

A Public Choice of Self: *Bildung*, Foucault and Education

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Draft June 2014

Abstract

The *Bildung* tradition promotes the development of one's talents and abilities as well as development of society. Within that tradition is embedded a public choice of self, a passionate search for continual growth, tempered by reason that is developed through intense study of one's intellectual tradition. It includes the ability to engage, we argue, in critique of one's society, challenging it to realise its own highest ideals. Self's behaviour and emotions, it is argued, are an integral part of the *Bildung* tradition. Whether self was educated, if self was schooled in the past, should be considered in terms of self's experience and behaviour in the present. The process of education and 'being educated' is a process built on trust, emotions and experience in life. To consider an epistemology on a *public choice of self*, three 'axes of education' are discussed, based on the philosophical work of Foucault, coupled with the musings of Lonergan and Dworkin, arriving at an *episteme* of education – art and poetry, solving equations, scientific research, reading philosophy and appreciating beautiful things like the tranquillity of the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal and the quartets of Bach.

Introduction¹

In this paper, the author², as an outsider trying to understand *Bildung*, a concept for which no English language equivalent exists, looks at individual behaviour and perceptual tendencies. The 'self' represents you or I as a reality³ bundle of experiences, memories, thoughts and emotions. The paper is neither a defence of consciousness nor 'the self' *per se* as debated throughout the history⁴ of philosophy and more recently in the neuroscience literature⁵. Rather, with a focus on the⁶ *Bildung* tradition and education, the emphasis is on how self's values and motives are conditioned by society and by self's experience of society as a whole. An integral part of the experience is education and schooling. Self enters the schooling system and is educated, self then exits the schooling system. Our discussion is not entirely about the economics of self, a self-centred economic man⁷ guided by a maximisation principle 'of getting the most from the least'. It is the story of how 'the seamless web of yesteryear' leads slowly and inexorably into the present. Foucault asserts⁸ that our own times and lives are not the beginning or the end of some 'historical' process, but 'a period like, while at the same time unlike, any other'. We refer to this process as a public choice of self, a passionate search for continual growth, tempered by reason that is developed through intense study of one's intellectual tradition.

¹ An earlier draft was presented at the Munich Workshop on 'Bildung, Art and Education', University of Munich, April 10-12th 2014, and I thank participants for comments, in particular Karel Boullart, Timo Airaksinen, Manfred Holler, Barbara Krugman, Klaus Wieland, Helmuth Blaseio, Katharina Kohl, Bjorn Frank, Hiltrud Schinzel and Branko Urosevic.

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³ Midgley, M (2014): *Are You An Illusion?* Acumen Press

⁴ Recommend reading Simon Blackburn (1999): *Think* Oxford University Press.

⁵ Interesting debate in Rosenbaum, D (2014): *It's a Jungle in There* Oxford University Press.

⁶ Siljander, P et al (2012): *Theories of Bildung and Growth* Sense Publishers, The Netherlands.

⁷ Boettke, P & F. Sautet (2009): *The Economic Point of View: Collected Works of Israel Kirzner* Liberty Fund, US.

⁸ Ball, SJ (2013): *Foucault, Power and Education* Routledge Press, UK. Chapter 3 discusses Foucault's 1979 discourse *Discipline and Punishment*.

Me. Myself and I⁹

A public choice of self also falls within Lawson's declaration¹⁰ of political economy, delivered at his Dublin lectures in 1843, as a science that has man as its subject matter and 'views him in connexion with his fellow man, having reference solely to those relations which are the consequences of a particular act, to which his nature leads him, namely, the act of making exchange'. Rather, in a public choice of self, the conscious of self and any investigation of the behaviour of self as an economic agent originally stems from the self-centred maximisation principle. Indeed, to eliminate utility maximisation from our debate on education in the *Bildung* tradition we choose to adapt the original Becker-Kirzner's discussion¹¹ on irrational behaviour by assuming that every opportunity has an equal chance of being selected. In other words, faced with a binary choice at a point in time, self will consider the trade-off between a short term gain and a long term benefit. Therefore, self will appear to be impulsive, erratic and habitual. Between the two extremes of education and schooling lies a wide spectrum of irrational behaviour, in the sense that no preference system, no utility function is consulted, partly determined by education and partly schooled by experiences in the present.

Ship of Theseus

In a public choice of self, as shown in examples to follow, revisions are made as a consequence of self's conscious and emotions and, a pattern of revisions in self's observed behaviour could be indicative of patterns of rational action. Consider Hobbes' famous example of the ship of Theseus. This ship is taken into dry dock for repairs. The masts are broken, so these are replaced. The hull is rotting, so that too is rebuilt with new timber. The deck is replaced and so on until no parts of the ship are the same as when it came into dry dock. So, is it the same ship? And what if someone took all the old pieces of timber and rigging and put them together again. Would that have a stronger claim to being the original ship of Theseus? The answer¹² is that it depends - there is not really a single fact of the matter. If you are Theseus, however, your ship is the totally renovated one. In the public choice of self you cannot answer the question 'but which one is really the same ship?' It is an empty question on *sameness* – although it may be the right question to ask it has no rational utility maximising answer.

The neoclassical economists of past centuries struggled for a formalised answer based on a metric. What we are proposing is a degree of vagueness about self's education and schooling without being too precise about what is of its nature, vague. Self relies on subjective judgement if no objective one can be made and the existential question about what matters at a point in time is ultimately a question for self and self's experiences and emotions in life. There is a dual ambivalence here, as described by Burchell¹³, one aspect in relation to scholarship and one in relation to the constant

⁹ The review of Midgley *op.cit* in *Financial Times* by Steven Cave was entitled 'Me, myself and I'.

¹⁰ Chapter 4 in Boettke & Sautet *op.cit*.

¹¹ Gary Becker's Chapter: 'Irrational Behaviour and Economic Theory' in Boettke & Sautet *op.cit*. He proceeds to demonstrate that 'although the average consumption of a single household could not be determined in advance, the average consumption of a large number of independent households would almost certainly be at the middle of the opportunity set, which is also the (mathematically) expected consumption of single household'.

¹² Abridged from Baggini, J (2011): *The Ego Trick* Granta Publications, UK

¹³ Burchell, G (1996): 'Liberal government and the techniques of self' in Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996): *Foucault and Political Reason* UCL Press London, UK.

challenge of 'not knowing what and how to think'. Self, expressed as an innate set of personal characteristics and traits, based on one's experience and knowledge of everyday life, is at the heart of *Bildung*, and represents the poet Seamus Heaney's 'the knowable corona' of what is meant 'to be educated'.

Foucault's 'questions posed in the present'

To consider an epistemology on a public choice of self, three 'axes of education' are discussed; the axes are inspired by the philosophical work of Foucault. As academics we learn from our students, we choose to teach and instruct. Ball¹⁴ has argued that the focus of much of Foucault's work was to explain what it means to teach and learn and to educate. The first axis in our understanding of education is education as an experience. The second axis is education as a means to influence one's belief system and the third axis is education as an embedded power. In his 'middle period' of writing and lecturing, Foucault paid attention to the 'management of populations' and on what he called 'bio-power' - how power flows through, for example, the educational system, its organisation, the interplay of knowledge and power.

Adapting x-law¹⁵, wherein a putative criminal's knowledge of the law is gained from the schooling of shared experiences of self or others before the Courts and not necessarily from obtaining a law degree. Putative criminals in the present - 'threats to the population', 'the menace'¹⁶ of the others within' our educated society - learn from experiences and gain an understanding of the law and of legal procedure. A set of interrelationships never imagined in the past, cross between the power of a Judge and the knowledge of the putative criminal. A well-educated learned Judge, rated and ranked and promoted from amongst his peers and, the schooled criminal, cognisant of the procedures and practices of the criminal justice system, dabble in the mysterious art of precedents, rules and regulations every day in the court systems.

University of the air¹⁷

The x-law experience, paradoxically, is analogous to Lonergan's erstwhile theory¹⁸ of knowledge - experience, understanding and judging. In other words, a putative criminal knows the law by experiencing the law. An illiterate immigrant adapts and speaks a new foreign language in order to survive. The newly appointed professor of Economics may learn to speak Mandarin. Each has a personal objective, so 'incomparably precious that it will save self from being a cipher'¹⁹: it will give each one of us 'a life of our own, independent of the machine'. And so it could be argued that *Bildung* embraces a society in which there is scope for all kinds of complementary individuals and activities - exposure to different kinds of people and experimentation with different types of lives, a life of experiences that are crucial to the sort of moral development Hegel had in mind writing his *Philosophy of Right* in 1821. Albeit, social unity requires well-formed institutions, educational

¹⁴ Ball, Stephen (2013): *Foucault, Power and Education* Routledge Press, UK.

¹⁵ McNutt, P (2010): *Political Economy of Law* Elgar Publishing, UK

¹⁶ Drawing from Foucault's 'example of the lepers' discussed by Ball *op.cit.* Also quoting the research work of Armstrong, D (2003): *Experiences of Special Education* Routledge Press, London.

¹⁷ Extracted from speech by late Richard Crossman, English politician in 1960s quoted in *Prospect* April 2014 pp88.

¹⁸ Fitzpatrick, J (1982): 'Lonergan and Hume' *New Blackfriars* May 1982 pp219-228

¹⁹ Extracted from *Prospect* April 2014 edition p88 attributed to Cyril Norwood Headmaster of Harrow School in England in 1929.

institutions, it also requires a diversity of individuals with the freedom to develop a wide variety of talents and abilities.

Therefore education of the self is achieved through a wide variety of experiences and challenges to the individual's accepted beliefs; in Foucault's writings²⁰, these challenges enable one 'to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner'. What binds Foucault's axes together in an *episteme* of education, we believe, are self's behaviour and emotions. They are also an integral part of the *Bildung* tradition. Whether self was educated, if self was schooled in the past, should be considered in terms of self's experience and behaviour in the present. The concept of duty²¹ provides a space between education and school; ultimately teacher-as-a-self has no duty to school or to educate, but rather has a permission or a discretion to decide either way. That space might easily be exploited by providers of education to introduce performance targets or to instruct a dogma or 'to lead out of ignorance', that is, to educate. The space for many is empty of the 'oxygen of knowledge' – what we refer to as *anoxia* in education - occupied by the proposition that self-as-a-teacher has the discretion to educate or not. If the self-as-a-teacher is struggling to reach performance targets he may have a duty not to educate but to school, to focus on the mathematics and not the poetry. The semantics and choice of words merely translate action into statements of official duty. The teacher is an official, his salary may be performance related and security of tenure may be linked to the school's performance in a peer review league of schools. But more ambitious semantics such as 'the law provides that John is educated' may be read on the understanding that government have decreed some rule according to which self-as-a-teacher enters into a contract with self-as-a-student.

Commoditised crime²²

As players in a game, putative criminals are schooled by their criminal world experience and from experiencing the x-law. This is their education. The game is zero-sum and mortality is a certainty. Rational arguments will have prevailed should the rules adopted by the criminals at time period, t , converge with the rule of law at time period $t + T$. Rawls²³ in his *A Theory of Justice* had provided a neo-Kantian theory of justice based on basic rights and liberties of individuals 'as free and equal persons', who unanimously agree to fundamental principles of justice: the principle of equal liberty and the difference principle. Benefits accruing to one group can be justified if they improve the position of the least advantaged groups in society. Rawls later argued that everyone's well-being depends upon cooperation with others; is it the case, we ask, in a public choice of self that 'without cooperation no one could have a satisfactory life'. The answer depends on the task at hand and the education of self. Rawls' 'Aristotelian principle' that normally, people find that tasks that use their developed capacities are more interesting and preferable to simpler tasks would suggest that self's sense of personal satisfaction increases the more self's capacities are realised.

What of the specific task? What if crime could be commoditised in a social bond between a putative caring defendant and a potential plaintiff? The emphasis is less on the production value of crime

²⁰ Foucault's 1970s lectures at *College de France*, reviewed and discussed in Ball *op.cit.*

²¹ Adapted from the writings of Dworkin, R (1978): 'Is There Really No Right Answer to Hard Cases?' *New York University Law Review* vol 53, no 1 April pp121-133 and (1978): *Taking Rights Seriously* Harvard University Press

²² Adapted from Chapter 7 in McNutt, P (2010): *Political Economy of Law* Elgar Publishing

²³ Rawls, J (1971): *A Theory of Justice* edition 1999, pp12-15.

committed and more on the opportunity cost of crime prevented. A first type²⁴ of 'bon voyage' scenario invokes the possibility of a one period gift of the total surplus of the crime as a commodity to the plaintiff at end of trade. Intuitively, at time period $t + T$ your house has not been burgled as you enjoy your vacation because the potential burglar traded the crime with you at time period t and you reached an equilibrium position. A caring defendant is a behavioural anomaly for the standard economic approach to criminal justice. It is not related to the multiple selves approach to time discounting nor to²⁵ Thaler's 'mental accounting' - the motivation of a caring defendant has to be understood in terms of stopping x from happening rather than in obtaining self-esteem or status for doing x . The compensation is the shadow price equivalent for society of a no crime state of affairs, reflecting the real reductions in security measures, the net present value of prolonged life, and the opportunity cost accruing to the defendant in not committing a crime. Prevention of crime may require knowledge of all the sources of disequilibrium in the political economy of crime.

What if? If then?

If you could imagine a potential burglar coming to your home and stating that on knowledge of your impending holiday trip and on the fact that your house will remain unoccupied that he plans to burgle and commit a crime of worth \$ w . Would you trade with him to prevent the burglary happening at all? No self is forced into such a position, but what if? A first and fundamental step might be recognition of the fact that in your neighbourhood crime prevention is sub-optimal; crime continues to escalate and once criminality gains sufficient support among the general public or is observed increasingly by the general public, the reputation of the law will be threatened and more self-interested people will be induced to act unilaterally. One's moral reasoning here is independent of schooling, and an education, based on performance and scores, arguably, will never be able to give self a boots-on-the-ground guidance on the final decision. A public choice of self is eager to establish grounds for an *objective education* that does not succumb to performance criteria alone. In other words, it is neither self's schooling nor education *per se* that matters, but rather the schooling and education expressed, for example, in a restaurant queue, faced with a potential burglar or in cheating. It is, in the words of philosopher Owen Flanagan²⁶ 'doing everything we can reasonably expect from the fully Naturalist picture of persons that contemporary science advances'.

Emotions and Belief

In the burgeoning literature on virtue ethics one recurring theme is that markets, such as commoditized crime, rely on extrinsic and 'thereby non virtuous motivations'. Bruni and Sugden (2013) recently argued²⁷ that 'this idea can also be traced back to Aristotle [sic] 'the life of money-making is one undertaken under compulsion, and wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else''. So in a market setting rational individuals are not independent – they act under compulsion. There are institutional responses to crime in an x-law environment. Police informants, for example, are registered sources of information for police detectives on crimes about to be committed. Self-as-whistle-blowers likewise provide valuable

²⁴ Abstracted from Chapter 7 in McNutt, P (2010): *Political Economy of Law*, Elgar Publishing, UK.

²⁵ Thaler, RH (1991); *Quasi-rational Economics* Sage Publications, NY

²⁶ Flanagan, Owen (2002): *The Problem of the Soul* Basic Books, US, pp293-294

²⁷ Bruni, L and R. Sugden (2013) 'Reclaiming Virtue Ethics for Economics' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* vol 27, no 4 pp141-164

information to law enforcement officials. They are symptomatic of the institutional failures in 'the law' environment and of the problems caused by imperfections in the market for criminal intelligence. A crime may be prevented in an x-law environment if the armed robbery gang were interviewed by the police at time period t and traded the worth of the crime to be committed at time period $t + T$.

So is education a good or a service, is it an end in itself? Is education up for sale? Our contention is that education ought not to be for sale however, schooling is for sale. Higher ranked schools can charge a higher entrance fee and impose entry barriers to ensure the school provides a club education, excludable but non-rival. State schools, by whatever name, are public goods, non-excludable and non-rival. Once financial incentives are introduced, expressed in terms of better working conditions, higher salaries, improved facilities, this prompts the thought that the self-as-a-teacher may be a self-interested school-teacher, supplying an educational service at the highest price rather than an altruistic educator at any price²⁸. The concept here of intrinsic motivation has undertones of Aristotelian ranking of intrinsic value over instrumental value. Yes, it depends on the teacher, on you, the academic: however, it has long been established in the psychological literature that external rewards can crowd-out intrinsic motivation²⁹.

There³⁰ has been a revival in the last two decades of Aristotle's contention that it is the proper role of the State to encourage *eudaimonia* or flourishing, in the citizenry. What does it mean to flourish? Harris³¹ tried to articulate the idea of well-being and human flourishing. But, if flourishing is the aim, can *Bildung* enable self to act toward that aim? Nussbaum³² (2013), a defining influence in the rise of the Neo-Aristotelian idea that philosophy, including political philosophy, can and should transform our emotions, looks to John Stuart Mill's inaugural address to the University of St Andrews, in 1867, in which Mill highlights the importance of 'aesthetic education' in schools and universities as the foundation for a sympathetic, liberal 'religion of humanity'. Nussbaum recognizes that if politicians really want to reach into 'the souls of their citizens and stir their emotions', they need the arts and humanities. She argues that politicians can at least create conditions in which artistic talent is more likely to arise, and help to educate a populace to a level where it's capable of responding to great art. They can do this 'by encouraging the teaching of arts and humanities' in schools and adult education, and by supporting artistic institutions and allowing them to take risks.

The desire to know and to take risks in the *Bildung* tradition accommodates each of us as self; and self's quest for objective knowledge is manifested in different ways at different stage of self's x-law experience. We educate and we are educated. When the mysterious art of precedents, rules and regulations are applied to education the self-as-a-teacher comes under pressure to discover the truth or to discover what Lonergan once called 'the eros of the mind' – analogous to the free unrestricted *Bildung* desire to know. Concepts are discussed, experiments are conducted and students interact with teachers and academics. There are many concepts from the mathematical

²⁸ Analogous to Titmuss' example of blood donation alluded to by Bruni and Sugden *op.cit.*

²⁹ Excellent discussion in Bruni and Sugden *op.cit.* and article by Sandel, M (2013) 'Market Reasoning as Moral Reasoning' in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* vol 27, no 4 pp121-140

³⁰ Review of Nussbaum, M (2013): *Political Emotions* Harvard University Press by Jules Evans Blog www.philosophyforlife.org.

³¹ Harris, Sam (2010): *The Moral Landscape* Free Press, Simon & Schuster, US.

³² Nussbaum, M (2013): *Political Emotions* Harvard University Press

equation $2+2 = 4$, to the reading of poetry, appreciation of art, to the concept of the Universe to truth itself. Many of these concepts are incoherent and the teacher's account may 'hang together' for one student but another will try to argue against.

But before the self can be promoted from the level of understanding a concept to the level of judgement, the concept has to be put to the test. And this is done by the self, reverting to 'fitting the data' or observing an experiment. Nielsen³³ argued that if a concept is incoherent one ought not to take it on trust that the concept in question has application. So the process of education and 'being educated' is a process built on trust. Trust between teacher and student. Polanyi³⁴ who considered coherence a mark of rationality, pointed out that 'coherence as the criterion of truth is only a criterion of stability'. So it may stabilise an erroneous or a true view. To the atheist, God does not exist, to the philistine art has no value and mathematicians can disprove that $2+2 = 4$. Which concept is more stable in the delivery of education? That art has value or that God does not exist or that a caring defendant could exist?

The Metaphor of Bentham's *Panopticon*

However, there is the possibility that self may not know enough about the concept to judge and thus postpone judgement until further educated. Self the tax-payer, for example, only experiences the public health service provision and its efficiency on admittance to hospital. It is as if education and experience are 'placing logic within the movement' - from not knowing to understanding the concept. However, beyond understanding there is judgement and x-law experience and the positive value of coherence is reduced. The educated self understands the concept 'tell-the-truth' but in self's experience in an x-law environment the belief system changes across time and experience. Coherence is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of truth. The teacher has the power³⁵ to influence the belief system of the student by teaching the value of art and poetry, and 'to make a difference to the result' – in this case, the student's appreciation of art and poetry.

In other words, intellectual flexibility and Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, both cornerstones of the *Bildung* tradition of good judgement and moral reasoning, may have been replaced by mentality rigidity, ranks and ratings in the schooling system. It has been argued elsewhere³⁶ that teachers are often left with no leeway to bring in their passions and emotions, and students measure their own ability solely in terms of test scores and grade averages, and that 'educationalists would prefer curricula which mandate only what no student should leave school without knowing and let school governors and the teaching profession decide the rest'. In a public choice of self, the individual exercises judgement.

Consider the judgement of prisoners in³⁷ the *Panopticon* writings, enclosed in a circular tower under the watchful eye of a guard who observes the prisoners from his vantage point in the tower. A prisoner believes that he has discovered an escape route. There are a number of 'givens' – there is a

³³ Nielsen, K (1971): *Contemporary Critiques of Religion* Macmillan Press, UK

³⁴ Polanyi, M (1958): *Personal Knowledge* Routledge & Kegan Paul, UK

³⁵ Lukes, S (1974): *Power: A Radical View* Macmillan Press

³⁶ Boucher, J (2013): 'Don't Deny the Evidence: Genes do affect social mobility' *Prospect* December 2013 Edition pp44-46

³⁷ Jeremy Bentham 1787 *The Panopticon Writings* published by Verso Press in 1995 are letters brought to public attention by Foucault in 1975.

plank of wood, but is it strong enough to support the prisoner's weight? Are the loose bricks at the bottom of the wall removable to allow the prisoners to scale to the top of the wall? These and so many other conditions have to be made before a prisoner can announce a secure judgement 'there is an escape route'. But there is an hypothesis: if the conditions hold, there may be an escape plan. Or if the conditions hold, another may predict that one could escape. Knowledge in this case is the affirmation of the self's coherent interpretation of the data conditions. But what is there to say about the guard? The fact that conditions that are independent of the self, have to be met before judgement can be made indicates that there is an objective detachable quality about what is affirmed in judgement. In the words of Dworkin³⁸ it is as if 'facts exit independently' of the self or the self's knowledge of them.

Isomorphic with Education

In other words, the truth – that the prisoner cannot escape or the prisoner has escaped - is reality. Truth affirms the facts: if the prisoner did escape, then the plank was strong enough and the bricks were removable. Truth is isomorphic with knowledge, knowledge is isomorphic with education. Beyond education there is the question of what is to be done on the basis of this knowledge. Should the self, inform on the prisoners? As the self begins to evaluate the options, the self is no longer making a judgement but is determining what the self stands for – the self is now self-conscious and the self, ponders what the self ought to do. It was, as argued³⁹ by Fitzpatrick (1982), the impossibility of deriving a value judgement from a matter of fact, an *ought* from an *is*, that led Hume in his 1739 *Treatise on Human Nature* to conclude that moral judgements are merely the result of feelings and emotions.

If the self can observe other responsible persons, self will be responsible too in the Kantian categorical imperative to fulfil duty - knowing what to do is intricately linked to observing others. Moral judgement declares that Immanuel ought to tell David the truth; but self's moral rule is that Immanuel should not lie and, 'should not lie' becomes a universal law. Morality is not the same as self-interest – morality is obeyed because it is the right thing to do. For self it is a matter of rational deduction. One is reminded of Charles Dickens in *Hard Times*:

"Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room. In the opening passage⁴⁰ of *Hard Times*, we meet the teacher, Thomas Gradgrind and, hear his own description of his philosophy, as applied to child-rearing and education. Gradgrind's grinding emphasis on "nothing but Facts" signals his adherence to Utilitarianism, which is a major target for Dickens in *Hard Times*. Nineteenth-century Utilitarian thinkers, the best known of whom was Jeremy Bentham focused on quantifying human behaviour to produce "the greatest good for the greatest number." The character of Thomas

³⁸ Dworkin (1978) *op.cit*

³⁹ Fitzpatrick (1982) *op.cit*

⁴⁰ Discussion of *Hard Times* sourced from the URL documentation - dickens.stanford.edu

Gradgrind takes these tendencies to an extreme. In the school he sponsors, he prohibits all speculation, fancy, and play, and the driest of lessons are given to the pupils. In the period before the 1854 composition of *Hard Times*, Victorian society struggled with the question of how to provide comprehensive elementary education to all children. Private schools, such as Gradgrind's, were common and had a strong influence on later nineteenth-century education in the UK. In 2014, a leading Nobel laureate, James Heckman⁴¹ is advocating spending US tax dollars on *kindergarten*-education for all children under 4-years old from lower-income families. Applying rigorous cost-benefit analysis to the well-established Ypsilanti programme in North Carolina, he is able to show that students in the programme had higher test scores than their peers and, were more likely to have gone to college. Support for early education in lower-income families not only benefits society, but 'it more than pays for itself'.

Education: 'the reason why of things' v Humean emotions

Experience and emotions open the way for subjectivism and prescriptivism⁴². The level of self's evaluative judgement is linked to self's education. Self's evaluation builds on factual knowledge; schooling provides the facts. If not, then self makes an evaluation without regard to facts and without regard to concepts and, it is worthless. Albeit, what grounds the evaluation is the education as it provides the basis for a new question to be asked, a new value judgement to be considered. In a Humean world mechanical beliefs and habits perform a compensatory role in Hume's theory of knowledge. The self operates on the principle of cause and effect - 'we understand similars similarly'. Moral actions derive from feeling of pleasure and pain. The mechanical beliefs and habits, however, are formed within the schooling process. It is a machine driven process, grades and performance criteria, and the Enlightenment's view of man as 'mechanistic' has prevailed with the emphasis on the hard sciences and the STEM initiative⁴³ where advancement in knowledge is by way of empirical verification. Knowledge of carpentry and history is less prized than knowledge of chemistry or coding. As 'the market and cash' mantra penetrates into the schooling system, economic forces and traditional standards clash and 'a new economic and social individual' is created⁴⁴.

The self has to exist and during a recession or economic downturn the arts, education and social services come under new budget constraint⁴⁵. Universities have to direct courses to what industry prefers and government politics is defined along a⁴⁶ voter-issue space that has⁴⁷ 'the market mentality of the right and the shades of working class on the left'. Education as an economic good has to be measured otherwise philistines might conclude that education like museums never pay a

⁴¹ Interview: 'The Heckman Equation' in *Business Week* edition January 20-26 2014. More research is planned by Heckman.

⁴² The arguments here have been influenced by the writings of both Fitzgerald (1982) and Ball (2013) and personal notes of the author from Dominican sermons at Oxford's Blackfriars Church in 1980-1982.

⁴³ Acronym - 'Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics'. Check the URL http://www.obhe.ac.uk/newsletters/borderless_report_january_2013/global_race_for_stem_skills

⁴⁴ Alluding to the spiritual and social changes discussed by Alan MacFarlane (1978): *The Origins of English Individualism*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.

⁴⁵ Barrow, R (1982): *Injustice, Inequality and Ethics* Chapter 14: Education Wheatsheaf Books, UK

⁴⁶ McNutt, P (2002): *Economics of Public Choice*, Elgar Publishing, UK.

⁴⁷ Boucher, J (2013): 'Don't Deny the Evidence: Genes do affect social mobility' *Prospect* December 2013 Edition pp44-46

return on investment. In the interests of an economic return, education has progressed to schooling with a concomitant measuring, predicting and defining teaching techniques. So management at school A may ask: how should we proceed? Do we sell languages, do we sell sciences, or do we sell poetry? But the teachers have a sunk cost in their particular specialism so they often see their job as no more than a schooling routine, passing on examination techniques to another generation. But is it not the case that 'the educated mind' cannot be measured, cannot be costed as a metric in the *Bildung* tradition?

Trabajo Bien Hecho!

Imagine⁴⁸ a Spanish self, reasonably bi-lingual, now at school in England. If a teacher says to the class the following: 'I want brown-haired children in the front row' no problem of definition or understanding will occur. So let us now assume that all the students in class, including the bi-lingual Spanish girl, understand the *verbal definition* of 'intelligence' so the teacher does not have to translate or explain when he says 'I want all the intelligent children to sit in the second row'. However, some of the class may have difficulty in understanding the *concept* of intelligence, understanding what exactly is involved. The children know what the teacher is talking about but they may not know a great deal about what intelligence actually is. The failure to understand the difference between the word intelligence and the concept is a difference between schooling and education.

The word intelligence can be measured: grade A is better than a D grade. But is a Spanish bi-lingual child attending an English speaking school, scoring D, less educated than an English only speaking child who scores A in the same science examination? For the philistine who monitors the A in a science examination, the opportunity cost of not speaking another language is not discounted into the cost numbers. The English-only-language-schooled student who scores an A grade in science is preferred. The difference between those who champion the provision of technological skills and those who champion the development of the mind may be substantive. Education is a matter of developing the mind, understanding of principles it is, as argued by Peters⁴⁹ so many years ago, it is about the 'reason why of things'. It is *Bildung*.

Education: Promise or Contract?

Foucault did argue that schooling perpetuates an existing difference in wealth, power and privilege and opportunity - so we ask: what value is education? Education is the flourishing *versus* the pain of schooling. A Proustian logic would point to the pain of schooling, memorising and factual learning, recitation and regurgitation of facts. In Proust's view⁵⁰ we do not really learn anything properly until there is a problem, until we are in pain, until something fails to go as we had hoped. You fail the medical school entrance examination and opt for a science degree instead. Your qualification allows you entry into medical school. In that time interval, it is education that carries the self through life and affects the chances and influences the behaviour of self. The self's x-law experiences, one's expectations and disappointments, one's behavioural patterns and one's intelligence and irrationality evolve out of one's education as well as one's self-consciousness. Rationality is a

⁴⁸ Adapted from an example in Barrow (1982) *op.cit.*

⁴⁹ Peters, RS (1966): *Ethics and Education* Allen and Unwin, London, UK

⁵⁰ Adapted from Alain de Botton (1997): *How Proust Can Change Your Life* Picador UK pp72-76

disciplined understanding - we obey the law, drive on the left-side or right-side of the road, tell the truth and do not blow our noses on other peoples' curtains. The rational self wants to know why, to seek explanation and justification, and to be able to account for his actions. Schooling fulfils many functions, conforms with Foucault's performativity of educating, but for schooling to provide education, it must provide that kind of understanding that allows the irrational self to respect the reason implicit in the rational mind.

Table 1: Anoxia: I-think-You-think

	I think	I know
You think	Emotions: promise	rationality
You know	rationality	Performativity: contract

In Table 1 what is proposed is whether or not knowledge is an exchange of promises between self-as-a-teacher and self-as-a-student and the teacher has a prima facie duty to enforce these promises by educating or leading out of ignorance. If knowledge is a concept then the self-as-a-student has a claim on it; if not, then the self-as-a-teacher has a duty to decide the same claim in an opposite way, education v schooling. Both versions suggest that there is no logical space between the proposition that knowledge is education and knowledge is schooling. However, if we adapt Foucault reasoning then there may a third independent possibility that occupies the space between education and schooling and focuses on the different character suggested by the following comparison. Some philosophers believe that there is no right answer to the question posed by Dworkin of 'whether Charles was brave if Charles is dead' and never faced any occasion of danger during his lifetime, not because 'brave' is vague but because it is wrong to say that a man was either brave or not brave if we could have no evidence bearing on the questions of which he was. This space between education and schooling evokes the question set by Hofstadter⁵¹ *sic* 'Yes, reader, I ask you: Who shoves whom around in the tangled mega-ganglion that is your brain'?

Vagueness v Fulfilling Duty

In Table 1 an exchange of promises progresses to a contractual obligation between self-as-teacher and self-as-student. We can define the following Hypothesis A: 'the self-as-a-teacher has to fulfil his duty to educate or failing to do so, he is in breach of contract'. But with whom is the contractual obligation, the employer school or the parents or the self-as-a-student? If someone were to apply Hypothesis A in practice he may find that he is puzzled whether A is a legally binding contract or not. Consider the following example: at a school in Florida⁵², a five year old girl decided to throw everyone's books and pencils on the floor. Sent to the head teacher's office, she continued to wreak havoc. Her teachers dared not restrain her physically. Instead they summoned the police, who led her away in handcuffs, howling. The teachers acted as they did for fear of being sued. The law had set a precedent. A teacher at a different school was sued for \$20m for putting a hand on a rowdy child's back to guide him out of the classroom. The school ended up settling for \$90,000. What this

⁵¹ Douglas Hofstadter (2007): *I Am A Strange Loop* Basic Books, US cited Chapter 2, pp32.

⁵² Alluded to by McNutt (2010) *op. cit.* pp4 Case Study 1.1

indicates is a sense of forbearance amongst teachers frightened of violating pupils' rights that they allow disorder and havoc to persist. Once the pupils observe the havoc, the havoc continues. A reasonable teacher-as-a-self would be expected to instil discipline in a rowdy classroom either by removing the rowdy pupil in the knowledge that she is acting within the law or punishing the rowdy pupil in the knowledge that other pupils are not only observing the punishment but that they also consent.

Knowledge in this most fundamental sense is ideological, since it forms views of reality and solves problems from a social class point of view. A fact-finder may find it easier to rationalise the case of a poor man stealing from a rich man than the case of a responsible teacher punishing a rowdy child. If the socially desirable outcome is to be obtained – for example, a peaceful well organised and disciplined classroom – then a reasonable person ought not to have to only rely on the law but to act in a responsible manner by fulfilling her duty. Albeit, self-as-a-teacher may argue that if A is vague then there is no right answer, that is, Hypothesis A can be true, A can be false, and A can be neither true nor false. However if Hypothesis A is true as in our example it is because the law has made it true by the actions of someone. In other words, any concept we use to describe self, such that if it is true that self has the property in question it is false that self does not, and if it is false that self has the property it is true that self does not. Self is a strange loop. Does education, educate? Can a blurry, intangible 'self' dictate to concrete physical objects such as 'everyone's books' what to do? The ship of Theseus is so impeccably re-constructed from hull to sail that what Theseus thinks he sees is not genuine; it is a fake! Hofstadter⁵³ argues that this conviction arises in us only thanks to our having 'suspended our disbelief and mentally slipped into Escher's seductive world'.

Foucault's performativity

So finally, we address Foucault's performativity, whereby education outcome is measured by performance criteria, lists, forms, 'do's and don'ts' and peer review rankings. Education becomes a calculable rather than a memorable experience. Education as a delivery mechanism is a focal point of knowledge, power and ethics. Knowledge evolves from the first axis of education as an experience good. But it is the second axis of education that involves the transformation of social and religious relations and practices into the public choice of parental choice at both pre-University and University level. Choice can be influenced by set of factors - religious ethos, social ties – but the net effect is the commoditizing of the educational experience: education evolves to become an economic good.

In 2014 Obama's US Department of Education was proposing to rate 7000 higher education institutions⁵⁴. Why? In part to help families make informed decisions but also to set standards that will determine how much of federal aid schools will receive. The Education Secretary commented in an interview that 'the ratings will take into account whether a college welcomes needy students, helps students graduate on time, and prepares them for good-paying jobs'. He further explained that the objective is to 'rate' colleges by grouping them according to performance criteria, not 'rank' them on a best-to-worst criterion. Tennessee's formula for awarding funds to schools has been

⁵³ Hofstadter *op.cit.* Chapter 8 pp102-103 discusses Escher's lithograph *Drawings Hands* – it depicts a right hand drawing a picture of a left hand and yet the left hand turns out to be drawing the right hand.

⁵⁴ Article in *Business Week* 'The Government Wants to Grade Your College' December 23 2013-January 5 2014 Edition pp31-33.

identified as a template and it is interesting to identify the categories and the % weight given to each, in particular, the weight attached to 'student progress':

Table 2: Rank v Rate: Tennessee Template

University of Tennessee, Knoxville	% 1	Tennessee Technological University	% 2	Chattanooga State Community College	% 3
Graduate degrees	20	Bachelor degree	25	<i>Student progress</i>	20
Research funding	15	<i>Student progress</i>	15	Job placements	20
<i>Student progress</i>	10	Research funding	10	Workforce training	10

Adapted from the original table⁵⁵, Table 2 represents the main criteria in allocating funding and the attached weightings indicate the data-driven trends that are embedded in the funding allocation: for example, the University is rewarded more for research and advanced degrees than promoting access to University; at the Technological University with a low-income student cohort, more funds are awarded for helping them stay in University and earn a degree; and the Community College is incentivised to prepare students for work and job placements. Education is 'praise-worthy' to the extent that it enables students to pass exams, to graduate and to progress in life, to secure a job and increase the chances of 'a given person escaping their class origins'. Do a self-check: are you in column 1 or column 2 or column 3 in Table 2? Education is a means to an end, a calculable end, a measure of a student's progress.

Emotional Intelligence, EQ

Debates on educational policy in the UK and in Ireland in 2014 could be housed inside a not dissimilar rate v rank tableau intertwined with the opportunity cost of teaching religion. The opportunity cost is measured in terms of less teaching hours allocated to other subjects. Denominational faith-based or integrationist or 'teach together' schools discuss the pros and cons of religious teaching as a subject. If the data-driven template is to maximise student's potential then we as lecturers and teachers must ask⁵⁶ the question - the potential to do what or the potential for what? Several different cognitive abilities, including intelligence as measured by IQ scores, contribute to academic achievement and student progress as metrics. But do the metrics help to furnish an answer to such questions? A study of Harvard graduates⁵⁷ in business, law, medicine and teaching showed a negative or zero correlation between IQ entrance exam scores and subsequent career success.

The metrics cannot be considered in isolation of the situation that an individual finds themselves at a point in time. The behaviour of the prisoner in our example earlier should not be viewed as having sprung from a rational assessment of self-interest alone. Rational assessment is one of a number of things competing for the attention of feelings that govern the behaviour. Emotional intelligence, self's feelings, his education and the situation all commit self to act in a certain way. The person who

⁵⁵ Article in *Business Week* 'The Government Wants to Grade Your College' December 23 2013-January 5 2014 Edition pp31-33

⁵⁶ Boucher, J (2013): 'Don't Deny the Evidence: Genes do affect social mobility' *Prospect* December 2013 Edition pp44-46

⁵⁷ As cited from <http://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-emotional-intelligence-eq/0001037>

informs on the escape plan must endure the opprobrium of his peers. The circumstances of an action or the experience of self in addition to self's motivation, consciousness and self-discipline also contribute. Or do they? The seemingly irrational behaviour to inform is sometimes explained by commitment to behave in ways that will prove deeply contrary to our interests. We refer to the example⁵⁸ of *Leo the Liar*. For example, no one would willingly hire Leo for a managerial position that involved failsafe opportunities to embezzle cash from the company. However, as argued by⁵⁹ Frank (1987) a person who is believed to have a strong conscious is a much more attractive candidate. The strict calculus of self-interest would still dictate that Leo steals the money but a sufficiently strong Zen-like emotional commitment to honesty could overcome this calculus.

A Foucauldian Prognosis

The latter point calls attention to the fact that such emotional predispositions may depend on self's education, that is, where self was educated, the circumstances of the education, the ranking and rating criteria - the importance of context and self's feelings of right and wrong are combined forces governing self's behaviour. Leo the Liar is honest and reliable - his failure to pursue self-interest confers an advantage. If others know that Leo's feelings can cause him to behave honestly even when he knows he could get away with lying then they will seek him out as partner in ventures that require trust⁶⁰. Like⁶¹ Schelling's (1960) example of kidnapper and victim, a blackmail act serves as a commitment device that provides the victim with an incentive to keep his promise not to go to the police on being set free by the kidnapper. In conclusion, training students to score A grades in their exams is not necessarily the same as preparing them to use their knowledge in work and in life situations and apply it in emotionally charged situations and seek novel solutions to problems.

With a reliance on performance criteria of rank and rate, the educational experience is nothing, there is *anoxia* in education and productivity is everything, as schools race to compete on grade averages, rankings, research papers, number of 'University qualified' students and, last year's efforts are benchmarked. Education is something to be invested in with good returns, 'a political investment of the body', according to Foucault, wherein the third axis of performativity becomes a key policy of government that uses comparisons and statistics in place of policy direction. Universities lose their independence from the State as funding is linked to peer review performance criteria. Social ties become a tradable commodity within the educational system and a new moral code embeds itself in society. Those who underperform or do not abide by the new code, the mainstream, are subject to what Ozga⁶² called 'the tyranny of the little fears'. Political correctness, entangled with social class, race and religion, has entered the educational system as an over-arching umbrella of diversity under which Foucault's axes of education are often inter-twinning with calculable incentives to attract the best teachers to better performing schools in better neighbourhoods. There is the probability that political correctness and performance criteria work together to change the meaning of educational

⁵⁸ McNutt, P (2013): *Decoding Strategy* McGraw Hill Publishing, Singapore

⁵⁹ Frank, R (1988): *Passions Within Reason* W.W. Norton NY

⁶⁰ Frank, R (1988): *op.cit*

⁶¹ Schelling, T (1960): *The Strategy of Conflict* Harvard University Press

⁶² Ozga, J (1998): The entrepreneurial researcher : re-formations of identity in the research marketplace' *International Studies in Sociology of Education* vol 8 (2) pp143-153

practice - what it means to teach and learn⁶³ – and our sense of who we are in terms of these practices – what it means to be an educator, and to be educated.

Teachers and academics, regulated by the performance criteria, are creating a new *episteme* of public service which involves the subordination of moral and intellectual obligations to economic ones⁶⁴ - more precisely, the present theory of how we as individuals develop into the sort of organic unity that will constantly work toward the full development of our talents and abilities contrasts with the *Bildung* tradition. In a public choice of self it is the emphasis on education that liberates one from blind obedience or from 'any sort of belief in realities that transcend the possibilities of human experience'. It has been argued that the *Bildung* tradition⁶⁵ rejects the pre-Kantian metaphysics of being for a post-Kantian metaphysics of experience that eschews speculation about timeless realities. Learning requires a passionate search for continual growth, tempered by reason that is developed through intense study of one's intellectual tradition. Fulfilment and flourishing comes through practical activity that promotes the development of one's talents and abilities as well as development of one's society. Rather than acceptance of the socio-political status quo, *Bildung* includes the ability to engage in critique of one's society, challenging it to actualize its own highest ideals. Within that tradition, arguably, is embedded a public choice of self.

⁶³ The focus of Foucault's work in on such practices as cited by Ball op.cit pp6-8

⁶⁴ Walzner, M (1984): *Spheres of Justice: Defence of Pluralism and Equality* Martin Robertson, Oxford

⁶⁵ Siljander, P et al (2012): *Theories of Bildung and Growth* Sense Publishers, The Netherlands.