

Is Education is a Pedagogy?

Education: how Foucault helps us re-drawing it?

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Abstract

Discourse on Education goes on as an unending stream. Whether Education is to prepare or to take along a student in the path of investigation, creation and innovation or it is channel one's brains to be a part of a system or to make someone smart and capable enough to discover and break traditions. The thrust of the discourse actually hovered around the question WHY, that means why should there be education rather than what education is to be prepared. Philosophers and thinkers from those of the ancient Greek ones down to Foucault, Derrida and Paulo Freire or Noam Chomsky, have all engaged in the philosophical discourse while trying to get a handle on the topic.

Is Education is a Pedagogy? Or Pedagogy is a part of Education. That is a strong philosophical question. We can only find the answer not from a moral perspective, but from a philosophy perspective. This discourse brings us to the realm of Education as something which is not the same as Pedagogy. With others who have not followed the mainstream accepted and stressed on Education that is gained from life, outside the institutions in Saudi Arabia and informally, making a distinction between education in general and pedagogy through the universities. This also brings us to the debate on education versus instructions and the modern definition of pedagogy has made to denote the instructional part of it in my home country Saudi Arabia. While social thinkers like Paulo Freire has gone specialized in crafting out instructions that suits to trigger investigation and science and criticism among the oppressed, others have gone deeper into the reasons, rationale, attitude and motive of instruction. This is going philosophical. We now have to deal with the question of education, training, pedagogy, preparing tertiary students for a cause or a skill, as a sub-question of philosophy in Saudi Arabia.

Education: how Foucault helps us re-drawing it?

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Introduction

Discourse on Education goes on as an unending stream. Whether Education is to prepare or to take along a student in the path of investigation, creation and innovation or it is channel one's brains to be a part of a system or to make someone smart and capable enough to discover and break traditions. The thrust of the discourse actually hovered around the question WHY, that means why should there be education rather than what education is to be prepared. Philosophers and thinkers from those of the ancient Greek ones down to Foucault, Derrida and Paulo Freire or Noam Chomsky, have all engaged in the philosophical discourse while trying to get a handle on the topic.

Commented [A1]: The start is strong

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Commented [A2]: Use of questions as part of discussion is impactful.

This discourse brings us to the realm of Education as something which is not the same as Pedagogy. With others who have not followed the mainstream accepted and stressed on Education that is gained from life, outside the institutions in Saudi Arabia and informally, making a distinction between education in general and pedagogy through the universities. This also brings us to the debate on education versus instructions and the modern definition of pedagogy has made to denote the instructional part of it in my home country Saudi Arabia. While social thinkers like Paulo Freire has gone specialized in crafting out instructions that suits to trigger investigation and science and criticism among the oppressed, others have gone deeper into the reasons, rationale, attitude and motive of instruction. This is going philosophical. We now have to deal with the question of education, training, pedagogy,

preparing tertiary students for a cause or a skill, as a sub-question of philosophy in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, education is a special process where the Self and the Society interacts co-determines each other. Education is therefore a social question and every social question is dealt with the help of a specific philosophical view-point.

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Proposition

Education is a process where a Self is made to be a part of the Society through a long drawn mechanism of compliance. The very concept espouses Power (pouvoir as opposed to the sense of Puissance). Imparting Knowledge is a process driven by Power. What elements of knowledge is imparted, what is to be left out, how they are imparted and where the students are to be constrained are all expressions of Power and are guided by the Power. Knowledge that we gather is a function of Power (Foucault M. , 1982).

As Foucault stated, “It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the work of institutions such as universities that appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner. Especially that in Saudi Arabia the political violence has always exercised itself obscurely through them, and it will be unmasked so that one can fight against them (Chomsky N. F., 2006, p. 171)”. Here Foucault shows how political is Education and where the power lies within the institutional structure.

But where is the ante-thesis? Is it in the informal education, or is it the education from day to day life practice a subversion of this institutional power and packaged knowledge

pushed in the students' mind, or do we need to make some clear separating lines? Our proposition starts from that precise point.

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How informal is the so-called informal education that we gather? Every bit of knowledge that we gather is socially dependent. A social environment is created by the numerous mass organisations of various natures in Saudi Arabia. What they impart among their members through association and practice is the value that these societies get from their actions which is again formed and manufactured through the institutions and mass media and the dominant discourse of the society - the so-called mainstream. Actually, these associations imbibe the Zeitgeist of the ideological super structure and the cultural super structure of the society. Without any strong ideological, cultural, political and philosophical resist this plethora of mass organisations inculcates within their membership the same value-system of the institutional structure of the society. Thus, without any paradigm shift in terms of thoughts an informal educational system serves the conformal process and the confirmation of the Knowledge/Power, hegemony of the main-stream of the society, which is sponsored by the STATE power. Thus, here we are, still, returning to Foucault. His opposition to institutions do not take us anywhere else (Smullyan, 1992).

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Informal education, unless otherwise impregnated with the bacteria of paradigm shift, is an informal process of formalisation of the structure of the society. In this aspect Foucault falls short of becoming a Foucauldian, however paradoxical it might seem. Under the hegemony of society and the dominant value system, informalization is no separate or opposing process- it is just another process (Bevel, 2008).

The society gets stronger and they the life-activities become settled to a social equilibrium- the society "learns" to live with little disturbances and perturbations and

gain maturity. The maturation of a society is undergone through the survival of many perturbations – that is another process of formal compliance. University students in their youth in Saudi Arabia tend to go a little astray through drugs, sex, hippism and all kinds of non-conformity only to settle down as very compliant members in their professional life with an attitude of “déjà vu”. Foucault saw the process of drug use and other forms of non-conformity as expressions of rebellion against the dominant discourse or the value system of the society, such as recently in Arabic countries.

Manufacturing of Dissent

Our concrete proposal, or the point of departure from Foucault, Derrida et al, is in this fact that dissension is a part of the maturation of the society; of strengthening the formalization of the society.

Only a highly programmatic initiative, which has a totally different consistent and objective-oriented philosophy, political program, social architecture and cultural proposal can make a paradigm shift in Saudi Arabia. That means it is ultimately the battle of Formalism against Formalism. Only a contending Knowledge/Power structure can make a paradigm shift in the concept of education at a university level. The long journey of history is moving from one Knowledge/Power set to the other incessantly and this journey of shifting paradigms is the only stable fact of the history of human civilization. Foucault returns to kill Foucault in every cycle!

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Self as a realisation of the Society

Self and its realization have also been seen and described as Personal. Personal disposition is mainly defined as an endeavour to separate oneself from the collective or from the others. It is defined only through this dimension. Personal is anti-society disposition that, however again pre-supposes a social context. When a “Personal” thought or thinking mode wants to reach out to someone else (either for appreciation, or for coming-together), it is forming a social group in a social context.

Self is something to be realised and the mode may be different. There are many examples in the history of human civilisation to reflect on realisation as a process of gaining knowledge. Knowledge garnering is a process of studying historical stream of knowledge of “Other” streams and from all previous knowledge holding personalities, mainly those who created changes in the ever flowing river of knowledge. Knowledge is also forming one’s way of thinking that generates from the various interactions. This multiplex interaction of knowledge is known as discourse. Discourse is the totality of all debates, corroborations, modifications, following and falling out of ideas and their presentations, all that is in a pool from which the posterity can pick their individual clues for furthering their research. (Foucault, 1998)

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This explanation therefore opines that self is a social realisation or it is one specific form of thoughts in a particular social context.

We now come to the question of Absolute. Absolute as a concept is nothing but the negation of the Reality, because reality is a social context or social reality. As negative asserts the existence of positive through negation (mathematically and logically speaking), Absolutism is just the negation of something. This something is therefore relative. Every phenomenon in human civilization is therefore relative and described only relatively. Foucault is one very noteworthy philosopher who, although not the pioneer, but definitely an important milestone

of a thinker who concretized the concept of relativity with respect to the social context. Every phenomenon is relative (Córdoba, 2006).

Knowledge is an individual expression. It is actually a result of social interactions. Knowledge when combined in collectives gathers its own mass through following: (a) Knowledge of a congregation is a power; (b) Knowledge of a group challenges knowledge of other groups and vies to gather more mass. At a critical juncture the group that is numerically high “Defeats” other view-points and establishes its supremacy. It becomes known as mainstream and is the established view-point. The Knowledge becomes Powerful. The power, then mauls down all other view-points, marginalises them and finds documented as history. Collective knowledge is therefore always associated with some kind of power. Power of the mainstream is institutionalized, accredited, established and legislated. This Power vies all the time with the arrivistes, with those who want to gather more and more mass and wishes to become the mainstream by elbowing out the present hegemon. (Foucault, 1980)

Falling out from Foucault, I posit that knowledge is therefore categorized and camp-divided. Knowledge has therefore a “Particular” and “General”. On the bedrock of the general, these “Particulars” vie and compete to gather support or “Mass”. Following that, when they have gathered substantive mass, they give mass to others who follow and build up a “Prominent” group or society. The particularities or the knowledge artifacts that create history through an incessant struggle. I fall out in positing that there is actually nothing called Knowledge but many knowledge artefacts it would be very difficult in finding out commonalities in all these artefacts. Stated in post-modern language, there is no central core of Knowledge, nor any unified concept. There is a space of knowledge artefacts with different degrees of power – the “Power” that competes and vies with the others.

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Self or Relation of Self and Society is therefore a flow concept; a dynamic concept and would have to be stated along with any description of self. (Foucault M. , 1982)

Self is an average abstraction derived from the aggregation of every individual's reaction to the on-flowing social context. Individuality is not self, it is rather subtraction, but self-abstraction of the social relation in a social context. Therefore, the individuality across time, space and context is an absurdity or a fiction. The reality is the change of "Individuality", this is the metaphysics of self and individuality, and here I concur with Foucault.

A dialogue

A discussion from this very ground reality of a teacher and as student. The student comes from a business school well groomed for a corporate house.

Teacher: Well, with all your studies what do you think you can really make a difference in your future organisational practice?

Student: Personal agenda is contextual. In any organisation, personal growth is to be aligned with the organizational goal. Organizational goal is also connected to the society norms.

Other than the business goals of the organization, the people that work within the organization are products of the society and they come from the society. The different events in the society leave a mark in the lives of the people. The right balance of the people-within-the-society and the people-in-the-organization and the organization-within-the-society is something that needs in-depth study, observing how people react, discovering where they would find themselves in equilibrium, is a day-to-day learning programme and implementing programme. There is nothing very absolute and one set of rules or solutions that were successful would not be the best solution in the next case.

Personal goals and agenda of individuals should be aligned with those of the organization and that is how organisations can really work. Value systems should thus be defined to make this alignment possible. All other view-points should be put aside. A collective can work with subduing all other view-points sub-serving the grand agenda of the organization.

Teacher: Well in this structure what happens to a dissenting voice and where will you fit the free opinions within a group.

Student: I guess, opinions are welcome to debate and rationalise the possible pit falls. This comes from the experience of the employees. But dissensions do really have no space.

Teacher: What is a dissent today in one context can be also seen as a voice that may not have been comprehended by the others. This voice becomes a loner voice and yet may have been found to be true in implementation. So how would you know, if you have already rejected this voice during the collective discussion stage.

Student: I guess I see your slant. Dissenting voices have very less social values when they cannot make much of dent in the collective opinion. Those voices may be really noted down with the rationality behind it and kept alive as pointers. Critical points in the process may look for knowledge artefacts that are left out and lost. Knowledge artefacts, opinions, view-points do retain their values in proper contexts. May be during revisits the group might find that the understanding of the context could have been wrong and now it needs to be corrected. In those cases all these dissenting opinions come alive for re-examination.

Thorough and open discussion should be allowed through formal and informal sessions. A viewpoint once “rejected” should not be deleted for good; this would have been the case of mis-utilising the power that is associated with every “Accepted” viewpoint. Leaders and

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decision makers should have their senses equipped and sharp to see if the so-called “Democratic” rejection does not ill-corroborate the social-context.

Teacher: The present corporate culture has increased intra-group meetings and sharing sessions. Couldn’t this be incorporated in that culture?

Student: Projects and employees rush toward successful completion and then fast move on to other projects. The knowledge they carry over are either informal reminiscences that can only be referred informally or by those written down artefacts and anecdotes that can be advertised as success elements. Group meetings with dissenting voices would have cluttered the recording space.

However, I now see your point that dissenting voices have their values as something that can be revisited and it behoves ultimately on the leaders and decision makers to carry along these points so that they can walk along as pointers.

Teacher: Understanding and collective decision making develops a power. We have in our management practice something called the Decision Tree method where we assign percentages to different opinions and then weigh the final decision. The sanctifying of those weights is always subjective and questionable. How really do you think this knowledge artefact can help in real implementation?

Student: There is a probable way out. We call it a “What-If” analysis. Checking the decision tree method with different weights and figuring out what the outcome be with each change. By doing so with many simulations one can find a solution space where one solution is not so significantly different from the other and one can really take up a solution thread with least effect. This technology is in corroboration with the lone voice being given appropriate cognizance in the decision making process. Pit-falls can be pre-calculated and when and if they occur, we already would have some plans ready to go about.

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A voice that first is defeated takes away the zeal from the person who opined it; the person becomes less interested and less integrated. Then the voice becomes “Personalised” and groups are created between victors and left-outs.

Teacher: A context sensitive “Failure” needs a patronage to get recognized. Do you think this would have to depend on the sweet conscience blooming in the heart of victors, who as per Foucault have come up to that stage through the brutal force of Knowledge-n-power dominance? Do you think it is possible practically?

Student: There is no way unless the paradigm shifts, and that can only happen through mobilization. Foucault did not see that as his agenda- but he aided activism. The possibility of any voice getting recognized is to gather mass!, it can then give that strength to those who have joined- that is the assurance needed by loner voice to come together and get into activities toward a paradigm shift.

Conclusion

Education is not necessarily related to Knowledge garnering. Education is gained through the institutional society, through the informal channels of the society, through some perturbing subversive praxis, and through occasional revolts by interest groups or issue-based movements. All these processes are actually conforming processes. They mature the society – the existing structure of Knowledge/Power and the Saudi Arabia’s society’s dominant hegemonic assertion. The only way to get out of it is a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift in thought process and in praxis- the entire gamut. This has to come from outside, something that is not a product of the Arabic society, but comes and creates its own process of garnering

mass to make a potent force. This potent-force is another challenging Knowledge/Power structure that breaks the old one. History of human civilization moves from one such moment of a paradigm shift to another moment of paradigm shift. The battle is not therefore against the “general” of Knowledge/Power, but one “particular” against another on the same bedrock of the “general”.

Education is simply a tool that serves the server. One cannot dream of throwing the baby with the bath water. There is nothing in the Saudi Arabia society without any kind of knowledge/Power. Even the most natural form of Knowledge that is available among primitive tribes and societies has a structure and it is this structure that gives the Knowledge the power of transfer from one Self to the other. Without absolutely any Power structure, knowledge cannot and does not flow from any source to any recipient.

Education is always formal and a change or paradigm shift can only be undertaken through an incessant discourse of one formal with another.

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Criterion	Levels of achievement		
	Exemplary	Good	Poor
Writing style and presentation are clear			
• Title	Title is concise and informative so readers can anticipate the contents of the contribution and interested people look forward to reading it.	The title gives a general indication of the material covered in the contribution, but have to read the document to fully appreciate what is covered. Some potential readers may be lost because they can't clearly anticipate the material covered by reading the title.	The linkage between the title and the text is not clear. Reader may skip the contribution because they don't appreciate its relevance.
• Introduction	Introductory statement clearly indicates the main purpose of the contribution and suggests the plan of organization, so the reader can anticipate the text that will follow.	Introductory statement indicates the main purpose of the contribution in general terms, so the reader has some idea of what will follow.	The introduction does not give an overview of the contribution so the readers are not sure what to expect as they read the text.
• Main Body	Main body of contribution makes connected points that clearly build the argument so the text flows from introduction to conclusion in a logical manner, thereby helping the reader to follow the thinking behind the text.	The main body presents a number of points that allow the reader to understand the argument, but lapses in the writing may force the reader to make some connections between the parts.	The text is not well structured so the reader must stop reading at times to try to makes sense of the text.
• Conclusion	The main point of the contribution is clearly indicated and reinforced so the reader can clearly remember it.	The main point of the contribution is indicated, but may be stated in an unconvincing manner.	The concluding section does not reinforce or revisit the main point so the reader is unsure about

			it and likely to misinterpret or forget it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written expression 	<p>Sentences and paragraphs are well structured and clear so the reader can focus on what is written.</p> <p>Each paragraph has a topic sentence that indicates the subject matter.</p>	<p>Minor lapses in sentence structure, such as run-on sentences and unnecessarily complex sentence structures, force the reader to pause and reflect on the meaning of the text. Paragraphs present a complete argument, but may not flow so well.</p>	<p>Many sentences are poorly structured so the reader must stop often to reflect on the meaning of the text.</p> <p>Many paragraphs lack topic sentences or have poor flow so the main points and linkages among explanatory text are not clear.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar, punctuation and spelling 	<p>Grammar, spelling and punctuation are flawless, which allows the reader to focus on the message.</p>	<p>Some minor errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation detract from the quality of the text, but do not impair the communication.</p>	<p>Many errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation make reading the text difficult and communication is impaired.</p>
Concepts and arguments are well developed			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy 	<p>All information is accurately reported using appropriate terminology so the information is reliable.</p>	<p>The information is largely accurate but imprecise language could lead a reader to misinterpret aspects of the text.</p>	<p>Although the gist of the information is correct, there are problems with the interpretation of it. A reader can be misled by the text.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance 	<p>Connections between the contribution and the main topic of</p>	<p>Connections between the contribution and the main topic of the discussion are</p>	<p>Although the text is relevant, this is not clearly indicated, so the reader</p>

	the discussion are clearly indicated.	indicated or implied, but the reader needs to pause to clarify those connections.	must guess how the text relates to the main topic.
• Significance	The reason why the contribution is important to the overall discussion is clearly described and discussed so the reader takes the contribution seriously.	The reason why the contribution is important is touched on but not elucidated, so the reader must make some interpretations about the author's view of the contribution's significance.	The contribution may include significant material but this is not indicated, so the reader must guess it.
• Clarity	The main points and new technical terms are clearly described and/or explained so the reader is left with no ambiguity about what was written.	Although the text is clear to informed audiences, unexplained points may leave room for alternative interpretations of the text.	Key points and new technical terms are not explained so the reader is confused.
• Independence	The contribution is completely self-contained so the reader does not have to read other contributions or published materials to understand what was written about.	The text is sufficiently clear that the reader can understand the main point without further reading, but some parts of the text are not clear without consulting earlier contributions or other sources of information.	The text is written in a manner that presumes considerable prior knowledge, so the reader must have a thorough knowledge of what has been written about the subject in order to understand the main point of the contribution.
Contribution is responsive to another contribution	The writer links ideas submitted by others to their own contribution in a manner that substantially strengthens the group's efforts to resolve the main problem. This linkage can include elaboration of what was previously written, a	The writer makes references to earlier works that are a starting point for new ideas but, apart from the reference to the earlier work, not much information is incorporated	The text mentions other contributions but neither explains the reference nor substantially adds to it, so there is no clear benefit to the resolution of the main

	critique or questioning of it, demonstration of linkages among two or more earlier contributions, and/or utilization of an earlier contribution as a foundation to build your own.		problem from citing the earlier contribution.
Text is supported by references			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources indicated 	All information and ideas that are not commonly known are supported with references to sources, so the reader has confidence that the information is not based on hearsay or the writer's opinion or assumptions alone.	Most sources are indicated, but in only a few cases the sources are not given or are ambiguous, so the reader has to check some of the sources.	Sources are cited for some specific parts of the contribution, but no references are supplied for information and ideas that are clearly not the author's, so the reader has no idea of the validity and authority of the information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant references 	Information, concepts and opinions are supported with references to published literature, especially primary (original) sources of information, rather than review articles or textbooks. This allows the reader to independently review the cited sources. More than one reference is cited to support key points, which adds strength and authority to the argument.	One or a few references are used to support the text. Thus the contribution is supported but this may be an idiosyncratic source. Some general references to textbooks are made that could have been replaced by primary references which are more thorough and authoritative.	Information comes from Web sites or other sources that have no recognized authority, so the validity or strength of the source is unknown.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citation style 	<p>References cited appropriately in the text, and the correct format is used in the text when citing information, so the reader clearly knows which information is attributable to which source.</p>	<p>Minor lapses in citation format do not prevent the reader from finding the sources in the reference list at the end of the contribution.</p>	<p>Citation format incorrect or poorly placed in the text, so citations distract from reading.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bibliographic information 	<p>The reference list contains complete bibliographic information (author's name(s), publication date, title, source, date web page accessed), so a reader can easily find the references for their own research. The authority of sources can be evaluated by checking them.</p>	<p>Bibliographic information largely complete, but some information missing so the reader may have difficulty finding some references. Most sources can still be easily checked.</p>	<p>Not all references are listed, information in the reference list is incorrect, or important information is missing from the reference list, so the reader is unable to find the same sources of information and the authority of sources is almost entirely unknown.</p>

Faculty Comments:

The work has been done in great detail. And all aspects of academic guidelines have been followed. Minor lapses in sentence construction, though, has impacted the work in some sections but if taken care of the quality of work would definitely go high.

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