the two need to be united. But that is not what is said here. Dewey has indeed placed logical on the side of curriculum material but he says that “psychological” is that material in relation to the child. In other words, psychology is not on one side of child versus curriculum; it is the solution to the problem.

Dewey then offers an extended metaphor for relating logical and psychological. Logic provides a map of experience whereas psychology provides the notes for the map-maker. Psychology might seem to be preparation for the logical. But then, as Dewey continues the metaphor, psychology is also the use of the map to lead back to life-experience. He concludes that “it [curriculum] needs to be psychologized; turned over, translated into the immediate and individual experiencing within which it has its origin and significance.” As he succinctly puts it, “the logical standpoint is itself psychological”(104). One might say without irony that this statement is not logical. A logical statement would seem to be that the psyche-logical is one form of logical, along with arthropos-, socio-, thanatos- and many other –logicals.

Dewey proceeds immediately to use this contrast of logical and psychological to compare scientist and teacher. The teacher is concerned “not with subject matter as such, but with the subject-matter as a related factor in a total and growing experience,” that is, the teacher’s concern is psychology. What is the teacher’s task in relation to curriculum? “To see it is to psychologize it”(105). Dewey believed that this description of the teacher overcomes a perceived conflict of child and curriculum. Introducing the teacher into the debate was surely a good move. But he has made the teacher a psychologist and subordinated all subject-matter to psychology. Teacher preparation would not require mastering physics, math, or history. The teacher’s knowledge of psychology implicitly includes all those areas; teachers have to concentrate on the psychology of learning.

My highlighting of what could be construed as a momentary slip in logic may seem exaggerated. It would be except that this passage is symptomatic of a shift that happened to educational language in the twentieth century and Dewey's contribution to that shift. Psychology almost completely absorbed the language of education. If education is a topic to be explored, would one not study how education involves politics, economics, ethics, philosophy, history, anthropology, religion? That does not appear to be the case in schools of education. "Teacher preparation" consists mainly of learning a method prescribed by the psychologists' study of learning.

There is no denying that psychology has in fact discovered many helpful things about learning. Unfortunately, psychologists have had little interest in teaching, other than in "behaviors" that would bring about learning. Dewey's essay did not cause the takeover of education by psychology. Nonetheless, Dewey was enamored of this new science that promised to finally turn education into a science. Dewey does not show familiarity with Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, published at the same time as his essay. In any case, Freud would not have been scientific enough for him. Although Dewey constantly put forward the scientific method as the only valid way to knowledge, his version of psychology was still supported by his philosophy. William James was Dewey's inspiration for the meaning of psychology and James was as much philosopher as psychologist. When Dewey was at the University of Chicago during the 1890s, psychology was still part of the philosophy department. In imagining the teacher as psychologist, Dewey was assuming a philosophical outlook on human experience buttressed now with careful reflection on the workings of that experience.[39]

Dewey was successful in having education become absorbed into psychology. But it turned out to be a different psychology than Dewey had envisioned. Psychology in the United States became an experimental science oriented to quantitative study. The scientific method that Dewey advocated was applied to external data and statistical conclusions were the result.

This kind of psychology in the early twentieth century of the United States was led by Edward Thorndike who celebrated the fact that education was finally a science. Writing in 1913, Thorndike confidently predicted that "through the knowledge of the science of human nature and its work in the industries, professions and trades, the average graduate of Teachers College in 1950 ought to be able to give better advice to a high school boy about the choice of an occupation than Solomon, Socrates and Benjamin Franklin all together could give."[40]

Ellen Lagemann, an historian of education, has written that although Dewey is revered in many places, it is Edward Thorndike who set the research agenda and influenced practice in the public school. She writes that "one cannot understand the history of education in the United States during the twentieth century unless one realizes that Edward Thorndike won and John Dewey lost."[41] Quantitative studies of learning have triumphed in educational theorizing and in the preparation of school teachers.

Because Dewey makes the teacher to be a psychologist, readers assume that Dewey – his protests notwithstanding – comes down on the side of the child. The conclusion of "The Child and the Curriculum" is either skipped or completely misread. That is unfortunate because Dewey introduces here one of his best descriptions of teaching. He writes: "The value of the formulated wealth of knowledge that makes up the course of study is that it may enable the educator to determine the environment of the child, and thus by indirection to direct. Its primary value, its primary indication, is for the teacher, not for the child" (110).

Dewey states clearly here what his third gap-filler is in addition to experience and psychology: the teacher. The reason there is no *essential* gap between child and curriculum is the role that the teacher plays. Curriculum is first for the teacher and the teacher teaches by changing the environment of the child. By environment here, one should understand all the physical and social surroundings of a child.

A teacher cannot directly transmit knowledge into the head of the student. Almost the whole history of philosophy testifies to that principle. But that does mean the teacher cannot teach. As Emile’s tutor knew, the teacher has to arrange the physical and social environment in a way that will issue in “learning experiences.” Like Emile’s tutor, Dewey’s teacher knows where the child’s education should take him or her: “See to it that day by day the conditions are such that their own activities move inevitably in this direction” (110).

The next to last paragraph of the essay begins: “Let the child’s nature fulfill its own destiny revealed to you in whatever of science, and art and industry the world now holds as its own”(111). It is Dewey’s typical dialectical way of saying things, the second clause a near reversal of the first. But sometimes the first half of the sentence is cited as evidence for Dewey’s position on the teacher and the child. Richard Hofstadter, for example, quotes Dewey’s words “let the child’s nature fulfill its own destiny” and then severely criticizes Dewey for not giving direction to the child’s development.[42] But that is just what is in the second half of the sentence: “revealed to you in whatever of science, and art and industry the world now holds as its own.” For Dewey, the teacher provides the direction that the child needs; the teacher knows from a study of art, science, and industry where the child’s nature leads.

Why would anyone quote the first half of a sentence by Dewey when the second half of the sentence is often almost the opposite of the first half? The only conclusion one can draw in this case is that Hofstadter either did not read the passage carefully or he deliberately misconstrued it by cutting the sentence midway. Neither conclusion is an admirable explanation for an historian who was in the midst of criticizing the anti-intellectualism of the country.

Dewey’s claim that the child’s destiny is revealed in science, art, and industry is a remarkable assumption. There is no mention of psychology here, although it is presumably included in science. The child’s destiny is revealed to the teacher by art, science, and industry. The child does not know its own destiny; only the teacher does. Perhaps that is true but listening to a student might have been mentioned as a help to understanding not human destiny but the individual journey of a particular student. That fact becomes more obvious if one talks of student, pupil, or learner rather than child. Six-year-olds, though they should be listened to by teachers, may not be able to articulate much about human destiny. Sixteen- or sixty-year-olds surely have something to say for themselves about their respective destinies.

In the last paragraph of the essay there are three sentences that summarize his dialectic. This conclusion of his argument has constantly been misread. The first sentence is a peculiar fragment that reads in full: “The case is of Child.” That sentence is often quoted, apparently on the assumption that Dewey’s last word is child rather than curriculum. But that sentence is the lead into the second sentence of the paragraph: “It is his present powers which are to assert themselves; his present capacities which are to be exercised; his present attitudes which are to be realized.” That is Dewey’s statement of the case on the child’s side.

The third sentence of the paragraph and the final sentence of the essay goes back to curriculum but now as understood by the teacher: “But save as the teacher knows, knows wisely and thoroughly, the race-experience which is embodied in that thing we call Curriculum, the teacher knows neither what the present power, capacity, or attitude is, nor yet how it is to be asserted, exercised, and realized”(111). Unfortunately, this last sentence is one of his quadruple negatives that lose all but the most determined reader. If Dewey wished the reader to grasp his final statement of a solution to child versus curriculum, he should have tried a simpler syntax.

I have often asked students to put into their own words what Dewey says in the last two sentences of "The Child and the Curriculum." I did that with hundreds of intelligent students who were preparing to be school teachers. Most of them would come up with almost the opposite of Dewey's meaning. They presumed that Dewey was saying the child is more important than curriculum. When I would diagram the two sentences – one line under the subject, two lines under the predicate, dependent clause slanted down from independent clause, and so forth – it would be clear to them what Dewey's meaning was. Dewey's conclusion places the burden on the teacher as psychologist and as an expert in art, science, and industry.

The difficulty of understanding Dewey's prose makes one wonder if it is worth bothering with. Certainly, it makes no sense to have students skim through his books. Nevertheless, much of Dewey's language floats through discussions of education in the United States even if the speaker has never read Dewey. Whatever one thinks of Dewey, it is impossible to make sense of contemporary educational debates without understanding Dewey's part, for good or ill, in what the early twentieth century has given us.

The Context of *Experience and Education*

One of Dewey's books that is assigned to students and is taken to be a compact summary of his educational theory is *Experience and Education*, published in 1938.[43] The book is a cry of frustration on Dewey's part, an impatient and all too brief summary of what he really meant. This hundred page book makes little sense unless one knows the context of the 1930s and the history of "progressive education."

By the 1930s, Dewey felt pressed from all directions in his role of grand theorizer of education. The book *Experience and Education* arose from an invitation by Kappa Delta Pi to address their annual meeting and critique his own philosophy of education. An author criticizing his or her own philosophy may seem like admirable candor but it is not generally a good idea. Why supply help to one's opponents with a negative statement of one's own work. *Experience and Education* is mostly a negative book. Dewey's harshest criticism is for those who profess to be following his philosophy.

The strange thing about the book is that Dewey writes as if he were still a disinterested spectator viewing a philosophical debate. In 1900, Dewey was a relative newcomer offering to mediate a debate between his elders. By 1935, Dewey was in his seventies and was one of the most famous people in the country. He gives no indication in the book that the progressive education he is criticizing is something directly attributed to him in the popular imagination. The audience that heard him deliver the lecture could be assumed to know that he was not an outsider to the argument but generations of readers since then have a quite different context.

The "progressive movement" had suffered a fatal blow with its support of World War I.[44] (FDR would retrieve some of its political and economic causes in the 1930s). Progressive education, on the other hand, only gelled after World War I. William Kilpatrick at Teachers College gave practical shape to the progressive method. He articulated his method before thousands of prospective and practicing school teachers. Kilpatrick assailed the old education: "Our old-type school, with its formal subject-matter, remote from life, made us think of the learning process as laborious and repellent." Fortunately, the new-type school shows that "life's inherent learning comes in fact without effort, comes in fact automatically and stays with us."[45] In the progressive school, according to Kilpatrick, the pupils control the method, "Pupils must propose what they actually do….All learning should be done only if it is necessary for what pupils have actually proposed."[46]

The ideology of "the child-centered school" was the basis of the Progressive Education Association founded in 1919. The organization lasted until 1955 (though it temporarily abandoned its name in 1944 for "American Education Fellowship").[47] In his 1930 presidential address, Burton Fowler stated the principle of the group: "We do endorse by common consent the obvious hypothesis that the child rather than what he studies should be the center of all educational effort."[48] So much for Dewey's solution to the false opposition of child and curriculum.

Two years before this address by Fowler, Dewey had been honorary president of the Progressive Educational Association and he had offered criticism of the child-centered ideology. But criticizing an organization's founding principle is a hopeless undertaking.[49] Dewey's frustration at people who claimed to be implementing his philosophy can be seen in his blunt statement of 1926 on the child-centered school: "Such a method is really stupid. For it attempts the impossible, which is always stupid, and it misconceives the conditions of independent thinking."[50]

Dewey continued to offer criticism of the lack of subject-matter in schools that invoked his philosophy.[51] Even to the very end of his life in 1950, Dewey was complaining to a friend: "Why do writers and teachers insist on saddling me with the 'child-centered' school. Anyone who has read me knows it is the socially-centered school that I have sought."[52] True, anyone who read Dewey would know he was not a proponent of the child-centered school, but Dewey assumed too much in thinking that his "socially-centered" school was an easy-to-grasp alternative.

There was a movement in the 1930s that claimed to be socially centered but Dewey had problems with that reform, too. The "social reconstructionists" reacted against the child-centered school and proposed to make the school a force for social reform. The Depression of the 1930s made clear that society was not going to be radically reconstructed by letting children run free in school. George Counts, in an electrifying speech that was published in 1932 as a small book, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order,* called on school teachers to take power away from the "practical men" – politicians, financiers, and industrialists – so as to change the country. "The profession should rather seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely in the interests of the great masses of the people."[53] Counts was not calling for an end to "progressive education." On the contrary, he was claiming to take back the movement that had moved out to the complacent suburbs and had fallen under the direction of psychologists instead of political activists.[54]

Counts preached that "if the schools are to be really effective, they must become centers for the building, and not merely for the contemplation of our civilization."[55] It was a thrilling but ultimately delusional idea that the young women who were the school teachers, together with the children in their charge, could seize power from the politicians and industrialists. Dewey had some sympathy for the aim of the social reconstructionists. Thirty-five years before Counts'speech, Dewey had called upon teachers to usher in the kingdom of God. But if Dewey had called teachers "prophets," he had perhaps not considered that prophetic speech can clash with the role of school teacher.

While Dewey may have shared Counts' desire for social reform, he rebelled at the means that Counts proposed. Counts called for progressive education to "become less frightened than it is today at bogies of imposition and indoctrination."[56] Although Dewey had expressed some admiration for the "cultural promise" of the Soviet Union's schools,[57] he could not accept a bald endorsement of “indoctrination” in U.S. schools. It might be argued that school children were already being indoctrinated by the political establishment on the right. The temptation on the political left was to fight fire with fire, imposing true doctrine in place of falsehood, but indoctrination ran up against the fundamental principle of liberalism. Dewey always remained skeptical of Marxism and other ideological doctrines.

By the 1930s, Dewey’s interest had moved to the political arena and economic theories. He still thought of education as found in school, a place where adults shepherded children into society. In 1933 he wrote: “The purpose of education has always been to everyone, in essence, the same – to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society.”[58] That is a remarkable claim about what the “essence” of education is and must be. Education is equated with school, school is equated with children. What else then can education be other than keeping society in order?

Dewey had not changed his educational language since the 1890s but his hope that education (school) can be the agent of social change had been dashed. By the late 1930s, Dewey wrote that the schools cannot “in any literal sense be the builders of a new social order,” though he still hoped that they could “share in the building of the social order of the future.”[59]At other times, Dewey was more pessimistic of the school’s part in creating a new social order. He wrote: “It is unrealistic in my opinion, to suppose that the schools can be a main agency in producing the intellectual and moral changes, the changes in attitudes and dispositions of thought and purpose, which are necessary for the creation of a new social order.”[60] If Dewey had said that the school cannot be *the* main agency, the statement would be a realistic assessment of the school’s limits. But in saying that the school cannot be *a* main agency, the statement reflects a despair of education. Having placed education in the school and having assumed schools are for socializing children, Dewey’s idea of education had no chance up against the social problems of the 1930s or any other decade.

Experience and Education

Experience and Education brims with impatience and frustration. In the Preface and in the Conclusion, Dewey proposes getting rid of “progressivism” and “progressive” as descriptions of education. Strangely, he does not take his own advice and he structures everything in between the beginning and the end of the book as a conflict between traditional and progressive.

In the Introduction he adverts to another movement of the time, one that shadows the discussion in the book. He refers to “the attempt to revive the principles of ancient Greece and of the middle ages”(6). The reference is specifically to Robert Hutchins, the brilliant young president of the University of Chicago, and his associate, the prolific philosopher, Mortimer Adler. They had initiated the Great Books Program which, like the program of social reconstruction, was a reaction against child-centered programs.

While George Counts wished to turn the school into a revolutionary vanguard, Hutchins and Adler saw the school as a contemplative place to immerse young people in the wisdom of great minds from the past. Dewey would have agreed that a solid intellectual curriculum made logical sense, given his own criticism of schools, but he was upset by Adler’s rigid adherence to his version of great books. Dewey’s exchanges with Hutchins and Adler were remarkably vituperative.[61] Did he really think that their Greek, Latin, and medieval texts threatened the U.S. public schools?

In any case, Dewey’s portrait of the “traditional” school did not give any ground to a value in the traditional. In the nineteenth century, traditional education meant Greek and Latin for an elite, along with basic literacy and job training for the masses. By the 1930s, nineteenth-century traditional education had largely disappeared, replaced by a variety of educational theories and practices in a massive school system. The schools under Roman Catholic auspices may have gloried in being traditional. The public schools were trying to be up to date, despite being burdened with economic problems, including inadequate pay for the young women who staffed the schools.

From the first page of *Experience and Education*, Dewey is a harsh critic of schools that claimed to be progressive. Despite his stated wish to get rid of the term, he seems instead to be intent on correcting what progressive means. As usual, he announces on the first page that "instead of taking one side or the other," he will "indicate a plan of operations proceeding from a level deeper and more inclusive than is represented by the practices and ideas of the contending parties"(5).

Unlike "The Child and the Curriculum," where Dewey as outsider could logically proceed to undercut the debate, in *Experience and Education* he is clearly and deeply involved on one side. His argument is a messy complaint about the inadequacies of progressive schools, but at the same time there is no dialectical interplay between "traditional" schools and "progressive" schools. Dewey could not reconstruct a meaning of "progressive" unless he also rethought the meaning of "traditional," something he was unable or unwilling to do.

If one wished to explore "traditional," the first step would be to recognize that traditional education – encompassing the last few thousand years – was not mainly about schools at all. To re-examine tradition, Dewey would have had to reconsider his dismissal of the family and the religious community as educational forces. He would have had to rethink education in relation to a new world of work and lifelong development. Dewey often dropped hints of an education beyond a school teacher's efforts with children.[62] But he could not get free of the educational language that dominated the late nineteenth century – nor have we yet found a consistent way out of it. Mortimer Adler's Great Books Program proved to be only a small blip in the attempted reform of education, an attractive alternative for a select few college students. However, some of the "traditional" ideas in those books might have some relevance to our continuing problem of what education is.

Dewey's concern in *Experience and Education*, as indicated by the title, is the relation between experience and education. That was certainly a worthwhile concern for any writer on education, and especially for Dewey. In the present, just as in the 1930s, there are people who enthusiastically announce a grand new discovery: experience-based education. Dewey takes dead aim at this cliché by pointing out that all education is based on experience. What else could it be based on?[63]

While Dewey has little good to say for "traditional" education, he does remind his would-be progressive disciples that "it would be a great mistake to suppose, even tacitly, that the traditional classroom was not a place in which pupils had experiences"(26). Even though he uses one of his double negatives here, he does acknowledge that traditional schools dealt in experience. Unfortunately, everything else he has to say about traditional schools is simply negative. Lacking any dialectical partner for the progressive side, Dewey could not succeed in sorting out the good and the bad in progressive schools.

Dewey had been writing about "experience" for almost fifty years. Much of *Democracy and Education* in 1915 was about experience. One of his finest books in the 1920s was entitled *Experience and Nature.* And in 1934, he published *Art as Experience* which has a systematic explanation of experience in relation to art. *Experience and Education* was Dewey's last, exasperated attempt to explain what experience means in the context of education. However, I doubt that there are many readers who on finishing the last page of *Experience and Education* say: Now I finally understand what Dewey meant by experience.

Dewey writes as if the reader is already familiar with his meaning of experience and needs only a few reminders or some course corrections. Many of his audience for the original address might be presumed to have known about his previous writing on experience. Most readers of the book since then, hoping to get Dewey's idea of experience, find themselves in a tangle of criticisms directed at progressive schools. Experience is a topic addressed only obliquely in this book. A reader might expect a first chapter laying out exactly what he means by experience. Instead, Dewey proceeds to talk about the quality of experience, aspects of the quality, interpreting experience, and the interplay of conditions of experience forming a "situation."

He might have begun with at least the kind of straight-forward statement found in *Democracy and Education*: "Experience itself primarily consists of the *active* relations subsisting between a human being and his natural and social surroundings."[64] That is not a complete picture ("primarily consists") because he did not have adequate words for what is his last word before silence. In *Experience and Education,* he should have emphasized to his readers that "experience" includes all the relations you can imagine, and also those you cannot imagine.

Dewey argues that the human mind thinks about "objects" but that actual existence (experience) is relational. There are no objects but there are objective and subjective poles within experience. Education, therefore, is always about "interactions" [65] *within* experience: teacher-learner, man-woman, adult-child, thinking-feeling, active-passive, human-nonhuman, school-family, tradition-progress, and so on without end. Dewey does have scattered comments on many of these relations within experience but, lacking a firm overall meaning of experience in which to situate the relations, the reader may miss the educational significance of these interactions.

Among the endless relations within experience, there is one that cries out for discussion if education is to be clarified. I refer to the relation of teaching-learning. Dewey frequently has indirect references to this relation but never systematically explores it. He could have been helpful in undercutting many of the fruitless assumptions about teaching.

In most writing on education, teaching is assumed to involve a human individual (the teacher) and another human individual who is young but not too young (the child). The assumed context is almost always a classroom. The question posed or more likely hovering in the background is: What does the teacher say and how does he or she say it so that the learner will take in that information? That question has no answer; there simply is no way for the teacher to transmit his or her knowledge into the head of the learner. While Socrates is celebrated for showing this to be the case, school teachers are still expected to transmit their knowledge to their students.

Dewey offers the possibility of a different question that does have an answer or has many answers. Teaching-learning is what goes on all the time within experience. Learning is what happens when humans, and other animals that are receptive to development, receive direction from those living or non-living forces that show them a way of life. Thus a teacher can be a human, either a living person or someone who is still present in memory. A teacher can also be a group of human beings; a community which is no longer alive makes up tradition. Finally, a teacher can be other than a human being; if humans are receptive to the teaching, animals and, by extension, objects, such as air, light, oceans, and deserts, are capable of teaching.

One could go on indefinitely naming those who can play teacher. The more important point not to be lost sight of is that teaching-learning is a single relation seen from opposite ends. Dewey compared teaching and learning to buying and selling."No one can sell unless someone else buys. There is the same extant equation between teaching and learning that there is between selling and buying."[66] He could have used any number of relations as analogies for teaching-learning. What is taken to be a truism in current educational writing – that learning is separate from teaching – is an impossibility within Dewey's philosophy.

If one starts with Dewey's meaning of experience, the question for the classroom instructor is how do I join the other teachers. The teaching has been going on in a person's life since birth The most important individual human teacher is usually the mother (the father may be a close second). A person who is assigned the term teacher in the context of school can only try to gently reshape whatever teaching-learning has already occurred and is continuing to occur in the student's life.

Dewey was insistent that the school should be in continuity with out-of-school experience. That would mean that the parents and the professional educator should provide a continuity of teaching-learning, within which the family's teaching and the school's teaching have distinguishable areas of concern. For Dewey to make that point effectively, he would have had to give attention to the parent as teacher but he never does that. Like other writers on education, he casually refers to "parents and teachers." Nearly all educational literature, after a rhetorical gesture toward parents, explicitly denies that parents are teachers.

The loss here is not just for parents but for the people carrying the impossible burden of being called "the teacher." The important but limited possibilities of classroom teaching are hidden beneath unrealistic pressures for success on test scores and overwhelming problems of classroom management. The work is extremely difficult and the public does not show much respect for the job. Politicians and parents deep down believe that "anyone can teach." They are right; every human being is a teacher. But unless one has dealt with the expectations and limits of the classroom on a daily basis for many years, he or she is unlikely to grasp how difficult the job is.

Dewey's progressive schools were looking for a way to ease the burden. Why not talk less, do less, have fewer rules, let children follow their interests? Dewey describes progressive schools that had no subject-matter, no rules of conduct, no adult authority. Dewey warned that such schools are headed for chaos, which is one of the worst enemies of freedom. The school is a game that has to have rules. No rules, no game, Dewey says (52). He positions the classroom teacher as a member of the community but also the game's umpire. That is not a bad image for thinking about classroom management. However, the umpire in this case first has to design the environment so that student interactions with each other and their engagement with learning materials provide a firm basis for authority.

Controlling environmental interactions in a classroom requires someone who can provoke intellectual questioning. People who try to survive in the role of school teacher with clever tricks have a limited career span. As Dewey said in the conclusion of "The Child and the Curriculum," what is required is that the classroom teacher be excited about art, science, and industry which the past has given us. The school teacher also has to learn about the teaching-learning already present in the prospective learners' lives. Success at the game requires intelligence, hard work, patience, humor, and luck.

Chapter Five: Wittgenstein: I'll Teach You Differences

Ludwig Wittgenstein is a controversial thinker of the first half of the twentieth century. From my point of view, this chapter is the most important one for getting at why there is a problem at all with teaching. From the side of the reader, however, this might be a frustrating chapter because Wittgenstein's style determines how this chapter can be written. That is, no book or set of essays can be summarized to convey his system of thought. Like a number of other writers in the past century, he is sometimes ridiculed or dismissed.

This chapter, in accord with Wittgenstein's work, proceeds with "remarks," "signals," examples and paradoxes. I am interested in the meaning of "to teach" but Wittgenstein never attempts to state that. It is important to note from the beginning that he does not claim to solve the problem but to show why we have a problem. That John Dewey did not develop a philosophy of teaching is surprising, perhaps even scandalous. That Wittgenstein has no philosophy of teaching is not surprising at all.

Although Wittgenstein does not have any extended treatment of teaching, it is possible to see much of what he wrote as an example of teaching. He tries in every which way to teach the reader about the paradoxes of language by using paradoxes. The way he says things is as crucial as what he says in conveying a meaning of teaching. I am interested only in his view of teaching but it is not possible to get at it without some appreciation of his overall project.

One thing that seems clear is that there is an early Wittgenstein and a later Wittgenstein. A contrast of early and late is true of many thinkers and it always raises the question of how the younger and the older thinker are related. It can happen that the older man contradicts his youthful self; at least he sees a repudiation while commentators on the work may see continuity. At other times the writer may see continuity while outsiders see wholesale rejection.

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

Wittgenstein himself commented on the relation between his first book, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and his last book, published after his death, *Philosophical Investigations* .[1] He says that the two books should be read together; the second book gets much of its meaning from being a commentary on the first (*Investigations* Preface). At times, he makes fun of the author of the *Tractatus*, his younger self (*Investigations* 119). Ultimately, as we shall see, he does not repudiate or contradict the early work but places it in a larger context that changes its meaning.

The style of the two books is radically different; they are alike only in that each has a puzzling format. The *Tractatus* is a series of numbered propositions by which Wittgenstein laid claim to completely representing the world that can be known. Like bright young mathematicians of the seventeenth century, such as Descartes and Leibniz, he ambitiously thought his system included all philosophical knowledge in its proper order. Only at the end of the book is there an abrupt admission that there might be a whole realm that his logical statements cannot encompass.

His admission almost seems an afterthought but it was actually his aim from the beginning. To a prospective publisher he wrote that his work had two parts, the part he had written and the part he had not written; the second part was more important.[2] That was not a very good argument to convince a publisher but it was prophetic. The later book includes much of what he could not find a way to express in the first book.

The *Tractatus* ends in what he calls "the mystical"(*Tractatus*.6.522). That is not an uncommon journey for many mathematicians when they reach the limit of their rational formulas. Beyond rational knowledge is silence. However, as Wittgenstein once said of his critics, "the difference is that I have something to be silent about"[3] Beyond the representation of the world in logical sentences is the realm of aesthetics, ethics and religion.

The image at the end of the book is of a man going up a ladder and then pulling up the ladder after him. Everything that can be said can be said clearly; beyond that is what cannot be said but is nevertheless more important. The famous last line was translated: "Of that whereof one cannot speak, one must be silent" (*Tractatus* 7). This unspeakable realm shows or manifests itself in silence. Reality is thus divided into what can be said and what must be shown. Wittgenstein could not have been satisfied with this conclusion. Simply to be left speechless about what one considers the most important areas of life has to be frustrating.

A group of philosophers in England and Germany disregarded the mystical ending of the *Tractatus* and were quite content with an empirically based logic. The group was called Logical Positivists. They thought that what cannot be said clearly is simply nonsense.[4] Wittgenstein, from the late 1920s until his death in 1950, struggled with how to speak about the unspeakable. The *Investigations*, published in 1953, is his report of that journey.

A biographical note here might be appropriate before examining the contents of the *Investigations*.[5] Although Wittgenstein had grown up with wealth and privilege, he experienced a quasi-religious conversion during World War I when he nearly died. After the war, he gave away all his money and for the rest of his life he lived a simple life with few possessions. He became a gardener in a monastery and considered becoming a monk. Silence became a central theme of his work. He then trained to become a school teacher and spent six years teaching in elementary schools for peasant children in southern Austria. He does not seem to have had much success in the job and had to resign. He then returned to Cambridge where he had shown great promise as a student before the war.

During subsequent decades he was a professor at Cambridge University but he never could quite fit the role of professor. He was especially uncomfortable at being a "lecturer" in the classroom. No doubt he confused or infuriated some students by his long stretches of silence in which he was trying to think out a problem.[6] He was more at ease meeting with a small group of students in his room. It is hardly surprising that the university lecture was not his appropriate format. Universities then and now simply assume that the job of professors in the classroom is to read aloud from their written text or notes.

What's in the *Philosophical Investigations*?

Wittgenstein said that he tried to write a book in the standard form but realized that the only thing that fits his conclusions is a series of "remarks" (Preface). He wishes the reader to become the writer of the book, that is, to force upon the reader a journey similar to his own. His purpose is to initiate a new "sensibility" in the reader brought about by "conversion."[7] Wittgenstein considered using as a motto for the book the phrase in the title of this chapter, "I'll teach you differences."[8]

Philosophical Investigations is a book that is loaded with questions, many of them not answered by the author, at least directly. Wittgenstein said that mathematicians did not like his work because he asked the simple questions that a child asks. "I trot out all the problems that education represses without solving."[9] The whole book can be read as reflections on how a child comes to learn a language and how grownups lose their first exuberant encounter with language. The adult comes to take language "for granted" as a set of names for labeling the things that make up the world.

Wittgenstein tries to provoke the reader into recognizing that language is more mysterious than pictures for things. The way we usually think of language "casts a spell"; we are "bewitched" by language (109). On occasion people meet with what Wittgenstein calls "conceptual puzzles," words that have conflicting meanings.[10] At that point, people may go to a dictionary to get the "correct" meaning. They then settle back with confidence that their word is the right representation of the thing.

I earlier quoted Nietzsche that any word which has a history cannot be defined. That is, definition is a setting of limits; a board of experts hands down a ruling on how the word is properly used. But every old word is ambiguous in meaning; the older and simpler the word, the more ambiguous. Wittgenstein agrees with Martin Buber that this ambiguity is not a defect of language; it is the basis for the richness of language.[11] Dictionaries are for the most part a cover-up of the process that leads to definition (415).

The Oxford English Dictionary, the most ambitious project on language ever attempted, makes a great effort to unveil the cover-up by showing how a word has been used throughout its history. When the OED was begun in the nineteenth century, it was a herculean task to track the uses of a word through centuries of usage. Now the computer makes it a much easier job but even the best computer cannot give us a record of every time a simple, old word has been used. If it could, then we would have the meaning of the word. We would find a pattern of different contexts in which the word has appeared. The OED does provide rough approximations of the contexts. But we lack and always will lack what Wittgenstein calls a "perspicuous" view, that is, a comprehensive view of how language functions in use (122).

Wittgenstein could be said to have written a commentary on what the OED does. One of his best known principles is "let the use teach you the meaning"(212). It is important to understand this principle as embracing the history of language, not just current use. The etymology of a word throws some light on why the word was thought to be needed. Someone at some time conceived the word as a helpful contribution to the language. Although the etymology does not settle disputes about the meaning of a word, it can never be dismissed as irrelevant.

Words wander in meaning as they are used in various contexts. That is hardly surprising. What is truly puzzling and causes endless disputes is when a word has nearly opposite meanings.[12] Wittgenstein says that if our opponent in an argument is saying something that seems completely absurd, perhaps he or she is legitimately drawing upon a meaning of the word that is the opposite of the meaning we are assuming.[13]

Words abstracted from a context of use do not have a meaning, but we imagine that some words can simply be used as labels for naming things. We have a strong tendency to change verbs to nouns so that an activity then appears to be a thing that can be labeled. Wittgenstein uses as a metaphor that words, when they are not acting in statements, are like an engine idling; they are simply static. (132). Or to use another of his metaphors, words are like tools in a tool box. One has to see the tool acting within what he calls a "form of life" (11). We think of words as the outer expression of our inner thoughts, the means by which we communicate our ideas. But words are also our chief obstacle to understanding the world and conversing with others. It is in speech that we agree or disagree (241).

If he is right that we are "bewitched" by language, living in illusion, then no words are up to the task of ending the spell. Every word that we use threatens to entangle us further in confusion. There is no way to directly address the problem by starting with agreed upon premises and arguing on the basis of evidence to a firm conclusion. Modern philosophy began with a search for an unambiguous premise, a truth that no one could deny. But if such a premise is put into language it is going to be ambiguous in meaning and not do what is asked of it.

The search for unambiguous truth leads to higher and higher levels of abstraction which eliminate human meaning as they eliminate ambiguity. Dean Rusk, a Secretary of State in the 1950s, described his experience of policy disputes in government circles. He said that arguments moved to higher and higher levels of generality until everyone could agree; they could agree because the agreement no longer meant anything. Of course, outside the dispute altogether, some official was actually deciding policy, perhaps with no recognition of the ambiguity involved. Or if a new policy was not pressing, the former policy stayed in place which itself was a decision not subjected to criticism.

Wittgenstein warns that the only way we can get at the problem is by examples, by showing how language works in practice. That is not the inclination of the human mind or the direction that philosophy has taken in its imitation of (mathematical) science. Wittgenstein refers to a "contempt for the particular," by which he means our wish to create general categories that are completely under our control.[14]

Wittgenstein refused to move away from the particulars. What G. K. Chesterton wrote of Francis of Assisi could apply to Wittgenstein: he refused to see the wood from the trees.[15] We – the human race – lack a comprehensive view of language. We have to work with the simple words of ordinary life and pursue clarifications one case at a time. In Hanna Pitkin's apt metaphor, we are fisherman at sea who cannot put into port to fix our nets.[16] When we talk about language we have only language to work with. Abstracting words from a living context to give us unambiguous constructs only further obscures the puzzles of meaning.

Wittgenstein's "remarks" on language received two main responses, one negative and the other laudatory. He did not make himself a friend to modern philosophers by constantly attacking modern philosophy or philosophy itself. He sometimes says that he is trying to put an end to philosophy (336). On his own principles he could have tried to recover the root meaning of philosophy – love of wisdom – and use that meaning against the present captivity of the term in the university. In any case, many philosophers and non-philosophers think that his work is somewhere between inanity and fraud. They think that what he said is too obvious for saying or else is just rambling comments that go nowhere.

In the other direction, Wittgenstein generated some loyal disciples, especially among a number of his Cambridge students. A small library of books has been devoted to an exposition of his philosophy (or anti-philosophy).[17] The danger here is "Wittgensteinism," which would be a system of abstract ideas. The name often given to this school is "ordinary language philosophy." His point was that we are stuck with words as we use them in everyday life for dealing with puzzles and disputes; no set of abstractions can save us. We do not need a philosophical system of "ordinary-langugageism."

These opposite responses to Wittgenstein –his work is trivialities that any fool knows versus a difficult system that only expert philosophers can master – have a similar effect. They both lead to an avoidance of the difficult but simple puzzles that profoundly affect life and death. "The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity….One is unable to notice something because it is always before our eyes" (129).

Since the seventeenth century, philosophy had been involved in a search for the "foundation" of knowledge. In the twentieth century the idea of a stone structure on which a building is erected was a metaphor that had problems. One approach to criticizing the metaphor would have been to separate "foundation" from the picture of a house sitting on concrete.

Another approach would have been to argue that modern philosophy applied the metaphor of foundation where it did not belong. That is, philosophers were not in search of a foundation; they were actually in search of a roof from which to hang other knowledge. A third way of criticizing the use of the metaphor of foundation is that philosophers did not consider that something other than one piece of knowledge can be the foundation for the rest of knowledge. There may be a foundation for knowledge that is not knowledge.

Instead of criticizing the metaphor, many twentieth-century thinkers declared themselves to be against "foundationalism"; they invented anti-foundationalism. This language lifts the question into a stratosphere where only a few people, comfortable in a world of –isms carry on a debate between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists. The idea of something being foundational or fundamental in human thinking is probably unavoidable but the word is ill-served on both sides of the debate. The simple questions of what do we know, how can we be certain, and what is fundamental to knowing are not likely to get clarified in a battle of –isms

Wittgenstein transformed the question of foundation. In an early formulation, he wrote in opposition to the "atomic facts" of the Logical Positivists: "What has to be accepted, the given – it might be said – are facts of living."[18]By the time of the *Investigations*, he had come to refer to "forms of life" as the given. The phrase has caused some confusion but he simply meant the various ways we use language in our daily lives. "Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing"(25). He does not begin from "the epistemological solitude of the individual consciousness" but from human speech in a multiplicity of situations. "Nothing is more fundamental to the whole human enterprise than the community we create in our natural reactions to one another as they have been cultivated and elaborated in a very contingent, historical tradition."[19]

Conceptual Puzzles

The "conceptual puzzles" that Wittgenstein refers to are terms that have nearly opposite meanings. The meanings are not contradictory; some underlying link prevents the two meanings from simply being equivocal. The double meaning emerged in the course of history, and the second meaning, almost the reverse of the first, does not entirely replace the first. Both meanings remain, creating ambiguity and endless disputes involving the correct meaning – "the definition" – of the word. If people consciously carried on that argument it would be confusing enough. In most disputes, however, the two meanings float through the argument without debaters recognizing that the ambiguity of the word is a problem at all.

Wittgenstein, in describing teaching, says that the teacher provides examples and at some point the learner can "go on in the same way as those who are teaching us"(31-32). I wish to cite some examples, not those that Wittgenstein used but ones that go on in the same way. In pointing out the ambiguities of the following words I am trying to show a form of teaching. I will use three examples of "conceptual puzzles" before turning to the examples of education and teaching.

Culture. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the biological metaphor "culture" was used to indicate a person with superior taste. Culture was almost synonymous with education. A person was either cultured or not. Culture was what the superior class defended against attempts to coarsen society. In the late nineteenth century, anthropology nearly reversed the meaning. From now on, there were many cultures and an enlightened person was forbidden to judge any one of them superior to others. Instead of a judgment of excellence, one was now to be "non-judgmental." The two meanings are almost opposites but one can trace the movement between the two meanings in a work such as Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* in 1870 which advocates a “program of culture” open to everyone. The anthropologist in the 1880s was drawing on a tendency already at work in a democracy where “culture” was to be made available to all.

In the late twentieth century, “multiculturalism” was a favorite word of people who thought it was obvious that the country contains many cultures. Their opponents, whether or not they were conscious of drawing upon an older meaning of culture, defended educational standards against the multiculturalists. Russell Baker wrote that he thought the schools should try to get one culture before claiming to cover many. I was once on a panel for an audience of U.N. diplomats. The question of the day was whether the United States should be exporting its culture around the world. After the predictable complaints about McDonalds, Coca Cola, and Hollywood movies by many of the diplomats, the French diplomat said: “I don’t think this country has any culture.” Everyone looked at him, everyone understood exactly what he meant, and then they went back to discussing the bad influence of Hollywood.

Religion. I noted in chapter six that the term “religion,” similar to culture, nearly reversed its meaning. Up to the sixteenth century there was true religion or false religion. There could not be many religions. Even as late as John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* which could be alternately translated as “Practices of Christian Devotion,” this meaning of “religion.” was in place.

A different meaning of religion had begun to emerge in the fifteenth century but what brought about a fundamental change was the split of Christianity at the Reformation. Late in the sixteenth century, as Protestants and Catholics fought to a standstill in some places, one finds reference to the “Catholic and Protestant religions.” The invention of this new meaning for religion was a big step on the way to tolerance, It was quite novel to suggest that there might be more than one set of practices deserving of the name religion.

Now the word was available for referring to Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and so forth. People who actually engage in practices of devotion do not think of themselves as “having a religion.” They may object to the word being applied to them while at the same time they may join anthropologists or sociologists in describing other people as having a religion. For most Jews, Jews don’t have a religion; Jews think that Christians have a religion, but being Jewish is a way of life. The final ironic twist is when Christians distance themselves from religion by contrasting, “Christian faith” and “world religions.”

Revolution . The term revolution” is a common metaphor with an unusually clear history. The term used by Copernicus in *On the Revolution of the Heavens* provided the image of a circling back to beginnings. The term entered political language in 1689 with the Glorious Revolution that secured the rights of Englishmen. The revolution restored rights that went back as far as the thirteenth century but had been disrupted. When the British American colonists declared independence in 1776, their document, with an eye to 1689, appealed to parliament for redress from abuses by the king. Subsequently, when they wrote a constitution they laid claim to a “new order” but they looked for models in the ancient world.

The French Revolution, in some ways a sequel to the one in North America, nearly reversed the meaning of revolution. A violent disruption was at its heart; a new calendar with the year one was to be adopted, signifying a break from monarchy and priesthood. In British America, the main revolution was, as John Adams said, in the hearts and minds of the people; the violent war was a sequel to the more important revolution.

The French Revolution began in violence and the revolution picked up more violence as it proceeded. The more common meaning of “revolution” since then has taken the French Revolution as its model. A series of bloody revolutions cut across the nineteenth century, culminating in the Marxist-Leninist revolution establishing the Soviet Union. In the 1960s, John Kennedy and later Bobby Kennedy talked of a new kind of peaceful revolution needed in Latin America. Their intention was admirable but they may not have realized how difficult it would be to bring the older meaning of revolution back to center stage.

Education

The term education is also a kind of conceptual puzzle. The way that school is related to education seems to be a simple omission or a use of a part for the whole. People regularly say "education," when they mean school. If challenged, they will say obviously education goes beyond school. What is usually unrecognized is that school and education are not different in extension but two different kinds of things. "School" is a word that evolved into meaning a place, an institution, or a system. Education is an ancient word for a process that especially applies to children but can be used of all human beings and in the past was used of animals and trees.

The almost complete collapse of education into school could not have occurred before the middle of the nineteenth century. The advent of an ideal of "universal education" (that is, school for every child) in France, the United States and throughout much of the world, was not greeted with joy by the laboring classes. Their resistance was worn down, though never entirely eliminated, by the fact that society rewards those who "finish school" and are properly credentialed (eight years at the beginning of the twentieth century, sixteen years today).

Some of what schools are for is undoubtedly valuable for a flourishing human existence. Some parents did need persuading about their children's education. But the new class of educators not only won the game; they all but eliminated their linguistic opponents. School was the victor over the ways people had been educated for millennia but it may have been a pyrrhic victory.

When the classroom is part of an educational pattern, it can be a place of hope and revolutionary power; that is the reason why it is both glorified and feared. But as the sole "deliverer" of education, the classroom is hopelessly overmatched. The school's teacher is burdened by both rhetorical praise and carping criticism. Tax payers routinely complain: why don't these teachers do their job and turn out smart, knowledgeable, and well-behaved citizens?

Whenever it begins to surface that school cannot be the whole of education, the issue is quickly pushed out of sight with a distinction between "formal education" and "informal education." The school is the formal education; informal education is anything else anyone cares to name. Since education is not thinkable without form (of time, place, material, recipients), the distinction between formal education (school) and what has no form (amorphousness) reinforces the assumption that whatever education is it belongs in school. Despite the fact that the whole idea has badly broken down over the last half century, the language has not changed from what the early twentieth century gave us.

Given assumptions in the way "education" is used, the teacher is the obvious actor in the middle (or the bottom) of the picture. What do teachers do? They teach. While the school teacher, is profusely praised at ritualized moments, he, or more likely she, does not have much status and is not paid in the same league as lawyers, bond salesmen, or CEO's. Not many university professors list their occupation as school teacher; it would mean a reduction in status if they did.

To Teach

How then do we find a wider, deeper, richer meaning of "teach"? Wittgenstein provides several "signals" for responding to the question: what does it mean to teach? In asking for meaning, Wittgenstein says, one should ask: How does the child come to use the word (208)? Another key question for Wittgenstein is whether the activity is exclusively human or does its "grammar" allow for its use beyond humans? One of his examples is that we know a machine cannot have a tooth ache; that is not part of the grammar of pain.[20] Does the grammar of teach allow us to say that communities of people teach? Do people unintentionally teach? Do cats, birds and elephants teach? Do trees, oceans or deserts teach?

The answers to those questions are debatable. One can assemble examples which after a while are persuasive – or not. The English word "teach" has been spoken and written millions of times. If one could google all those millions of times over the centuries, only a small minority of cases would refer to what a person called the teacher does in a classroom. The word teach shows up to describe the first moments of life and continues in use to the very end of life. Throughout life teaching cuts across every "form of life"; that is, its use is both lifelong and life wide.

Wittgenstein's question of when and how the child first encounters the word does not admit of a general answer. What is certain is that a child, even before speaking, encounters someone showing them how to do something, to which the child responds. Wittgenstein says that teaching begins as training (5). Giving an explanation to the learner comes later. Numerous books on education blithely assert that to teach is to give reasons or to explain. These discussions of teaching simply dismiss what happens in early childhood as training, not teaching.[21]

One's grammar can simply oppose teaching and training or one can include training as a form of teaching. The preferable choice is suggested by the practical results. Excluding training from teaching creates a shriveled up meaning for teaching and it leaves reasons and explanations without a human leg to stand on. A school teacher who does not include training as a subordinate but indispensable part of teaching-learning is going to find classroom teaching ineffective, unwieldy, and discouraging.

The young child encounters teaching as a training in human basics (5, 208). Most of the time the teaching is not verbal and it is not intentional. The child is taught how to do things by being shown how to do them. At an early age, the teaching is similar to the teaching of nonhuman animals when young. Children feel sympathy with (the other) animals who are similarly being trained. Children can recognize fear or pain in their next of kin, an awareness that adults may lose.

It takes several years for the child to acquire the verb "teach," but it is acquired well before "school age." Once the child is aware of learning things, its vocabulary soon includes "teach me to do that" – whether the request is to tie a shoelace, blow bubbles, or learn to ride a bicycle.

In the 1940s and 1950s researchers were interested in the link between teaching and learning. "To simplify the research task, teaching was reconceptualized as a variety of acts performed by individuals called teachers as they work in classrooms with the intention of promoting learning."[22] The assumption in such research was that classroom instruction is the primary form of teaching and that teaching and learning are separate activities. The search was for sure-fire behaviors that would effectively connect teaching and learning. It was confidently said that "since it may be assumed that whatever effect a teacher has on pupils must result from behaviors, it is only necessary to identify the crucial behaviors, record them, and score them properly to measure effectiveness in process."[23]

This research never produced much fruit.[24] Many researchers concluded that teaching and learning have no necessary connection. But it could be that isolating a (school) teacher's behaviors to understand teaching is the wrong place to start. Wittgenstein begins with teaching-learning as a single relation. Learning is always a result of teaching but a pupil in the classroom learns from many teachers. The academic instructor, mainly using words, has no guaranteed way to succeed. There is always a gap. The gap is not between teaching and learning but between what an individual human teacher intends to teach and what pupils actually learn.

The skillful teacher in the classroom accepts this frustrating fact and does not try to fill the gap with more explanations or threats of punishment. The effective teacher uses language that points, suggests, provokes, and leaves the learner to respond. When people do not learn what someone is intending to teach, the fault may lie with the person trying to teach, with the one who is to be a learner, or with conditions that are not entirely under the control of either. The question to ask is not why they cannot learn but what are they in fact learning and how can one influence that teacher. A child in a ghetto school has many teachers. The lessons taught by the country, the neighborhood, and the school may drown out the lesson that the hard-working instructor at the front of the room is trying to teach.

An examination of who or what teaches raises the issue of whether the grammar of teach-learn extends beyond the human world. I have suggested that a focus on teaching as the giving of reasons unduly restricts teaching to “children of school age” and undermines even that one form of teaching. Teaching that is humanly most helpful begins with training which can be examined in the interaction of mother and offspring in many species. The pattern that humans follow quickly veers from the rest of the animal world but, when humans take the time to look, they can still learn much from the teaching-learning among other animals.

The teacher of an animal can be another animal or the teacher can be a human. Some of the best writing on “animal training” does not hesitate to use the verb teach.[25] If you wish an animal to conform to human wishes, you have to respect its ability to learn and show it to do so in ways that do not violently intrude on what it has already learned. Its basic learning has come from its tribe and its parent. Other animals have a more restricted pattern of learning than do humans but like humans they learn because they have been taught.

The grammar of teach-learn extends beyond the human world and even beyond the nonhuman animal world. One can say that the ocean taught the fishermen, the mountain taught the climber, or that the earth is our teacher. The question is where the metaphorical extension of teach-learn no longer makes sense. On the learner’s side, there has to be a being who can respond; teaching a rock or an automobile does not make sense. On the teacher’s side, teaching is to show how to do or not do something. Within that meaning, intention is not an indispensable element. Calling the universe and everything in it our (potential) teachers seems to some people to make the word do too much, evacuating any useful meaning. But so long as one holds to the core meaning of to teach as to show someone how to do something, the metaphorical extension does not become empty of meaning.

One theme implicit in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy but which requires emphasis is that he moved from using visual metaphors for knowledge to a variety of oral/aural/tactile metaphors. At least he tried to make that move although his language (whether German or English) resists giving up the primacy of the visual. Equating knowing with seeing goes back as far as Plato and was reinforced in modern times by the metaphor of “enlightenment.” In the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein came to the limits of knowledge as a picture of an object. His attempted alternative was a realm that *shows* itself. Although this realm is unspeakable, it is still visual in character. In the *Tractatus,* his real alternative to a picture is silence, which is an oral/aural metaphor but it does not change the character of knowing insofar as the silence is *above* all language.

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein has language play a variety of games which do not need pictures attached. Silence now finds its place not above the world of language but at its center.

Most teaching in life is nonverbal. Speech for a child emerges out of silence. The earliest form of speech in teaching is directions for moving the body. The shift is from *showing* to *showing how*. It is easy to miss how crucial the difference is between these two verb forms. It is the difference between, on the one hand, trying to teach swimming by holding up a picture of a swimmer and explaining the dynamics of swimming and, on the other hand, teaching someone to swim by getting into the water, putting a hand under the learner's body, and saying "kick," "breathe," "turn." In a classroom, it is the difference between trying to show people the truth by telling them, as opposed to a conversation in which a student is shown how best to use language in the search for truth.

Wittgenstein often slips back into talking about a view or a vision of things. He also uses a distinction between "image" and "picture" in order to free thinking from a pictorial bias (301). But at least in English, "image" is still a strongly visual metaphor. An important point he does make with this distinction is that we get free from identifying knowing and a picture when the images are multiple. It is doubtful that the human mind can think without images of some kind. Wittgenstein had a fondness for Western movies and incorporated them into his image of knowing. The "moving pictures" provide not a picture or several photos but an experience of movement. In trying to transcend knowledge imagined as a snapshot, he sought alternatives in mathematical formulas, architectural plans, and portraits.[26]He also considered music to be a key to human understanding. Understanding a sentence is much like understanding a piece of music.

A person who wishes to signify understanding may say "I see." But the sign that the person has understood is that he or she can use the right word in context (531). Hanna Pitkin gives an example of a three-year-old who is told by her mother to put her blanket back on the bed. The child responds: "But mother, I simply can't function in the morning without my blanket."[27] The adult may laugh that the child has imitated a statement of her mother's. But the child did not just repeat her mother's words. She used the sentence in the appropriate human situation and she is responding to the mother's (unintentional) teaching by example.

What clinches the fact that the child understands is that she has precisely substituted "blanket" for "coffee." She understood the statement within her own context. If she were asked the meaning of the word "function" she probably would not even know that it is a word. She was shown how to use language and she responded with her own proper use of language. In this kind of teaching, "seeing the truth" and giving reasons do not play a prominent part.

The learning of language is the most obvious example of how teaching-learning occurs for humans. The child is surrounded with teachers and responds to the teaching. A child learns French or Spanish or Russian depending on which language is spoken in the environment. The child can also learn a second language from its immediate surroundings before self-reflection fully emerges. After that time, the person may try to remember rules, memorize words, and compose sentences, all of which get in the way of speaking a language.

A classroom is a good place for reflecting on language that has already been learned; it is not designed for acquiring a language. Rather than teach a person to speak, a classroom teacher can teach a person to speak better. The usual way to learn a language is in a wide variety of situations in which the person has little choice but to respond in speech ("Where is the bathroom"). The teachers are everyone and everything in the vicinity.

Steven Pinker has written "let us put aside the myth that mothers teach their children to speak."[28] What he is opposing is a special language of "motherese" but he badly overstates his case. Mothers most surely teach their children to speak. They are only one of many teachers, but they are one of the most important. The reason, I suspect, that writers on education are dismissive of parental teaching is not that the teaching is ineffective but, on the contrary, because it is so powerfully formative of a person’s life. Later in life, when other people teach by giving reasons and explaining, the teaching is likely to go nowhere if it conflicts with the teaching-learning of early childhood.

The leaders of the French Enlightenment proclaimed that the purpose of education is to free the child from the prejudices of the father (they could have added mother). But the most that the schooling part of education can do is examine those prejudices and help a person to decide which ones should be affirmed and which ones might possibly be shed. “Prejudice” now has a completely negative meaning; but we all begin with pre-judgments, what the human race offers us as a gift before we can do much rational judging on our own.

Wittgenstein, Socrates, Freud

At first glance, Wittgenstein is simply a follower of Socrates, another master of clever insights into the puzzles of language. But Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, has an ambivalent relation to Socrates. Yes, Socrates is a playful ironist punching through the illusions of knowledge to make real knowing possible. But to take Socrates as the model of all teaching can itself be an illusion.

The reason why Socrates is dangerous is that the individual needs a surrounding community, reason needs the context of the non-rational in life, humor needs something serious about which to make jokes. Socrates in complete isolation, wielding his confident arguments, has too many rationalistic and dangerous men as his successors. As G. K. Chesterton said, rationalism is that peculiar form of insanity in which one has lost everything but one’s mind.[29]

Wittgenstein’s crucial difference from Socrates is that his meaning of “teach” is rooted in the body, the emotions, the human community, and the life around humanity. For Socrates, to teach is to show; for Wittgenstein, to teach is to show how. The early Wittgenstein was intent on stating true propositions that accurately describe the world. The later Wittgenstein was interested in how a child acquires language and how the many “families” of language operate in everyday speech. The early Wittgenstein imagined silence as an unspeakable realm above the ordinary. The later Wittgenstein understood silence as the center of ordinary life. One cannot understand language without the silence from which words emerge. Language itself is a syncopation of sounds and silence.

Socrates is a master of verbal explanations but that kind of teaching presupposes a great variety of other kinds of teaching, both verbal and nonverbal. Teaching begins as training in a community. “We master routines that do not depend on understanding; our understanding depends on this. At the bottom is not thinking but doing.”[30] The “foundational” question is not finding one piece of knowledge that is the basis for all the rest; it is the question of who and what do we trust.

Wittgenstein’s answer to the question of trust is that a child does not begin as a doubter, doubt presupposes belief. A child begins by trusting the teacher and the most basic teaching occurs as the child encounters the physical environment; other humans provide a kind of padded cell for the encounter. Wittgenstein’s description of the ultimate basis of knowing and teaching is simple and homey: “It is just like directly taking hold of something as I take hold of my towel without having doubts.”[31]

Wittgenstein often refers to what he is doing as therapy: “The philosopher’s treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness” (255). That description of philosophy strikes many people as peculiar. Wittgenstein was influenced by his Viennese contemporary, Sigmund Freud. Wittgenstein even calls himself a disciple of Freud who he praised for looking at the connection among things rather than looking for causes. However, he criticized Freud for attempting to find a single pattern of meaning in dream interpretation: “Freud wanted to find the essence of dreaming.”[32]

Both men had an interest in therapy and Wittgenstein was actually more comfortable with the term. Freud says that his main interest is a theory to change the world. Freud says that he does therapy for two reasons: to test his theory and to make a living. Freud was concerned that his theory would be taken over by therapists in the United States.[33] He feared that they would turn psychoanalysis into a therapy to adjust rich people to the existing world. His fears were well-grounded.

Freud was a source of brilliant figures of speech, using insights from mythology, hunches, guesses, and stories. He did not discover the unconscious but he named it. His language stayed close to ordinary speech, although his English translators created a thicket of Greek-derived words.[34] Freud’s weakness, which has badly hurt his reputation, was that he wanted to be accepted as a real scientist, with science understood in its nineteenth-century mold. Psychoanalysis has not held up well as a scientific theory of the workings of the mind; as therapy it does better. However, without the provocation of continued theorizing, the therapy cannot extend beyond “adjustment” to the surrounding political and economic culture.

Wittgenstein is vulnerable to the same domestication. His therapy can be reduced to an amusing little word game. But his journey from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations* was a move away from a theory encased in the trappings of mathematical-empirical science to recognition of a kind of theorizing that requires a commitment. This theorizing has to move away from the role of a play’s spectator to being the play’s writer/director/actor. The play is always fragmentary because the author cannot see the ending.

The relation between theory and therapy is part of a larger relation between theory and practice.” Theory versus practice has been a favorite contrast in modern times. “Theory” is a visual term; it means to look. Given that the Greek image for truth is a coming to the light, theory plays a central position. The best or most certain knowledge is theoretical, looking upon the truth. In Aristotle there is also “practical knowledge” but it suffered from an inferior status. It almost disappeared from modern philosophy until the twentieth century.

Popular speech as well as contemporary institutions and professions embody a vertical split between theory and practice. The theorists are on top; the job of “practitioners” is to “implement” the theory. “Think tanks” produce reports that are peppered with high-flying abstractions. If anyone complains about the impenetrable prose of the visionaries, the standard response is that “someone can clean up the language later.” Ideas are what count; words are just disposable outer covers. It is the practitioners who will be left with having to put the ideas “into practice.”

Wittgenstein was part of a twentieth-century attempt to redo the relation between theory and practice. “Practice” has almost opposite meanings. It can mean getting ready to do something; it is not the real performance, just preparation for it. Practice also means the very stuff of living, what we are engaged in from birth. In this latter meaning, practice precedes theory; theorizing is itself one of life’s practices; it is the practice of trying to bend thought back on itself. The chief material it has to work with is language. A slight shift in language can reverberate throughout practice. This kind of theorizing is based not on assembling facts and using a chain of reasoning. It is mainly an altering of metaphors. Theorizing of this kind can have profound effects but it is always frustratingly incomplete. It does not end in a theory but in further theorizing.

In a reform of language there is a mutually enforcing relation between the words and the behavior of the participants. Wittgenstein's "let the use teach you the meaning" applies to how behavior at any time in history is expressed in language and how expression of language changes behavior in the future. Wittgenstein was interested in behavior in a special sense "for it includes in its meaning the external circumstances – of the behavior in a narrower sense."[35]The beginning and the end of his theory are the practices of human life.

Wittgenstein's statement that philosophy" leaves everything as it is" may apply to current behavior but in a longer run of history philosophy is capable of changing everything by disrupting the closed circuit of behavior and language (124). Marx complained that "up to now philosophers have only tried to understand the world; the point is to change it." Both halves of his statement are true but the second part follows from the first rather than contradict it.

Wittgenstein's philosophy, he says, allows him to stop philosophizing when he wishes to do so and contemplate the simple joys of life (133). A good teacher knows that one can only make one's best effort to show how to act, including how to speak. Then one has to let go, realizing that at least for now the student may just not get it (143). Neither agonizing over one's failures nor pressing harder on the student is likely to bring success. Dialogue is endless; tomorrow is another day. As Wittgenstein said, "in philosophy the winner of the race is the one who can run most slowly[36].

Conclusion

The reader who has got this far may be inclined to conclude that the only lesson to be drawn from history is confusion about the meaning of teaching. Certainly, there is no easy consensus that emerges from the previous pages but there are lessons to be learned. Perhaps the most important lesson is that history is not a straight line of progress and that the relation between teaching and learning remains problematic.

The purpose of engaging a variety of writers from other times and other places is not to find confirmation of what the reader already thinks. It is rather to make the reader aware that there may be other ways of seeing the issue that are worth considering. Sometimes undergraduates who are assigned to read classic texts only want to read what agrees with their opinions. That attitude could always be found among students but it seems more prevalent today. A history, literature, or philosophy instructor finds it difficult to convince students that encountering writers you do not agree with has great educational potential.

This book has raised questions about the meaning of "teach." A difficulty in this inquiry is that in contemporary language "teach" seems to be a clear idea. Teaching is what teachers do. The teachers are people who have a certain kind of training in working with young people in places called schools. Their job is thought to be one of transmitting the knowledge that they possess to the students in their charge. While the teacher needs skill and various methods to succeed, the process does not seem mysterious. Of course, everyone recognizes that the teacher sometimes fails to transmit the knowledge.

One thing that all of the authors discussed in this book agree upon is that no one can transmit knowledge to another. Numerous other writers agree. If they are right, then society at large expects the people called teachers to do the impossible. The teachers themselves may come to suspect that what is expected of them cannot be done. Some classroom instructors may decide that their survival depends on dismissing the paradoxes of Plato and the puzzles of Wittgenstein.

In much of educational literature there seems to be an unspoken agreement not to bring up the question of the *possibility* of teaching. Raising doubts that anyone can teach anything to anybody is not helpful for the morale of people who are called to teach. Asking "what does it mean to teach" is taken to be a distraction from practical questions, such as how to teach tenth-grade geometry.

What would help the people who are called teachers is that people who do not think of themselves as teachers would recognize that the question of teaching applies to them. The discussion of classroom teaching in relation to other forms of teaching has to include the teaching by parents, politicians, artists, business leaders, physicians, athletes, and others.

Teaching as Showing How

Teaching is a fundamental activity of all human beings and at least some other animals. Etymologically and historically, "teaching" is showing someone how to live, including how to die. (Rousseau recognized what all religious traditions have known: teach people how to die or they will never learn how to live)[1] A human community does that through a wide range of its representatives. For society to ask a few people who work with youngsters in schools to be *the* teachers is an impossible burden to lay upon any group.

For beginning an inquiry on teaching, Ludwig Wittgenstein is the most helpful of the authors I have considered. Wittgenstein has nothing to say about school teaching but much to say about how human beings learn because they are taught. For Wittgenstein, there is no point in trying to define the word teach but it is helpful to explore how the word emerges in a person's life. The human animal is born with few if any instincts but with a capacity and readiness to learn. As Rousseau said, everything not given by birth has to be given by education. The infant responds to being taught. From the first moments of life, teaching-learning is a relation of giving and receptiveness. It becomes a fully dialogical relation as soon as the infant can express the rudiments of human speech.

The fundamental form of speech in teaching is choreography, that is, direct and precise instruction on how to move the body. Good teachers know when to say "push" or "move your hand an inch further." A good teacher can break down an activity into "executable commands." That is, the teacher must know exactly what to say and when to say it.[2]

Teaching-learning between human beings can be broken down into four steps: 1) student acts 2) teacher contemplates the act 3) teacher proposes modifying the act 4) student tries out the proposed change. The sequence can be repeated indefinitely forming a circular movement. The student's response helps to teach the teacher what is the next step in teaching. Interestingly, the term "instruct," which is used for direct, bodily commands, reappears in classroom teaching when bodily commands are all but suspended and the mind is the focus. A classroom instructor has to consider what can be learned about instruction from a parent teaching a child to eat at the table or put on his shoes. "Executable commands" are not just for infants.

Every teacher of ballet, baseball or baton twirling knows that teaching involves training the inherent learning ability of the student through precisely guided instruction and then repetition of the action. Modern educational literature not only neglects drill, training, and memorization but tends to attack them as the enemy. The word memory is usually preceded by the adjective rote. A basketball student's reluctance to spend hours practicing foul shots may be understandable. But educational literature's disparagement of training, repetition, and memory is an overreaction to misuse of these practices. George Steiner has often pointed to the absence of learning "by heart" as one of the greatest weaknesses of modern education.[3]

Books on teaching simply announce that training is not a part of teaching. It is assumed that teaching is explaining or giving reasons. As soon as children can understand explanations, they should indeed be given reasons, but reasoning is never more than a part of teaching. Instead of a conveyance of reasons or ideas, teaching-learning is always a bodily encounter in which the teacher shows someone how to do something. In a classroom, the doing something usually refers to speaking and writing, public behavior that a teacher can contemplate and then suggest how the action can be improved.

Fundamental human activities, including standing, walking, talking, eating, and bathing are learned early in life because other human beings have taught the learner by example. Sometimes the giving of example is intended, more often it is not. The child, who has become comfortable at creeping, first stands up because the physical and social environment says "if you wish to live in this humanly arranged world, you have to learn to perform this action." When a child is learning to walk, the teacher is likely to be an appreciative observer who says a few words and provides a safe and encouraging environment.

Humans have innate talents that can be developed by teaching. The teacher may have less of a particular talent than the student does. Most good athletic coaches were not the best athletes. They were often second-stringers who had the opportunity to study the game and the players while sitting on the bench. The best athletes know that they can always learn to be better at what they do; they are willing to be taught. I often wonder what reaction Tiger Woods's coach gets when asked: "What do you do for a living"? Answer: "I teach golf to Tiger Woods." Even if you are unarguably the best in the world at what you do, you can be taught to improve your performance. Almost certainly, Tiger Woods' most important teacher of golf was his father; the teacher was obviously not as talented as the student. As is true of most cynical slogans, the saying "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" has an element of truth.

One of the worst assumptions in modern education is that teaching is only for children. I noted in the Introduction that the literature of adult education has actually reinforced this bias. The mark of an adolescent is to think that he or she no longer needs to be taught. Thus, much of the writing on education suggests an adolescent culture in which individuals no longer need good example, intellectually stimulating conversation, and occasional corrective criticism. The ideal of adulthood is a projection of this adolescent attitude: Since I am a healthy, rational, self-sufficient individual, I am beyond the need for being taught.

Languages of Teaching[4]

Teaching-learning begins at least as early as birth and continues at least until death (I have occasionally been challenged by religious believers when I have limited the span from birth to death). I have often marveled at the work of physical therapists as they teach people who are physically disabled or who are very old. The therapist is precise in commands based on knowledge of the human body. The learner has to cooperate and be willing to repeat an action hundreds of times. The physical therapist exemplifies a form of teaching that was pointed out by many ancient writers. It is not an accident that the physician came to be called "doctor" or teacher. Therapy is one of the first forms of teaching ("mommy will kiss it and make it better") and, if we are fortunate, it will be one of the last.

Therapy in human life involves a "family" of therapeutic languages, forms of speech that are directed at healing.[5] Throughout our lives, teachers praise, forgive, console, comfort, and otherwise try to heal the hurts that can obstruct learning. In contrast to these therapeutic languages, a second family of languages can be called rhetorical. In this family of languages, teachers say with more or less directness how the world is and what human nature is. Story telling, preaching, and lecturing are rhetorical languages that are appropriate for teaching when the conditions are right.

The stories that last for generations are about human destiny but leave room for the individual to decide where he or she fits in the big picture. When an adult composes stories for children, the adult often makes the "moral" of the story too obvious. W.H. Auden writes that "there are books which are only for adults, because their comprehension presupposes adult experiences, but there are no good books which are only for children."[6] Most adults have had the excruciating experience of sitting through a movie aimed at children, as opposed to a movie that the adult and child can appreciate at different levels. We are taught by stories throughout our lives. What is learned as a child in school should be a help to appreciating the stories that can nourish the imagination and intellect. The trouble with standard textbooks is that they have no texts, no artistic, idiosyncratic, surprising crafting of language that would lead a reader to cherish the book.

Preaching and lecturing are closely related rhetorical languages. Both are effective only if the teacher has carefully prepared what is to be said and the learner has chosen to share in this instance of teaching-learning. One often hears the criticism that a speaker is "preaching to the choir" but that is exactly who should be preached to, that is, an audience that shares the beliefs of the preacher and wishes to know the implications of those beliefs. Outside that context, preaching is boring or insulting. Our main preachers are politicians whose text of belief may be the U.S. Constitution, the Republican platform, or House Bill 250-17. Most politicians today are not very good at preaching because they seem ashamed to preach. They even leave the composition of the speech to someone else. Can anyone imagine a team of speech writers assembling Lincoln's Second Inaugural?

Sermons can shade into lectures but a lecturer is allowed a wider circle of belief that is shared with an audience. Lecturers, like preachers, ought to take plenty of time to prepare. Most of us are not up for delivering a worthwhile lecture (or listening to a lecture) more than a few times a year. The speakers who "have lecture, will travel" are only in the entertainment business. The audience for a real lecture has to share with the speaker an appreciation for words well crafted and expertly delivered. A lecturer relies on facts and tries to persuade the listeners by his or her arguments. With today's media, sermons and lectures are more important than ever; the Internet has not killed spoken and written words. But as Plato found with writing and Martin Luther with the printing press, the instrument for spreading the word can increase the quantity of the teaching at the expense of the quality. We have more than enough talk but not enough high quality preaching and lecturing.

Rhetorical languages and therapeutic languages are languages of teaching from infancy onward. Every parent both soothes and sermonizes, adjusting the language for age, past performance, and dozens of environmental conditions. Later in life, friends, co-workers and public figures largely replace the parents, although one can find ninety-year-olds preaching to their seventy-year-old children.

While therapeutic language is still obviously related to the choreographing of the body, rhetorical language can seem to be a teaching by words alone. Humans share with other animals a teaching in which adults show the young how to survive. Nonhuman animals have their own language to demonstrate activities of finding food or spreading one's wings to fly. Humans seem to be the only earthlings who can abstract language from the body and choreograph speech itself. This power of abstract thought and abstract speech is the great achievement of the humans and their greatest danger. Abstract language is a force for good or ill.

The classroom within the school is invented for one, very unusual kind of teaching-learning. The classroom is a padded cell in which to play with the power of language. Rhetorical or therapeutic languages are not appropriate for the main language of academic teaching. Of course, since both the would-be teacher and the potential learner are human, some of those languages are part of the classroom mix. Academic teaching cannot work if physical or psychic hurts are blocking the way. And classroom order and course management require some firm rhetorical directives. Conditions for classroom instruction are seldom ideal. A little therapy may be needed to create an open atmosphere. A sermon or lecture may be needed for basic orientation, but if so it should be less than a minute in length. I would wager that most third-graders can recognize that the main classroom teaching should be neither therapy nor preaching.

What then is the nature of academic language? In one respect, it pushes beyond rhetorical language to be not only abstract language but abstract language that bends back on itself. In contrast to rhetorical language which is aimed at changing bodily behavior, academic speech is limited to changing speech. The classroom is mainly for talk about talk. But the speech in the classroom returns to the bodily roots of speech, which is why it is called instruction. The meaning of a word, as Wittgenstein many times said, is found in examining how it is used, that is, the bodily, communal, practical performance of language.

Academic teaching is not pulling ideas out of students' heads; it is rather a conversation in which the words help to give birth to ideas. A main characteristic of academic language should be ironic humor. The teacher is not earnestly leading the student to the desired answer. Where the conversation goes is not completely under the control of the teacher; the results are unpredictable.

The student, as I indicated above, takes the first step in teaching-learning. In a classroom that usually means speaking or writing. The teacher's main question is "What do you mean"? What the teacher has to contemplate is how the student's speaking and writing can be improved by connecting the words to the history and geography of the language. The history is the etymology and how the word has been used. The geography refers to current conditions of its usage. Academic teaching is the providing of a use of speech that helps the student to join a human conversation and articulate his or her well-grounded views of a subject.

A scholar, writes Northrop Frye, "lays down his hand and remains dummy, so to speak, while the reader plays it." Especially in the university, teaching gets confused with doing scholarly research. All academic teaching *presupposes* study and research by the teacher, but acting as a scholar and as a teacher is not the same. University professors are inclined to tell students what they know instead of engaging in a structured conversation in which the teacher's greater knowledge will help the student to go on in his or her own way.[7]

To teach is to show someone how to do something. In a classroom, the showing how is mainly linguistic. Try out this way of speaking that the teacher exemplifies and advocates; see if it produces greater understanding. The classroom teacher should be a passionate advocate – but only of linguistic clarity and depth. The connection between the words and the student's ideas remains under the student's control.

A conversation in depth about history, poetry or physics may produce beliefs in a student different from the teacher's. If there is factual error, the teacher has to point that out or lead the student to recognize it. In the vast majority of cases, however, differences between people are differences of interpretation. Since no language captures the whole truth, differing opinions may both be right or at least neither is completely wrong. The successful academic instructor neither expects nor desires that every student will emerge with ideas and beliefs that are identical with the teacher's.

This whole process of talking about talk may seem suited only for graduate students in linguistics or communication theory. Actually, seven-year-olds are often better at this game than university students who have spent many hours being lectured at. The child can still be excited by words and enthusiastic about what words can do. The child cannot grasp theories that require Piaget's "formal operations" but, as Rousseau said, the child is quite capable of reasoning about "immediate and palpable interests." Rousseau, however, had a strange block when it came to the child's ability to understand one or several languages.[8] A young child who is treated with respect can engage in academic conversations that unlock the power of language.

I suggested in chapter one that Socrates can lead us astray. His dazzling discourse has made him a dominant figure in the history of education. Socrates is the master of asking probing questions and of getting people to recognize that their supposed knowledge is just mere opinions. A Socratic method is often understood to be a tactic of drawing out answers from the student instead of putting answers in. Teaching of this kind, however, is concerned with ideas which presuppose a world of bodily and communal teaching.

I argued that to get a full picture of teaching-learning we have to listen to Socrates and his much maligned opponents, the Sophists. To Socrates' claim that he could not find a teacher of virtue, Protagoras, the Sophist, replies: "You are spoiled Socrates, because all are teachers of virtue, insofar as each is able, and none is apparent to you."[9] Socrates may be right that the Sophists were corrupt because they took money for selling knowledge. Nonetheless, Protagoras recognized that the teaching of virtue or excellence is the work of a community in which everyone teaches "insofar as each is able."

In chapter two, the difference between Socrates and Protagoras is reflected in the disagreement between Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. For Augustine as a Platonist, God is the teacher who puts ideas into the soul; no human should be called teacher. In contrast, Thomas has every creature participating in divine creativity; everyone and everything is capable of teaching. In contemporary educational writing, Augustine's view is easy to recognize; but if one takes account of all forms of teaching-learning in the world, Thomas has the better case. These two thinkers represent the ultimate choice for the possibility of teaching: When teaching is limited to an individual trying to transfer knowledge, teaching is not possible; when teaching-learning is basic to human and nonhuman life, everything is a potential teacher.

Rousseau and Wittgenstein agree that teaching begins in infancy with the training that every young animal requires. The physical environment shares in the teaching of a child. Tradition and the present community introduce the child to the range of human practices. Language and reason only slowly emerge from within human nature's bodily experience. Reason and rational discourse become central in specifically human teaching. Teaching-learning continues throughout a human's lifetime but always on the ground of bodily performance.

The only author examined here who practically equates teaching and school teaching is John Dewey. He does not state that equation but, given what has happened in the last 150 years, Dewey's failure to clearly affirm other kinds of teaching, results in his laying the burden of teaching on school teachers. That explains Dewey's impatience with the school as cut off from "real-life-experience," and his subsequent criticism of his would-be disciples who thought that children should just have "experiences" rather than be taught.

Dewey constantly complained about the classroom being a special place and speaking a language that is not found elsewhere.[10] Since then, partly under Dewey's influence, the walls came tumbling down. The result is more difficulty for the classroom teacher. What should be a privileged space and time where a special kind of teaching occurs is often overwhelmed by the outside world. The *school* should not be isolated from the rest of life but *classroom teaching* should be a clearly distinct form of teaching that complements other forms of teaching.

In addition to the five chapters on historical figures, I have included two chapters on specific problems: moral education and religious education. These two chapters might seem out of place. They do interrupt my story line, but I have included them precisely because they do not fit within the modern school curriculum. That fact is what makes them revelatory of the problem with "teach" as a whole.

A serious grappling with moral education and religious education would force recognition of the need for different languages and different forms of teaching. That means on the one hand the clear recognition of teaching that is other than classroom teaching and on the other hand the affirming of a distinct form of teaching for the classroom. Classroom teaching in the areas of moral education and religious education would be an utterly crucial but very narrow part of the whole task of teaching. At present, there is not even an agreement on what those two forms of classroom teaching should be called. Teaching outside the classroom gets little attention while the classroom's role is comprehensive but vague.

Moral education's problem with "teach" is based on a suspicion that teaching is itself not quite moral. The activity of teaching, which would otherwise be a violation of personal autonomy, is allowed to be practiced on children who are not yet ready to think for themselves. Durkheim's school teacher as high priest of society's rules does not have many takers today.

Starting with Piaget, moral education was given over to psychology; the answer for moral education was looked for in the development of reasoning about moral rules. Teachers should keep out of the way. After a few decades in which Kohlberg had supposedly discovered that moral reasoning was sufficient to produce a morally educated person, the reaction of "character education" has tried to turn back the clock. Its concern with the "whole person" has possibilities but the literature is fuzzy about teaching.

Character education, like other kinds of moral education needs a clear distinction between the many forms of moral teaching, one of which is classroom instruction. Lacking distinctions the whole of moral education can end up in the classroom but without the school teacher's part being circumscribed. When we are unsure of something fitting in the classroom curriculum we nervously attach the word education to it (sex education, drug education, environmental education, physical education, moral education) which only further weakens the subject.

For example, we ask school teachers to teach "sex education" which makes no logical sense and causes unending disputes. We should ask: What part of a person's sexual education should academic teaching deal with and what is that subject called? More than a hundred years of arguing over "sex education" has not clarified what the question is[11] Moral education, which overlaps but does not subsume sexual education, likewise remains cloudy as to what part of a person's moral education should be taught in the classroom and what is the subject called. The term ethics is available as the possible name for an academic subject but moral education literature does not often refer to the teaching of ethics.

Religious education is even more confusing and contentious than moral education. The need for some distinctions about teaching is the more urgent. The solution in the United States has been to declare the whole area out of bounds for a public education. In some countries "religious education" is the name of a school subject which is no more logical than "moral education" as the name for what can be taught in a classroom. Religious education, like moral education, begins at birth and at least some elements continue for everyone until death. Whether or not one practices religion (devotion) one's education is incomplete without knowledge and understanding of religions (the historical and social phenomena).

No one should be subjected to the teaching of religious practices unless he or she has some choice in the matter. Parents substitute for that choice when the child is very young. While parents necessarily teach by example and instruction, the direction should still allow a personal choice later in life by the young person. There should be a place for a thoughtful and knowledgeable examination of religion as a phenomenon and religions as historic realities. The classroom is the logical place for an intelligent conversation on the matter. Academic teaching-learning should be shielded from political passions and charged emotions.

A student picking up numerous facts about all the religions of the world is not the same as, for example, asking why there has been such conflict between Christian and Jewish religions, or how a form of Christian religion intertwines with a religious meaning of "America." A serious examination of religion as it impinges on student's lives may not be politically feasible in most places. But the denial that religion can be taught reveals an assumption that classroom instruction is simply preaching. Teachers of every school subject have a stake in the legitimacy of teaching ethics and teaching religion.

The frequent reference to something as "merely academic" is an insult to classroom teachers. I noted earlier that Wittgenstein's assertion that talk about talk "leaves everything as it is" applies to the immediate situation. Classroom teaching is a suspension of everyday concerns for the purpose of narrowing the mind on to a few words. But academic teaching that can change how questions are asked has unpredictable results that frighten people whose power depends on not asking questions outside pre-established lines. These people's dismissal of the "merely academic" is a way of saying that academic teaching is not "real life." They prefer to have reality defined by generals, CEOs, or political leaders. Academic teaching is the potentially revolutionary practice of questioning the assumptions of what is called real.

Teaching-Learning

The most important question about teaching is whether it is continuous with learning or whether teaching and learning are two separate activities. The significance of this question may not be immediately apparent. What is the difference between saying "I taught them but they did not learn" and "I tried to teach them but they did not learn (that)?" In the first case, teach and learn function independently. Teaching does not guarantee learning; and it seems obvious that people can learn without being taught. In the second case, teaching and learning are necessarily connected. I *tried* to teach but since I did not succeed at teaching they did not learn; at least they did not learn what I was trying to teach.

Some authors think there is no problem in speaking both ways.[12]. More often, it is assumed that people who think there is a continuity of teaching and learning are confused. They have mistaken a "task" word for an "achievement" word. Teaching is sometimes used for learning (the achievement) and therefore people talk about the performance of the task as if it were the achievement.[13] John Passmore writes: "It is a very important fact that there can be learning where no one teaches."[14] But this is not a question of *fact*. It is a question of what Wittgenstein calls grammar, which in this case underlies a whole worldview.

The assumption that teach and learn are separate and only contingently related identifies teaching with what a human individual called the teacher does. In this view of the world, it is obvious that the teacher sometimes fails to convey, instill, transmit what the teacher intends to convey, instill or transmit. It is also obvious that people learn when there is no teacher in the vicinity. The main setting assumed for this conjunction of teacher and learner is a classroom.

The alternative worldview is one in which teaching-learning is fundamental and constant for living beings. From the first moment of life, animals survive because they learn and they learn by being taught. Humans have a wider range of learning possibilities than other animals. Human speech becomes central to teaching, but to be effective it has to involve a human body in a physical, historical and social environment.

Passmore is right in one respect: learning may occur where *no one* teaches because the learning occurs where a community or physical environment does the teaching. Most teaching, in fact, is done that way. A legitimate question that can be addressed to anyone who claims to be a teacher is: What community do you re-present? An individual human teacher comes with a cloud of witnesses, both living and dead.

In a Peanuts cartoon, Lucy says she has taught Snoopy to whistle. Charlie Brown says he has never heard Snoopy whistle. Lucy replies: I said I taught him to whistle, not that he learned. The joke is obvious. In teaching someone to whistle, walk, swim, use a fork, tie a shoelace, ride a bicycle, and hundreds of similar activities the teacher and learner are engaged in a common activity. They succeed together or they fail together. No one comes into the living room and announces: I taught Jimmy to ride the bicycle but he did not learn.

How then explain that the students in a classroom do not always learn what the teacher teaches? The students in a classroom are constantly learning but the teacher at that moment may not be the person at the front of the room. More precisely, what is learned may not be what the person at the front of the room *intends* to teach. Wittgenstein and Thomas Aquinas point out that there is always a gap between the intention of the individual teacher and the learning. When the learning is a physical skill, the gap is filled by physical actions. When spoken words are the medium of teaching, the teacher can shorten the gap between intention and learning but some gap remains. The experienced teacher knows that more and more talking will not entirely fill the gap.

Clear and pointed speech is a main way to fill the gap; so are the physical movements of a teacher, the comfort of a chair, the fresh air in the room, the time of day, and other factors that a person may hardly be aware of. Each of those teachers closes or widens the gap between the individual's intention to teach and the learning of the student.

An institution's reward system may be a more powerful teacher than the words of an instructor within the institution. A person's behavior may be teaching something that the person does not intend to teach. When the potential learner does not learn what someone is intending to teach, the task of a would-be teacher is to find out who the teacher is and what is being taught. A school teacher has to engage the teaching-learning already in play.

The school teacher may see this approach as subverting his or her work. But school teaching would be enhanced by opening up a dialogue with other teachers, starting with parental teachers and moving on to all the other teachers, both human and nonhuman. Recognition of these other teachers would relieve school teachers of all the other forms of teaching-learning that a school is not equipped to handle. They could concentrate on engaging students in a conversation that can change the way both teacher and student experience the world.

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1. Amazon.com currently lists more than half a million books that are about teaching.

2. There are books that ask about the nature of teaching but they almost inevitably revert to the classroom for the main meaning of teaching and consider other uses of "teach" as an extension. Examples of books that ask the question are: John Passmore, *The Philosophy of Teaching* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Thomas Green, *The Activities of Teaching* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971); C.J.B. MacMillan and Thomas Nelson, *Concepts of Teaching* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968); R. S. Peters. ed., *The Concept of Education* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).

3. A typical case is *Philosophy of Education*, ed. Randall Curren (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007). In a book of almost 600 pages, there is a 30 page section on teaching, within which all four of the essays are about school teaching. While other essays do speak of teaching, there is not a single entry which philosophically reflects on what teaching is.

4. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

5. Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn for the 80s* (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1983), 135.

6. Malcolm Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (New York: Follett .Publishing, 1980).

7. *New York Times,* 29 August 2003, 26.

8. *New York Times,* 3 September 2003, B1; of course, there are college professors who take teaching seriously: Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

9. Plato, *The Republic*, 454e.

10. Redding Sugg, *Motherteacher: The Feminization of American Education* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1978).

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11. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 313.

12. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 76.

13. Johann Pestalozzi, *Leonard and Gertrude* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger, 2004); *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger, 2007).

14. Sheila Rothman, *Woman's Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 57.

15. Joseph Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 123.

16. Margaret Wertheim, *Pythagoras' Trousers: God, Physics and the Gender Wars* (New York: Times Book, 1995), 168.

17. David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 62.

18. Tyack, *The One Best System*, 60.

19. Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 86; Dan Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

20. There are some excellent books on the relation of school teaching and parental teaching, such as Robert Evans, *Family Matters: How Schools Can Cope with the Crisis in Childrearing* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, *The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn from Each Other* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002).

21. C.M. Guarino, L.Santibanez, and G.A. Daley, "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature," *Review of Educational Research,* 76, no.2 (2006):173-208; D.N. Harris and S.J. Adams, "Understanding the Level and Causes of Teacher Turnover: A Comparison with Other Professions," *Economics of Education Review,* 26 (2007): 325-37.

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1. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 39.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), #10, 11.

3. Plato, *Republic* 588-89; *Phaedrus* 246-57.

4. Wilfred Wees, *Nobody Can Teach Anyone Anything* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971).

5. Alexander Nehamas, "What Did Socrates Teach and to Whom Did He Teach It"? *Review of Metaphysics,* 46, no. 2 (1992): 288.

6. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), II, 171.

7. Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 33.

8. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 32.

9. Nehamas, "What Did Ssocrates Teach," 295.

10. James King, "Nonteaching and its Significance for Education," *Education Theory,* 26 (Spring, 1976): 230, 228.

11. Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 16.

12. W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

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13. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), par. 428.

14. G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 25, 144.

15. Nehamas, “What Did Socrates Teach,” 284.

16. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 200.

17. Scolnicov, *Plato’s Metaphysics of Education*, 25.

18. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), 157. Arendt translates the saying of Protagoras as “man is the measure of all things for use.”

19. Scolnicov, *Plato’s Metaphysics of Education*, 7.

20. Johannes Comenius, *The Great Didactic* (London: Russell and Russell, 1967), 26.

21. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 38.

22. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, 168-69.

23. Scolnicov, *Plato’s Metaphysics of Education*, 35.

24. Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1103a14.

25. Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1095a29; 1179a20

26. Gary Alan Scott, *Plato’s Socrates as Educator* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 2000), 25.

27. Scott, *Plato’s Socrates*, 41.

28. Jacques Goff, *The Birth of Europe* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 121.

29. Samuel Ijssling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 7.

30. Numbers in the text refer to Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Desmond Lee (New York: Penguin Books, 1987).

31. Jaeger, *Paideia*, II, 295.

32. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 291.

33. Gilbert Ryle, “Teaching and Training,” in *The Concept of Education*, ed. R. S. Peters (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), 109 complains that Aristotle’s ideas are “grossly translated” by “habit.” One certainly has to resist a common meaning of “habit” as a mindless repetition that restricts freedom; however, the ambiguity seems built into the idea.

34. Michael Oakshott, *Rationalism in Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 11.

35. Mary Belenky and others, *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 219.

36. Adriana Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), 72.

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1. Augustine, *The Confessions* (New York: Knopf, 2001).

2. Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 130.

3. Augustine, *The City of God* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2001).

4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 92.

5. Augustine, *The Confessions*, 1.6; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), par. 43.

6. Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1996).

7. Augustine, *Against the Academics* and *The Teacher* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing, 1995).

8. Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 29.

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9. Garry Wills, *St. Augustine* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).

10. Augustine, *The Confessions*, Book 10.

11. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

12. Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993)*, viii. 24.*

13. Epictetus, *The Enchiridion* (New York: Dover Books, 2004).

14. Augustine, *Sermons* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1993), iii, 10.

15. Wills, *St. Augustine*, 102-04.

16. Augustine, *Letters* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2001), 93.11.3.

17. Augustine, *Letters*, 93.2.4.

18. Augustine, *Confessions*, 5. 14.

19. Augustine, *Confessions,* 4.13.

20. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (New York: Dorset, 1986), 180.

21. Augustine, *Soliloquies* (New York: Migne, 1999), 1.20.

22. C. Swearingen, *Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 204.

23. Augustine, *Commentary on Genesis (*Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2002), 2:5.

24. Augustine, *Commentary on Genesis*, 1:17.

25. Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

26. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 278.

27. Augustine, *Sermons*, 95.1.

28. Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, IV. 11.26

29. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 176.

30. Augustine, *Sermons*, 254. 3.

31. Plotinus, *The Enneads*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1969). VI. 9.

32. Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.38; 3.11.

33. Augustine, *Of True Religion* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1959), 39:72.

34. Augustine, *Teaching Christianity,* IV .11.2.

35. Augustine, *City of God*, IX.16.

36. Augustine, *Against the Academics*, III.19.42.

37. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 129.

38. Frederick Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 405-67; Brown, *Augustine,* 251.

39. Brown, *Augustine, 225.*

40. Augustine, *Teaching Christianity,* IV.12.22.

41. Swearingen, *Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies*.

42. Cicero, *The Orator* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), 29.1.

43. Cicero, *The Orator*, 21: 69.

44. Augustine, *First Catechetical Instruction* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1946), 12:17.

45. Wills, *St. Augustine*, 24.

46. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 17.

47. Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1986), 137.

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48. Augustine's identifying of teaching with listening to God in the interior of the soul is suggested in other places. For example, in a letter to Gaius in 390 or 391, he wrote: "No one after all, sees in the book itself or in the author he reads that what he reads is true but sees it rather in himself if a certain light of truth is impressed upon his mind, a light which is not bright in the ordinary way and is most far removed from the impurity of the body." *Letters*, 19.1.

49. Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions: On Truth* (Chicago: Regnery, 1951).

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51. Thomas Aquinas, *The Sentences of Peter Lombard, q*uoted in Josef Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas* (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 1991), 101.

52. John Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 213.

52. David Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1979), 172.

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2. Maurice Cranston, *The Solitary Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 37.

3. John Dewey, "The Need for a Philosophy of Education," in *Later Works* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University, 1981), 195.

4. Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reform* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). She has kind words for Isaac Kandel, *The Cult of Uncertainty* (New York: Macmillan, 1943) and William Bagley, *Education and Emergent Man* (New York: T. Nelson, 1934).

5. Ravitch, *Left Back*, 169.

6. William Boyd, ed., *The Emile of Jean Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971).

7. Ravitch, *Left Back*, 170.

8. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Indianapolis, Ind.:Hackett Publishing, 1996), sec. 85.

9. Plato, *Republic,* 502b.

10. Robert Wokler, *Rousseau* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 101.

11. Other social-contract theorists include Thomas Hobbes and John Locke

12. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* and *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (New York: Washington Square Books, 1967), 169.

13. Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 169.

14. Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 171.

15. Michael Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 300.

16. Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 125.

17. Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 233.

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18. Maurice Cranston, *The Noble Savage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 346, 358.

19. Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1932), 46.

20. On the language of "revealed religion" and "Christian revelation," see Gabriel Moran, *Both Sides: The Story of Revelation* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 75-101.

21. Wokler, *Rousseau*, 102.

22. Cranston, *The Solitary Self*, 37.

23. John Dewey, "Education and the Health of Women," *Science* 6 (October, 1885): 341-42; "Is Co-education Dangerous for Girls?" *Ladies Home Journal*, 28 (June, 1911): 42-3.

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25. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: Modern Library, 2001).

26. Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, 98.

27. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 223.

28. Plato, *Republic*, 463-464.

29. Cranston, *The Noble Savage*, 192.

1. Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1995), 181; Robert Westbrook *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 320.

2. John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," *Later Works* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University, 1981), 5: 150.

3. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 388.

4. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 384.

5. John Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow* (New York: Dutton, 1915).

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7. John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 9-10.

8. John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," in *Dewey on Education*, ed. Martin Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), 30.

9. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," 32.

10. Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow*, 2.

11. Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow*, 45.

12. John Dewey, "The Need for a Philosophy of Education," in *Later Works*, 9: 202.

13. For the best treatment of this history, see Daniel Rogers, *Atlantic Crossings* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998).

14. Max Weber, *Education and Sociology* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), 91.

15. Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America 1890-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

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17. Edward Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

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22. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 38.

23. Dewey, *School and Society*, 22; *Democracy and Education*, 161.

24. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 8, 38; Dewey, *School and Society*, 75.

25. George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 29.

26. Dewey, “The Need for a Philosophy of Education,” *Later Works*, 9: 197.

27. John Dewey, “Science as Subject Matter and Method,” in *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*, ed. Reginald Archambault (New York: Modern Library, 1964), 192.

28. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, xiii.

29. Quoted in the introduction to Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow*, xxv.

30. Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, 501.

31. Dewey, “From Absolutism to Experimentalism,” *Later Works*, 5:151.

32. Martin, *The Education of John Dewey, 53.*

33. Herbert Kliebard, The *Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 11.

34. Lawrence Cremin, *Transformation of the School* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 134.

35. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 134.

36. John Dewey, “Child and Curriculum,” in *Dewey on Education*, ed. Martin Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), 91. Page numbers in the text refer to this edition of Dewey’s essay.

37. Silvia Farnham-Diggory, *Schooling* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 22.

38. John Dewey, “How Much Freedom in New Schools”? *Later Works*, 5: 319: “I do not mean, of course, that education does not center in the pupil. It obviously takes its start with him and terminates with him. But the child is not something isolated.” Dewey is here inconsistent in speaking of educating terminating in the child; a major theme of his is that education does not terminate.

39. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958*, 44-5.

40. Harvey Kantor and David Tyack, eds., *Work, Youth and Schooling* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982), 39.

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42. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 375.

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48. Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 258.

49. Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, 502.

50. Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 234.

51. John Dewey, "How Much Freedom in New Schools," *Later Works*, 5: 319-25.

52. Letter to Bob Rothman, in Martin, *The Education of John Dewey,* 498.

53. George Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* (New York: Arno Press, 1932), 29.

54. Cremin, *Transformation of the School,* 259.

55. Counts, *Dare the Schools,* 37.

56. Counts, *Dare the Schools*, 9-10.

57. Richard Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 66.

58. John Dewey, "Why Have Progressive Schools," *Later Works*, 11:147.

59. John Dewey, "Can Education Share in Social Reconstruction"? *Later Works*, 9: 207.

60. John Dewey, "Education and Social Change," *Later Works,* 11:414.

61. John Dewey and Robert Hutchins exchanged a series of strident essays starting with Dewey's review of Hutchins' book, *Learning in America* in *Later Works,* 11: 391-96 and Hutchins' response in *Later Works*, 11:592-97.

62. For example, Dewey, "The Need for a Philosophy of Education," *Later Works,* 9:195: "An educated person has the power to go on and get more education, to grow and expand his development."

63. One must note, however, that Hutchins contrasted the "work of the intellect" as opposed to "mere experience." See Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism,* 281.

64. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 274.

65. Dewey uses as his key word, interaction; late in life he thought he should have used "transaction" though the advantage of the latter is not obvious; see John Dewey, *The Knowing and the Known,* with Arthur Bentley (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1949).

66. John Dewey, *How We Think* (New York: Lexington, Ky.:D.C. Heath, 1933), 34-5.

Chapter Five

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971); *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953). Numbers in parentheses refer to paragraph numbers in each book.

2. Letter to Ludwig von Ficker in G. H. von Wright, *Prototractatus* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1971), 16.

3. Letter of Paul Englemann in Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 220.

4. A. J. Ayer, *Wittgenstein* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

5. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: His Life and Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991) is the most complete biography.

6. Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 16, 26.

7. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (New York: Harper Torch, 1972), 612.

8. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: His Life and Work*, 537. The line is from *King Lear,* act 4, scene 1.

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9. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 382.

10 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 18.

11. Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man (*New York: Harper Torch, 1966), 115.

12. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, 20.

13. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books, 29.*

14. Wittgenstein, B*lue and Brown Books, 18.*

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16. Hanna Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993), 297.

17. A few of the better known studies are Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Rush Rhees and D. Z. Phillips, *Wittgenstein and the Possibility of Discourse* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006); John Danford, *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); James Edwards, *Ethics without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Tampa, Fla.: University of South Florida Press, 1982); Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

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19. Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (London: SPCK, 1997). 76.

20. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books,* 16.

21. R.S. Peters, *Concept of Education* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 19.

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Conclusion

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