

The Passionate Teacher and the Curriculum Police: Perspectives on Modes of Subjectivity and the Curriculum as Art

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Educational authoritarianism does not tolerate or provide the opportunity for individuals to write significant curriculums with the creative and personal intensity of art. Authoritarian meddling discourages experienced teachers from collaboratively interpreting so-called "aims and objectives" and other modes of written expression. The police-like approach, governmental fawning, sycophantic committee work and the railroading of insidious and dominating curriculums etched in stone will ultimately fail and betray us. We need a greater shift toward the personal and an active recognition for interpretation of authentic curriculum texts as art in our teaching practices. Authoritarianism can only lead to the eventual and diminishing returns in our schools and institutions.

L'autoritarisme éducationnelle ni tolère ni munit les individus à écrire des curriculums avec l'intensité créative et personnelle de l'art. Ceux qui s'ingèrent d'un façon autoritaire découragent des enseignants expérimentés de l'interprétation en collaboration des *soidisants* "but et objectifs" et autres modes de l'expression. L'approche des gendarmes, la gouvernement servile, les comités flagoneurs, et les curriculums dominants qui sont gravés à l'eau forte sur pierre, ultimement vont échouer et nous trahir. Holus avons besoin d'un changement vers la personne et une reconnaissance active pour l'interprétation des textes du curriculum comme l'art dan l'enseignement. L'autoritarisme ne mène qu'à la décroissance eventuelle de nos écoles et institutions.

Passion and Domination

Educational authoritarianism is alive and well in Canada as in other places in the world. Take the case of Ontario's Premier Harris and company. These are well meaning, but ultimately misguided people, who play dangerous games with the lives of our teachers, parents, and students. They know not what they do in their effort to dominate and centralize education. The purpose of this paper is to address insidious domination through centralization and use of curriculum police. The latter enforce authoritarian approaches to the curriculum. This paper will delineate repercussions that arise through an abuse of power in the name of education.

I will go about this by answering the following questions: What if curriculum writing as such were to dispense with tedious committees and the politics of bureaucratized sycophantic sessions of power, patronage, and domination? What if curriculums were to be composed in the spirit of music and other arts by a talented individual and interpreted or coauthored as such by the teacher and to some responsible degree by *the students* in the classroom? What if any educator in a position of power were to trust the teaching profession and dispense with notions of enforcement? What if these educators were to take risks in the name of responsible subjectivity and passion after truly having done their homework in the rigorous spirit of objectivity? What if they were able to recognize that the merit of objectivity is its most commendable ability to reveal its own limitations and invite subjectivity at the parameters of rationality and determinacy? What if educators, civil servants, and governments in power were to stop dominating, controlling, predetermining outcomes and alienating that very teaching profession which actually actualizes the awesome responsibility of teaching and educating our most important resource, our students? What if Glenn Gould had written this paper, the pope, the devil, the premier of Ontario, or Kierkegaard for that matter? But it is in terms of the latter individual that I have mainly chosen to write this paper. Hopefully, you the reader, in turn, will indulge my choice for this paper.

There is a growing tendency in education to infer that contemporaneous thought is more in tune with the times and thus has its own validity. But this is just another veiled variation of the much abused authority argument. Do prevailing fashionable or unfashionable notions really evade the problems associated with that

argument? Obviously not, as it becomes a matter of convenience with which aspect of an argument or time period one chooses to side with. But what value is there in exhuming Kierkegaard? It certainly is not for his authority as he himself denied this very aspect in himself and others. Why not simply answer that the exhumation is useful in that most educators do not really know terribly much about Kierkegaard and that therefore it may be of use to review some of his ideas in light of that fact. The most common prejudice against Kierkegaard is that he is just a humourless, didactic, Christian philosopher of benefit to theologians and psychologists. But I think that there really is something to learn from his so-called aesthetic thought as differentiated from his religious criticisms of the established church. (There is also a good deal to learn from the latter but this is not an area of concern for this paper). Given these rather innocuous circumstances why not put on a seat belt and go for a short ride? We probably waste more time waiting at long cross-lights or viewing commercials on television. For this reason I will quote him a little more frequently than the other 12 thinkers who appear in this paper collaboratively or independently of his thought.

Evans writes that Kierkegaard was the first philosopher who approached the notion of subjectivity indirectly by focusing his ideas on passion and believed that existence without passion prevented a person from becoming personally integrated (Evans, 1983, p. 40). On the other hand, Warnock emphasizes the idea that Kierkegaard wanted to dismantle the myth of scientism which argues that everything is causally determined (1988, p. 8). Of course this does not imply that one should disregard objective knowledge. Far from it! He, and like many others who followed after him, simply wanted people to recognize the limitations and myths of the what of objectivity and to preserve our individuality and those of our students through subjective reflection. For Kierkegaard (1846/1974) "*passion is subjectivity*," [italics added] and does not exist objectively (p. 116).

Warnock (1988) clearly defines what she believes to be three essential characteristics of Kierkegaardian subjective knowledge: It could not be passed from one person to the next; thus, it could not be taught as such in the classroom. Knowing something subjectively always has the nature of a paradox because subjective knowledge is an attribute of emotion rather than the intellect. Finally, subjective

knowledge is concrete rather than an abstract notion because it is related to an existing individual (pp. 9-10).

Thus, on the subjective or personal level, a teacher or a writer of curriculums would not evade the actual content of her existence. This would be especially true of a living, concrete, and passionate teacher and author. I feel that the teaching performance or curriculum from such an individual would not escape this reality. Thus the subjective response to curriculums and teaching is one that can be contained and related to by both the teacher and curriculum writer. In this sense one *cannot* evade or escape one's subjective inner self.

How are we to utilize the nature of subjectivity and communication? For example, to what extent can the teacher communicate to his students subjectively if the mode of communication is indirect? Reid (1989) encourages us to think intuitively through an acknowledgment of the limits of thinking and talking propositionally. He even goes as far as to declare that:

All such talk is empty if it is not based on direct, intuitive, first-hand cognitive experience ... Experiential intuition is essential The Concise Oxford Dictionary's version [of intuition] is: 'Immediate apprehension by the mind without reasoning; immediate apprehension by sense; immediate insight' ... I will claim, that *all* knowledge contains an intuitive element or factor. (pp. 15-16)

Evans (1983) writes that Kierkegaard's conceptualization of indirect communication through subjectivity practices the maieutic art, as did Socrates.

The paradox of the maieutic life is that 'the recipient by the help of another comes to stand by himself.' But if this is to be possible the communicator must find a way to reduce his own significance to the recipient to a vanishing nothingness. (pp. 102-103)

In other words any notion of a teacher or curriculum writer controlling and dominating the learning experience in the classroom must be eradicated. This can be done by reducing one's significance in relation to one's students or colleagues in order to communicate indirectly or artfully. William Barrett in a conversation with Bryan Magee reminds us that Martin Heidegger shares this point of view as well:

We have to stop trying to dominate not only the physical world but also people, and not only other people but also

ourselves: we have to stop trying to dominate our own personal lives There may be a certain point at which we have to cease trying to coerce that part of Nature which is ourselves, a point at which we have to submit to it. Now the only thing Heidegger has to offer is a certain kind of reflective thinking which (he says) is akin to poetry, in that it contemplates *being* rather than *objects which it can manipulate* [italics added]. (Magee, 1988, p. 71)

This type of manipulation, either of the teacher over her students or curriculum writers over teachers, is surely, highly undesirable. Kierkegaard (1846/1973) writes that

Unless the individual learns ... to be content with himself and learns, instead of dominating others, to dominate himself, content as priest to be his own audience, and as author his own reader ... then he will not escape from reflection [of a public or collective entity and its values and propensity for leveling]. (p. 263)

For Kierkegaard the contradictory notion of dominating oneself is a consonantal possibility if it takes the form of contentment with oneself. Unfortunately, those who believe that curriculums are etched in stone would summon teachers and inspectors to act as curriculum police for the purpose of *enforcing* these documents. This already constitutes an outrageous act of domination which has an insidious effect on the whole school system. Marvin Wideen (1994) writes that:

It should come as no surprise ... that you cannot mandate the things that matter. Mandates generally do not assume any element of professional growth. They typically assume that changes external to the system can change the system. And that in turn assumes that teachers can act as conduits for other people's intentions. (p. 118)

Outraged and frustrated teachers in North America and the United Kingdom are already feeling these effects and are complaining vociferously – amongst themselves – for fear of the authorities and what they might do.

How does a concept of subjective understanding relate to concrete aims and objectives in curriculum guidelines and lesson plans conceptualized in this manner? If we are to take the concept of subjectivity as developed thus far, it becomes evident that one would wish the teacher to take the leap and interpret so-called aims and objectives subjectively. Ideally, they should not be written out at all

but implied indirectly on paper in the spirit of subjective communication. But since they do exist I would like to emphasize that such aims and objectives are all too often written in a false spirit of objectivity and control and thus do not constitute, by any means, the best temporal clues available for the purpose of writing excellent curriculums. Tasos Kazipedes (1989) wrote a paper which clarified the logic of aims and objectives. He argued that there were two programmatic reasons for writing in this fashion:

The first is pathological, and is the result of the failure to prepare educated teachers ... Talk about a 'teacher-proof curriculum' and other mindless slogans are extreme examples of the wrong-headed approach to a very complex issue When specific prescribed objectives and rules, rather than criteria of educational worthwhileness, guide the curriculum the result is control of the minds of the teachers and the students and impoverishment of the whole educational environment. Another politically motivated reason for emphasizing curriculum objectives is to make it serve specific political ends. (p. 57)

Aims and objectives are then, of course, at their very best nothing more than a very rough blueprint of the originator's ideas or, as mentioned already, something a good deal worse if related to the writer's lack of significant subjective experiences and/or desire for control or domination of teachers and their students. Ideally, the teacher should participate in indirect communication by the how of his interpretation of the direct communicant of the curriculum or lesson plan in whichever form it may be written. Perhaps one could clarify this idea with a concrete and simple example. Assuming that the pitfalls of writing objectives can be evaded, and this is assuming a lot, these objectives become real or concrete after a teacher actualizes them in one form or another in the classroom. A musical analogy may be useful at this point. If we think of a musical score as the objective curriculum or lesson plan and the performer as the teacher interpreting these particular notes or signposts then the following quotation by David Dubal (1989) is most useful:

The printed page is merely a blueprint; each player, to the best of his or her ability, tries to present what is in the music, what the composer means. 'The written page,' Aaron Copland wrote, 'is only an approximation; it's only an indication of how close the composer was able to come in transcribing his

exact thoughts on paper. Beyond this point the interpreter is on his own.' Pablo Casals said, 'Sometimes, looking at a score, I say to myself, 'What marvelous music. But I must make it so.' (p. 14)

Once again, I would argue that at best these aims and objectives are obviously temporal and objective clues to be performed and interpreted as it were. Sharon Bailin (1994), in her chapter on "The Something More" uses a musical example as well to illustrate a

wider applicability of the notion of skill ... the imaginative something more is exhibited in music in the manner in which a piece is interpreted and the expression thereby created The musician who exhibits something more in his playing, then, will be the one who has highly developed musical judgment and skill that the choices he makes in interpretation will reveal new possibilities in a work and render it highly effective. (pp. 115-116)

Thus, I would advocate that aims and objectives be taught in an imaginative way. In no sense are they to be played or taught mechanically. They are thus just an approximation of the inherent, inward values expressed by the author. The author should realize this limitation and invite this fact by expecting teachers to creatively interpret, collaborate, and co-author legitimate aims and objectives which are to be actualized in the classroom. The powerful implication here is that the author has to take a leap of trust. She must risk trusting the prospective interpreter (teacher) of the said curriculum. Both author and teacher must take the risk and trust each other! The fact that there are so many people who believe in the role of curriculum police is an indication of the lack of fundamental trust in education so very necessary if the school system is to function as a great deal more than an edified police environment dedicated to the domination and control of individuals. It also reveals our insatiable need to conceptualize curriculums in terms of their legalistic overtones. Eisenberg (1995) writes:

There is a growing tendency in society today to become legalistic. In our attempt to control some key aspects of existence in a rational, reasonable manner, we resort increasingly to a legal model. More laws are being passed, more human relationships are legislated and formalized, and more disputes are mediated legally. But instead of turning into a utopia on earth, we seem to be unravelling at the seams. Not only is the growth of crime in scope and

viciousness an element in the emerging society, but so is our pervasive dependency on law, on formal rules and sanctions, on classifying, correlating, and controlling, which together form the essence of scientific method. (p. 375)

Mistrust breeds curriculum police and creates grave impediments to our creative ability to exercise freely our individual passion and subjectivity in our teaching. Surely, without trust and its inherent risk factor, there cannot be subjectivity and passion in teaching.

We should only tolerate non-dominating aims and objectives. These are related to the inwardness of an individual (an author, teacher, and ultimately his or her students) which is, after all, the inwardness of existing human beings. This relation to the person's inwardness is made possible by way of the subjective response of the teacher to the aims and objectives to be actualized. In this sense there is room for the possibility of both teachers and students contributing *individually* to the actual writing of the curriculum *after* its legal implementation. In this way a curriculum becomes an ongoing activity which will reflect local needs as well. Such an approach might reduce the frequency of new curriculums as is so very evident in the United Kingdom recently.

Thus, in order that these objectives may be realized in actual self-realization of both the teacher and originator of those objectives, a leap of faith via the blueprint and the teacher's imagination is necessary. In this way, it is possible to bring about the true essence of existence as implied in a masterful curriculum.

To put it another way, the comprehension of subjectivity versus objectivity is not a matter of creating antagonisms between these two dichotomies. I agree with Robin Barrow (1992) that

The tendency to polarize rationality and feeling is to be resisted. Rationality, far from being opposed to feeling and emotion, actually involves them Commitment to rationality is entirely consistent with commitment not only to commitment itself, but also to the values of caring, intuition, insight, imagination, creativity, and so forth. Conversely, concepts such as intuition, imagination, creativity, and emotion are logically tied up with rationality. (p. 94)

In this quotation it is possible to see objectivity as rationality and subjectivity as a form of one's *personal* feelings. The problem is that we do polarize objectivity by making it an absolute value in some form of all-encompassing rationality.

Yaroslav Senyshyn (1992) traces an historical basis for Rationalism in his review of John Eisenberg's book entitled *The Limits of Reason*:

Although we are at the threshold of a new century, we have yet to shed our faith in Rationalism. The seventeenth and eighteenth century epistemology and its naive belief in Natural Law still hang over us like an unwanted hangover. In the early part of our own century, we were rudely awakened to the limits of science and logic, yet we choose to cling to the blind, and sometimes alarming, path of reason. (p. 317)

Eisenberg did not want to discredit or ignore reason per se but wished to reveal that there are ways in which reason or objectivity can be seriously misused and even abused. Eisenberg's book challenges the notion that there are determinable ways to solve our social and educational problems. The end result of all of this determinacy has been mostly disillusionment and failure in moral education, the law, and reform programs. Eisenberg (1992) writes:

There is some intrinsic logical incompatibility between what reason tries to do and what it can do. Rational method is premised on the possibility of conceiving and correlating all operative factors in a given process. But all such factors cannot be taken into account. Reason cannot take reason into account any more than an eye can see itself seeing or a hand grasp itself grasping Nature as we can know it, and human society even more so, is one big crapshoot! We are ultimately confronted by an intrinsic indeterminacy, an indeterminacy that precludes total, even substantial, understanding and control of our destinies – even in principle.

How is the teacher to avoid these pitfalls of false determinacy or objectivity in the classroom? The successful teacher would present his personal, subjective being as an existing human being and use the inner core of that essence to relate to that same core of experience of the originator exemplified in the curriculum. This also means that imagination as a predominantly subjective entity must function in the realm of the personal and individual. But, one may well ask, is the imagination a category of the subjective? I believe that it is. Stuart Richmond (1995) writes that

Imagination is a philosophically complex concept of mind that resists definition in strict behavioral terms Imagination is not a skill or technique, nor is it, in any obvious sense, a simple cause and effect variable ... Imaginative thought

transforms knowledge of what is, to insightful conceptions of what might be and is therefore a component of all forms of planning and design. (p. 7)

Kieran Egan (1992) also conceptualizes it in terms of its indistinctness of mind and its evasiveness to empirical research:

This is not an area in which we can turn to empirical research for much help. Empirical research can usefully come into play once the phenomena to be dealt with are clearly conceptualized – but this has so far been lacking for imagination. (p. 68)

The strong implication here for curriculums is that aims and objectives must be treated with all the passionate seriousness of true creative sincerity and struggle and with synchronic acknowledgment of the limitations of such a blueprint. Thus, this type of objective or concrete curriculum cannot be ignored. It should be written with the same seriousness and intensity of purpose that an artist will give to her medium. If the curriculum could then be treated as a work of art the following by Reid (1989) would apply:

In considering the appreciation of art there is, of course, the problem of *interpretation*. A work of art engages the full attention and study of a person. In this act of attention, the senses, the imagination, feeling and thought are all involved with one another in intimate relationship to what is given by the specific art work. As a personal response art is and must be a private experience of the given object, but as *directed to the object it is self-transcending* A musical score, a complex presentation with many aspects, can be 'seen' to have different musically viable interpretations by different masters. They are different because, since the musical composition is complex and has many aspects, *this* musician is bringing out certain aspects of the music, and *that* musician others Though there will always be healthy disagreements, the *consensus* of competent critical judgments builds up through time a critical canon, a stabilizing, but never a final authority. (p. 19)

The author of such a curriculum must be a highly qualified individual, a master teacher-writer, a creative philosopher as artist, *not* an individual who succumbs to the temptation of sliding into bureaucratic expediency, even if he should be a teacher! This business of politicizing the task at hand can only result in simplistic and insidious solutions. But the phrase "a highly qualified individual" does need clarification in light of the idea of the individual, as writer, and

thus the only person writing as such. For these reasons I am particularly wary of the notion of team writing a curriculum because collectives tend to lose sight of the expression of subjectivity in the individual. I believe that this group setting often will result in a kind of collective cowardice. I am reminded of Kierkegaard's (1846/1973) irony in this quotation:

Now everyone knows that so and so many make an individual, and quite consistently people add themselves together (it is called joining together, but that is only a polite euphemism) for the most trivial purposes. Simply in order to put a passing whim into practice a few people add themselves together, and the thing is done – then they dare do it. (p. 260)

We have all experienced this kind of collective cowardice at one time or another in committees. It can be easy to get drowned out in these situations.

If all the above conditions were to be met then such a curriculum would be worthy of being actualized by a highly motivated teacher, in turn a master teacher as artist, who could accomplish this task imaginatively. This requires a commitment of precarious balance that must be maintained by both the teacher and curriculum author as individuals. John Mullen (1988) eloquently expresses the process by which this commitment is to be maintained by revealing Kierkegaard's dichotomy which can pertain to this effort:

To be committed is to be subjective, to be detached is to be objective. A person [teachers and writers of curriculums] must be both a subject (a center of commitment) and an object (an item of analysis) to himself. Yet these are opposing tendencies. They can never be made to live harmoniously together. They will always cause you trouble (anxiety) in so far as you attempt to satisfy both, and yet this is exactly what you must do. This is therefore a problem which is built into the requirements of being a person. That is what an existential paradox is, a problem (source of anxiety) which goes away only when you cease to be a complete person in death, in insanity, in self-deception. (pp. 46-47)

What then is the nature of objective knowledge as the opposing tendency of subjective understanding?

The Nature of Objective Knowledge

According to Kierkegaard and others, when an individual's reflection is directed to objective truth, then she becomes related to an object of truth. Thought or reflection in this relation between the individual and the known object (in this case a possible curriculum) does not result in a focus on the nature of the relationship per se, but rather on the question of verifiability of the truth of the object to the knower. In Kierkegaard's (1846/1974) view it is possible to state categorically that "if only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth" (p. 178). When an individual's reflection is directed to truth subjectively, then the reflection is directed subjectively to the relation between the individual and the question of truth raised in a subjective manner. "If only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true" (p. 178). Kierkegaard gives an example in the form of the knowledge of God to clarify his line of reasoning. He posits the problem in this way:

Objectively, reflection is directed to the problem of whether this object is the true God; subjectively, reflection is directed to the question whether the individual is related to a something in such a manner that his relationship is in truth a God-relationship. On which side is the truth now to be found? (p. 178)

Obviously, the answer is on the side of subjectivity. But how does he get there? Kierkegaard begins with the mediational point of view; that the truth is on neither side. But he rejects this argument on the basis that the individual is in the state of existence and thus by definition in order to take a mediational approach must be in a "finished" state; but this is not possible because the individual exists and therefore is "becoming" and not "finished." Thus, according to Kierkegaard's logic, an individual cannot be in a state of mediation because a human being is in the human sense of the word and thus exists in a way that God does not.

Kierkegaard offers another argument. He says that the mediational state is also impossible because an existing individual cannot be ubiquitously identifying herself as subject and object. "When he is nearest to being in two places at the same time he is in passion; but passion is momentary, and passion is also the highest expression of subjectivity" (p. 178). In other words, passion can sustain the individual's ubiquitous relationship of subject and object for the

moment only. To translate this into more concrete terms one can give the example of the view of the futility of empirical research when it faces concepts such as imagination that cannot be clearly conceptualized. Egan (1990) recognizes this problem and thus the need for the affective or subjective in stimulating imagination.

Obviously teachers can best stimulate imagination by first identifying what they themselves find affectively engaging about the topic at hand. Indeed, this seems to me a first essential. If teachers cannot locate *in themselves* [italics added] an affective response to the material, then they have little hope of being able to engage students in it. (p. 167)

Kierkegaard sums up his argument by referring to what he calls objective and subjective “accents.” These accents are of historical interest because they reveal the thought of those who subsequently conceptualize subjective notions such as creativity, imagination, feelings, and so on, as entities that are not necessarily divorced from reason or objectivity. Kierkegaard reminds us that these accents are related to the “what” of a statement and to the “how” of a statement respectively. The what of a statement is relative to the person speaking in those terms; thus, the truth of what is being said is relative to the person or persons speaking. In other words, the “what” of a statement has relative truth only. Thus a curriculum written in the spirit of the “what” of teaching and content can hold only relative truth to the person speaking. Thus, the aims and objectives of curriculums are, for the most part, erroneous and irrelevant when conceptualized in this manner. If one wishes to use them then one must seriously question the possibility, once again, that they are being stated in this manner for the disturbing possibility of dominating others. Perhaps an introductory, humbler phrase would be more in order – for example: “It is sincerely hoped that students and teachers as potential artists may find these following ideas [the *what* of the matter] and suggestions meaningful and significant in their lives because according to my personal experience this is *how* they have been such for me.” I quote Kierkegaard (1846/1974) for the sake of clarity:

The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said Objectively the interest is focused merely on the thought-content, subjectively on the inwardness Only in subjectivity is there decisiveness, to seek objectivity is to be in error. It is the passion of the infinite that is the

decisive factor and not its content, for its content is precisely itself. In this manner subjectivity and the subjective 'how' constitute the truth. (p. 181)

Robin Barrow (1984) offers an interesting variant of this notion of the "how" and "what" of the matter in his ideas on curriculum evaluation. He writes that there is:

A widespread failure to recognize that objectivity does not require the total separation of the individual and his judgement Avoiding arbitrary bias and irrelevant considerations ... is not a matter of *what* procedures one adopts, but of *how* [*italics added*] one makes use of any procedures and of their quality. (p. 243)

Although quotations are very useful for our understanding of the differentiation of objective and subjective truths, it nevertheless still leaves us with the legitimate question of truth in itself; that is, *what is truth?* Surely, it is not enough to say that truth is subjectivity; Kierkegaard's (1846/1974) definition is quite succinct: "*An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual*" (p. 182).

But such a definition is not passive or abstract in nature; Kierkegaard refers to the "appropriation-process" as a "venture" by which an individual actively "embraces" uncertainty "with the passion of the infinite" in order to gain this truth. It is apparent that this truth is faith for Kierkegaard and he admits to this by claiming that his definition of truth is an "equivalent expression for faith." All of this is quite acceptable, but what about the possibility of an objective certainty? Can we dismiss this notion altogether? Kierkegaard addresses it with a brief dismissal; in a curt way he admits to the objective truth of a "mathematical proposition," but dismisses this by labeling the propositional truth as one that is an "indifferent truth" (Kierkegaard, 1846/1974, p. 182). Reid (1989) who was cited earlier in this paper about the "limits" of propositional truths and collaboratively of Kierkegaard reminds us that:

Instead of making knowledge a function of the truth of propositional statements ... we should turn it on its head and say that truth is a function, or attribute, or quality, of the mind's living cognitive apprehension of the world Direct knowledge through acquaintance and experience, direct intuition, are not in the conventional or propositional sense of

knowledge, first-class citizens. I am not, of course, suggesting that those who subscribe to the propositional view of knowledge are unaware of other claims to knowledge, but only that the tyranny of the propositional view prevents them from being taken seriously enough. (pp. 13-14)

I believe that this kind of indifferent propositional truth is irrelevant to the more important issue of objective uncertainty and its relation to the notion of inwardness. How is one to acquire this inwardness? I agree with Kierkegaard (1846/1974) that this kind of inwardness is passionate faith in any worthwhile task acquired through risk: "Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty" (p. 182). If we follow through with this, I would say that we must write curriculums that stress art in the arts and sciences. The famous mathematician-physicist Freeman Dyson (1992) writes that "we should try to introduce all our children to science as a rebellion against poverty and ugliness and militarism and economic injustice. Another face of science that children should explore is science as art" (p. 199). I feel that all subjects and curriculums in schools should be appropriated as art by their respective students and teachers. In other words, curriculums should have a potential to be written and viewed, at least, as striving for art. It is even possible that certain discarded curriculums as art would still have artistic value and be highly influential even if they were no longer functional as such. Although only a very few would probably attain the status of art as such, at least the passionate intent, struggle, and risk involved, would greatly enhance their applicability in the classroom. Let us not be prejudiced by traditional or more familiar forms of art as only art. Why not curriculums as well!

I believe that in order for an individual to have faith in subjectivity, risk must be involved. A belief in subjectivity is in direct incremental proportion to the risk involved. For Kierkegaard, the greatest risk of all would be any belief in the absurd. The only object of faith is the absurd and only this object can be believed. Thus, objective scholarship cannot aid in this interaction between faith in subjectivity and the absurd.

If the maximum of understanding of faith in subjectivity is that it refuses to be understood, then one can only understand that it cannot be understood. To do otherwise is not only a paradox, but a

self-defeating process by which subjectivity becomes attributed with a knowledge that leads to the confusion of viewing it as a "matter of knowledge" and thus a kind of objective faith in subjectivity which is a contradiction in terms, that is, a paradox that is objectively conceived and therefore inaccurate and ultimately a disservice to a belief in passion as subjectivity. Let us relate this, once again, to education.

The Possible Extinction of Passionate Teaching in a Classroom

In conclusion, I wish to reveal a notion of subjectivity in connection with what I believe is its most important implication for teachers today. I will begin by stating this opinion: Without a greater shift toward subjectivity and passion in the teaching, writing, and conceptualization of curriculums *as art* that are not *intended* to be etched in stone, the "live" teacher may very well become a fossilized museum piece and for all practical purposes an extinct individual to be replaced by the computer or other forms of "non-live" technologies. Why? Simply, because the so-called objective practitioners of teaching and enforced curriculums will readily exhaust the predetermined possibilities in misleading modes of objectivity and determinacy and leave little room for imagination. The rest would be a matter of fiscal sense or nonsense. Enforced curriculums are the result of politicization in the education sector. Why hire human beings if you don't really need them?

As well, the inevitable outcome must be boredom for students and misleading and deteriorating modes of teaching techniques based on a "worship" of curriculums as holy icons that are supposedly and mistakenly written in a spirit of determinacy and control. This is being done at the expense of all those unfortunate students who are already falling to the wayside because of boring and dispassionate teaching resulting from the enforced implementation of mediocre, dominating, and politicized curriculums.

I find R.G. Collingwood's perceptions to be in great harmony with my own point of view concerning this topic. Once again if we think of the ideal teacher as an artist carrying out passionately and with subjectivity the curriculum written by another teacher-artist-philosopher then we can relate to this quotation by Collingwood:

The emotion expressed by a work of art [the masterful curriculum must be artful and thus considered a work of art] cannot be merely an 'aesthetic emotion', but that this so-called aesthetic emotion is itself a translation into imaginative form of an emotion which must pre-exist to the activity of expressing it. It is an obvious corollary of this, that an artist [the author of curriculums] who is not furnished, independently of being an artist, with deep and powerful emotions will never produce anything except shallow and frivolous works of art. (1958, p. 279)

As well, I am implying that teachers who are not artists in the sense of being passionately aware of the limits of an absolute objective approach to a curriculum and the unlimited nature of subjectivity or informed intuition will never produce anything except shallow and frivolous teaching reflective of curriculums without deep and powerful emotion. Thus every teacher must be a co-author (an interpreter in the Collingwoodian sense) of the intended aims of the curriculum in the same way that "performers [teachers] have been told that they must not claim the status of collaborators, and must accept the sacred text just as they find it; *Authors who try to produce a fool-proof text are choosing fools as their collaborators*" [italics added] (Collingwood, 1958, p. 321).

Let us beware of teachers and small-minded curriculum writers who rely on objective renditions with little emotional involvement. For they know not what they do. Students will pay the ultimate price – for many of them will give up learning. In classrooms all over North America we see the impasse that the inflexible, objective approach has brought about: namely, that we have a breed of teachers who are not qualified or simply not encouraged to "collaborate boldly and competently" (Collingwood, 1958, p. 321). In this Collingwoodian sense, our modern teachers and writers of shoddy curriculums are incompetent after all. We cannot afford our fanatical faith in a distorted objectivity which worships so-called "aims and objectives" and thus blinds us to this disturbing possibility of rampant incompetency in the profession.

Is the result of this incompetency destroying our teaching and curriculum culture already? Are teachers who *are* competent performers and interpreters ironically going extinct or burning-out by the harassment and demands of fanatical practitioners, the so-called curriculum police, who for the sake of actualizing curriculums will

cater to the dictates of their power drives? Are we convinced that we have indeed exhausted all the possibilities and variables of subjective, emotional, and intuitive interpretations? Science knows that objectivity leads to finite variables and subjectivity leads to unlimited ones. The art of teaching and writing curriculums is boundless in variables only if the art of subjectivity is understood and encouraged on the part of the educational establishment. Let us beware of the inevitable demise of the art of teaching if we are to persist stubbornly and blindly in the idolatry and apotheosis of faith in the erroneous notion of the sacredness of the objective text, that icon of false worship – the curriculum – the be-all and end-all of most educational documents. I am referring to the ones etched in stone and ready to be implemented by the curriculum police, particularly in Ontario and elsewhere.

Boredom in our classrooms is inspired by the overly pervasive spirit of an erroneous objectivity which leads to objective dead ends. There is a *finite* amount of information that can be gleaned in an objective attempt of a gathering of facts. Are we that far away from Dickens' "Number 24, what is a horse [fact]?" But, once again, it is the spirit of distorted objectivity and the politicization of subjectivity and curriculums that prevents the practical realization of unlimited, *personal* possibilities and variables in the art of teaching. The spirit or faith in a false objectivity prevents oneself from having faith in the unlimited possibilities of a subjective and personal approach to teaching and in the writing and interpreting of curriculums. One is forced to admit to the possibility of unlimited subjective possibilities as a seeming theoretical possibility. If we cannot develop a faith in the endless possibility of the subjective approach to teaching and curriculum writing then we will become educationally bankrupt.

We need a greater shift toward subjectivity and an active recognition for interpretation of *significant* curriculum texts in our teaching practices. Let us write curriculums with the artistic and personal intensity of art to be freely *interpreted* by their trusted practitioners, the teachers as passionate, individual artists and co-authors. Senyshyn (1996) writes,

The emphasis must be on the understanding of self and the utilization of one's inwardness as the mode of subjective communication. The [curriculum] ... is the means of direct communication and the actual performance [teaching] is the

aesthetic category that is the form of indirect communication whose artistic merit will be in direct proportion to its evident inwardness, which is derived from subjectivity The individual [as teacher *and* student] must be allowed to aspire peripherally to the subjective limits of one's concrete existence. (p. 60)

Conclusion

What exactly is it that Kierkegaard would have us do in light of his thought. He would certainly have wanted us to dispense with writing curriculum team committees. He would openly criticize the politics of bureaucratized obsequious sessions of power and domination in the curriculum writing process and ask that this cowardly process be replaced by the efforts of a distinguished educator, an individual, recognized, appreciated, and elected by a college of distinguished peers who have dedicated most of their professional lives and careers to education in a non-dominating way. Certainly not an authority that brags openly about his or her lack of formal education! Thus a masterful curriculum as art would be composed in the spirit of music by a talented individual and performed and interpreted or coauthored as such by the teacher *and* to a limited extent by the students in the classroom. Educators in power would be able and willing to trust the teaching profession and dispense with notions of enforcement of curriculums. They would be able to take such a risk in the name of subjectivity and passion because they would have done their homework in the rigorous spirit of objectivity and its greatest asset which is to surrender its very own limits to responsible subjectivity and the personal. They would indeed *reflect* this very merit of objectivity as revealed indeterminacy. Powerful people who may be educators and civil servants would cease dominating, controlling, predetermining outcomes, and alienating that very teaching profession which actualizes the awesome responsibility of educating our students. Finally, given these ideal circumstances Glenn Gould could have written this paper, and for that matter, the pope, the devil, Kierkegaard, and maybe even the premier of Ontario.

One could say that ultimately we need a greater shift toward subjectivity and an active recognition for interpretation and coauthorship of *significant* curriculum texts as art in our teaching practices. Let us allow deserving individuals the opportunity to write

authentic curriculums with the artistic and personal intensity of art to be freely *interpreted* by their trusted practitioners, the teachers, as passionate, individual artists and co-authors. The misdirected objective and police-like approach will ultimately fail and betray us. It can only lead to the eventual and diminishing returns in our schools and institutions.

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