

Essays: Pertaining to Education

by

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Foundations of Education

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Academic Autobiography

We as educators must be epic storytellers, spinning an heroic tale retelling the knowledge we wish to impart to our students. Regardless of subject, it is our job to conjure up a world where the bits of datum and formulae we offer become pertinent and significant to their day-to-day lives and living philosophy as part of who they are and will continue to become on their journey into the future.

While not much of a story in and of itself, my entire life has been driven, framed and continuously redefined by story. We live our lives traveling along a strand of causal events but within our minds and hearts we rewrite the events of our lives into our memory as our own personal epic, the most important story imaginable because we are not only the star and leading character, but author, screenwriter, director, and producer. Most importantly we are the essential critic who will write the crucial review that defines us and tells the audience whether this is a show worth seeing. This is a story that we cannot easily put aside or film we can leave to check what's playing down the street. This is who we are. Story imbues meaning and purpose into the tale of our lives.

That said, I was born into this world at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Brooklyn, New York in the year 1958 to loving parents, young and struggling to prepare for the daunting job of raising a family. And so saying – as is so often the case – the economic pressures proved too great eventually leading to divorce and my being raised by my aunt and uncle. My uncle, not being the most tolerant of men and -

in all fairness – me and my cousins being the young hellions we were, found school a relief from the doctrine of what was then referred to as an old fashioned upbringing. Walking to the bus stop through a candy cane forest of pastel building clustered beneath the Whitestone Bridge, I attended P.S. 193 until my mother remarried, allowing her to finally send for me.

Mr. McLaughlin knew about story. He taught English with relish -- mustard, onions and any other condiment suitable for ballgame cuisine. He could heap on the flavour, smell and texture onto a story and have everyone in his class salivating to dig into the book he was assigning with hungry anticipation. He would crouch down as though covering home plate ready to catch our attention, our questions and enthusiasm and spin them back to us, keeping us in play until well after the bell sounded for next period. It was while attending junior high at St. David's School in Manhattan that I fell in love with 'Story.' For the rest of my life I have been guided by a fascination with the capacity of language to affect our lives. I became a voracious reader, began to write poetry and with my cousins Dominic and Lori made my first 8mm film entitled "Three-in-One."

When my mother became pregnant with my little sister, Samantha I was adopted into one of the most powerful media families in the world and so became Joseph Kluge. After a meteoric rise to the president of the freshman class at the Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut I managed to run afoul of the Dean of Students and so found myself regrouping as a freshmen once again at Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts.

At Deerfield, I finally found a home. Still a bit of the rebel, I nonetheless become good friends with the Dean of Students whom I worked closely with as Co-chair of the Prom and Student Activities Committees. At Deerfield electives were taught by upperclassmen under the guidance of faculty advisors. And so it was at Deerfield that I got my first taste of teaching. There the Dean asked me to tutor a couple of Varsity ballplayers to help them meet their academic requirements. Later I became an assistant teacher for Unified Science and occasionally covered classes when the professor was out sick. My senior year I taught the elective “Zen and the Art of Clowning” – a course I also offered for one semester at Pitzer and revamped Deerfield’s technical theater program requiring members of the lighting and stage crews to take a minimum of one acting course in order to better understand how to integrate the elements both before and behind the curtain to best effect the audience.

While studying Yeats, Eliot, Donne and Blake I became interested in metaphysics and began to read the Bible and Apocrypha in earnest, eventually teaching myself to read tarot as well as the basics of astrology. During vacations I worked as a production assistant at WNEW-FM, realizing the medium of music and lyrics as an even more accessible and popular extension of story telling.

At Pitzer College, I continued to work fulltime in radio eventually becoming production director for the number 1 AOR station in the United States KMET-FM as well as program director for the college station KSPC-FM where I produced the first live broadcast of the Police and the Motels in North America. While at

college I continued pursuing my passion for storytelling, becoming fast friends with the Beverle Houston, the chair of our film department and renowned author of *Self & Cinema*,¹ a history of the avant-garde and new-wave in cinema. I graduated June 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts in Literature having written my thesis on 'The Function of Psychology and Religion in Art, a Barthian Structuralist Analysis of the *Four Zoas* by William Blake.'

Having acquired a somewhat *Orson Wellsian* on-air voice during my years in radio, I was recruited to anchor KGUY-AM's morning drive news in Palm Springs, California, but after a blistering heat wave that topped over 110 degrees for the greater part of the summer I decided to learn more about the financial side of the entertainment industry and so moved to Boston Massachusetts where I worked in broadcast sales for two long years before returning to production as a producer and writer for MediaSync Productions, Inc. in New York City. At MediaSync, I took over writing and producing chores for a little known cable show called *The Eternal Values* which eventually blossomed to air over 300 affiliates worldwide. Additionally, I eventually earned directing and writing credits for clients ranging from Paine-Webber and MasterCard to Conair Corporation and Playboy Shoes. Throughout this period the goal was to eventually develop and produce original programming for both the small and big screen, but soon it

¹ Beverle Houston, *Self and cinema: A transformalist perspective* (South Salem, NY: Redgrave, 1980)

became apparent that in order to make any headway I would have to relocate to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles I had to swallow my pride and once again scale the ladder from the bottom in order to obtain my credentials as a member of the Directors' Guild of America. My work in motion pictures has given me the opportunity to travel the world from the Cannes to Shanghai, and work with such luminaries as the award winning Director of *Steel Magnolias* and *The Turning Point*, Herbert Ross (*True Colors*), renown *Chinatown* cinematographer and director John Alonzo (*Navy SEAL*), the angelic and elegant Oscar winning Anjelica Huston (*The Addams Family*), the prolific director of *Men in Black*, Barry Sonnenfeld (*Addams Family*), DGA award winning, Frank Capra III (*Navy SEAL*, *Murder by Numbers*) and Stanley Kubrick's long time producer, Bernie Williams (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Navy SEAL*). I learned how story is affected by concerns of scheduling and budgeting, and how such concerns should be taken into consideration when addressing any new project creatively to increase its chance of reaching an audience.

For the past few years I have been writing commercial and packaging copy for Warner Brothers Home Video (*The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* reissue, various and sundry animated releases of *Scooby-Doo*, *Static Shock*, *Batman*), Lifetime (*FBI: Hostage Negotiator*) and Trimark (*Requiem for Murder*) as well as pieces for product development at Warner Brothers Marketing in addition to various independent projects, videogames and screenplays of my own.

As more and more production has fled abroad, I have decided to finally return to the origins of my passion for storytelling and teach. As educators we must be prodigious storytellers. The capacity of story to bring knowledge to life, to change an individual and change the world is the greatest miracle of being alive and sentient. It is the capacity to entertain, explore, empathize, thrill and or horrify. To educate.

Notes on the History of American Public Schooling

As a future educator, I find the history of education as outlined by David Nasaw in his book, 'Schooled to Order' to be, at the very least, somewhat troubling and certainly disheartening. As prospective educators seeking admission to the halls of Academia, I would venture the vast majority of us are apostles of education as a journey to the altar of knowledge and the development of critical thinking. An odyssey that should be available to all. Upon consideration of Nasaw's book, the history of American Public Schooling would seem to be an ongoing dialectic struggle between traditional and progressive trends in the socio-economic politik regardless of the hopes and desires of students and educators as well as the popular sentiment.

According to Nasaw, from its inception, education served a single underlying purpose throughout its history until present day; that being the protection of personal property and the defense of the status quo. Knowledge, learning and the capacity for critical and independent thought would seem to have served little purpose throughout the history of public education other than as the tool by which the "Power Elite"¹ maintain their control of their social and economic privileges.

During colonial times, public education was essentially non-existent in the

¹ Nasaw, "Schooled to Order" Oxford (1979) p.167 citing C.W. Mills and the influence of Social Darwinism

continental United States other than the religious oriented schools of Puritan New England. While missionary schools for the aboriginal and dispossessed populations along with private tutoring for the elite was fairly widespread, these institutions had little penetration when compared to the overall population at that time. Consequently, the history of education effectively begins in Puritan New England with the establishment of the “Deluder Laws” and publication of the ‘New England Primer Textbook.’ From colonial times education was viewed from an essentially ‘traditionalist’ viewpoint, charging the parents with the responsibility of girding their children with the tools necessary for each to eventually take their place as productive members of society.² While colonial America was certainly revolutionary by way of its recognition for basic and wide spread elementary education the overall perspective was still more or less aristocratic with a primary goal toward maintaining the status quo. The Deluder Laws of Puritan New England did little to further the popularist and progressive views of our founding fathers of American democracy. Republicans such as Franklin, Jefferson and Jackson struggled with unchaining education from the shackles of religion. An emancipation that was not to break free until the eve of the American Civil War.

Both Franklin and Jefferson felt education to be the final guarantor for the blossoming democracy in America. Nonetheless, Jefferson’s proposal for a free public school system was voted down in Virginia and it was not until 1839 that

² Sadovnik, A.R., Cookson, P.W., & Semels, S. (2001) “The History of Education” p. 67

the first teachers' school was established and free public schooling championed by Horace Mann, education's first progressive reformer.

Thus we turn through our first dialectic cycle, that being from the Colonial Era's hypothesis that education be used as a tool to reinforce their newly found religious freedom as well act as guardian to their new found social and economic properties and institutions. This hypothesis was then challenged by the rising democratic sentiments of the Revolutionary War Era where democratic ideals and the separation of church and state clashed with the entrenched system, and while no established system has yet replaced it's progenitor the resultant compromise or synthesis inevitably forms the basis for the next cycle of reforms.

And so we enter the Common Era of American Education championed by Horace Mann. Horace Mann was born into post-revolutionary New England in 1796. Educated and graduating Brown University with Honors in 1819, he entered public service shortly following his admittance to the Massachusetts bar in 1923. In 1837, Mann was named the first Secretary of Education for the state and so embarked on the path that would lead him to be known through history as the father of public education in America.³

Mann's tenure as the predominant force of reform and the establishment of the Common School Era in education can be best highlighted with the following

³ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Horace Mann" (2006)

points.

Mann (and Barnard in Connecticut) championed education before the public conscious as an essential resource for American society. Not just as the guardian of the Status Quo and defender of personal property but also as the instrument of social change and evolution. To this effect he drove the public awareness for the importance of education even to a nationwide and eventually worldwide level of expectations. This new public awareness allowed for the next two and essential changes to the educational system as championed by Mann: the institutionalization of publicly funded financial support for public schools as well as the establishment of teachers as an honored and respected professional occupation with the founding of the first school for teachers. Even after retiring from public office, Mann continued to influence the face of education across the globe through his publication "The Common School Journal."⁴

The next important step in the evolution of public schooling was the establishment of truancy legislation. In 1849, Boston was first to purpose a law making school attendance compulsory. The law was eventually passed in 1857 with similar legislation soon following across the country.⁵

The next cycle of reform came to pass with the birth of the "Progressive Era"

⁴ Sadvnik, A.R., Cookson, P.W., & Semels, S. (2001) "The History of Education" pp. 70-71

⁵ Nasaw, "Schooled to Order" Oxford (1979) p. 75

heralded by the Social Darwinism of Stanly Hall and the birth of modern education's most prominent philosopher (philosopher, really – there ain't many of 'em) and educator John Dewey.

John Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont in 1859, the same year that Horace Mann passed on to the great Common School in the sky.⁶ Dewey is best known for his works, "School & Society," and "Democracy & Education. Dewey expounded a modified form of social 'Instrumentalism', which can be defined as a worldview where all human activity is developed to solve individual and social needs and dilemmas.⁷ It was Dewey who was the driving influence leading to the abandonment of traditional and authoritative methods in education. His belief that education should be personally engaging and experimental utilizing active student participation and practical applications. It was not without some horror that he observed the Progressive movement attempt to take his ideas to such an extreme as to preclude the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake as well as fostering critical and independent thinking in favour of driving the vast majority into various forms of vocational training in lieu of a true education which included the arts and sciences for all who so desired their pursuit.

In the end, education can be seen as the damn and spillway by which society

⁶ Yahoo Encyclopedia, Columbia University Press "John Dewey" (2006)

⁷ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "John Dewey" (2006)

attempts to control the huge potential energy, both creative and destructive contained within each new generation. Though secondary schools were saved from industry's attempts at turning it into a proletariat breeding pool for their workforces, the progressive movement has indeed managed to capture access to higher education, especially with respect to four year universities and graduate schools. But in the end, the desires of the American people, the students and faith of the educators in the education they teach has safeguarded the pursuit of knowledge. At least for the time being.

-JBKluge

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Class Struggle in America's Educational System

I'm beginning to suspect that we are all part of some enlightened initiation or hazing program to determine just how committed each of us are to becoming educators. The history, policies and structure of America's educational system seem to be irreconcilably set across purposes with offering the youth of America an equitable and fair education. Kazol and Anyon pickup where Nasaw leaves off in his book, "Schooled to Order,"¹ with their examinations of the specifics of how social class structure plays into drastic differences in the implementation and goals of how we educate our children according to the economic and social caste they are born into. That is not to say there is no vertical movement in American society, but it is clear that such rises in status and opportunity exemplary of the myth of the 'American Dream' are more often 'in-spite-of' rather than a result of our educational system.

In his book, "Savage Inequities," Jonathan Kazol charts a journey through the third world of America's educational system where some districts hold our children in such poverty and squalor that we find missions from The Daughters of Charity ministering in the no-fly-zone of East St. Louis, Illinois.² Here is an America rarely traveled or reported in the general press. We hear of funding battles and new legislation but rarely see with any detail the hardship and overwhelming sense of hopelessness from the students, their families and more alarmingly from the faculty and staffs of the school districts in question.

There is a ominous feeling of impending disaster, of social unrest or revolution fomented by disenfranchisement and despair. Schools built on tainted land, with leaking roofs, unsafe structures without heat or air-conditioning, no or outdated

¹ David Nasaw, "Schooled to Order" (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981)

² Jonathan Kazol, "Savage Inequities" (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) p.11

text books, substandard sanitary and cafeteria facilities existing within miles of showcase facilities across the tracks is on a par with offering the starving masses of pre-Revolutionary Paris a meager share of cake. The Third World within the United States is not a self-created quagmire inhabited by the slothful and drug addled. As the Rev. Wolff of Chicago's South Side points out in Kozol:

“There are good people in this neighborhood, determined and persistent and strong-minded people who have character and virtues you do not see everywhere. You say to yourself, ‘There’s something here that’s being purified by pain.’”³

And God help those who face such determination if it becomes flamed by anger.

Teachers such as Corla Hawkins⁴ give some measure of hope, but to ask the faculty and staff of America's public schools to personally shoulder the moral and economic burden of our society's responsibility and commitment to the education of our children is not only unfair but a sad indictment of who we are as a people. As individuals. And as a society.

While Kazol examines the broader picture surrounding inequities in both social and environmental conditions, Jean Anyon examines the perceptions, goals and objectives of a broad spectrum of schools according to the social classes they serve, essentially reinforcing Kazol's perspective and illustrating to political philosophies dealt with previously in Nasaw.

School Districts serving what Anyon defines as Working Class and Middle Class communities foster a range of emotions from despair to hopelessness and expectations of low achievement reinforcing the social order as we see reflected in the words of one principal to a new teacher in his school

³ Jonathan Kazol, “Savage Inequities” (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) p.42-43

⁴ Jonathan Kazol, “Savage Inequities” (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) pp. 47-51

“Just do your best. If they learn to add and subtract that’s a bonus.”⁵

Conversely Professional and Executive Elite Schools reflect the upward mobility and optimistic expectations of their milieu. Teachers and students share a curriculum that nurtures the cognitive and conceptual skills that imbues students with a broad understanding of the knowledge they are pursuing as well as the ability to think independently and critically for themselves with “more emphasis on children’s understanding the generalizations and other content of the books” they use.⁶

This week we have seen this same struggle played out in the New York City and State educational system, on the one hand school facilities for the metropolitan school district are woefully inadequate⁷ while on the other hand funding is being stalled at the state capitol in a battle against the ‘Robin Hoods’ of school reformation. Those funds that are available for stopgap measures are in turn stymied by a ideological battle between State Board of Education and the Roman Catholic Church. State guidelines mandating sex education in our public schools is in direct violation of Church policy.⁸ Meanwhile the empty parochial schools seen as a short-term solution to New York City’s public school overcrowding and other facility shortfalls stand empty.

It would indeed be ideal if the platitudes of present day reformers and politicians could effect any discernable movement toward improving the situation. It would be ideal to lift up the poorer schools across the nation without sacrificing the

⁵ Jean Anyon, “Social Class and School Knowledge” (Course Pak, 1981) p.129

⁶ Jean Anyon, “Social Class and School Knowledge” (Course Pak, 1981) p.135

⁷ Kenneth Lovett, “\$7.4B school aid bonkers: Bruno” (New York: New York Post, Feb. 28, 2006) p.3

⁸ David Andreatta, “Holy Snit: Sex-ed flap halts schools” (New York: New York Post, Feb. 28, 2006) p.2

funding and resources of the best.⁹ But the funding and resources are limited even in this “best of all possible worlds,” and so even Pangloss must admit a need to share or be willing to sacrifice another limb. It seems to me that only a national tax specifically earmarked to level the educational playing field which would in turn allow current funding by district to enhance schools beyond a nationally mandated standard and thereby create a truly equitable and fair educational system while still permitting local communities to commit whatever addition resources for local improvement they are free to determine on their own.

⁹ Jonathan Kazol, “Savage Inequities” (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) p.222-223

A Espada da Volta

My first reaction to Paulo Freire's writing was one of affronted resistance. His choice of introducing his concepts in terms of "right" and/or "correct" thinking smacked of Orwellian 'Newspeak,' and so seemed to me symptomatic of the spiritual disease Freire warns is characteristic of in today's oppressive system. I have an inherent resistance to being told how to think, however within this context Freire is actually offering us a grammar of how to think, not what to think. So, in the spirit of respecting what I at first perceived as an adversarial point of view I plowed on to find I not only respected but mostly agreed with Freire's non-ideologic ideology.¹ It is after all a characteristic of the language of revolution to provoke, and is here well done.

One of the most important tasks of critical educational practice is to make possible the conditions in which learners, in their interaction with one another and their teachers, engage in the experience of assuming themselves as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons: dreamers of possible utopias, capable of being angry because of their capacity to love.²

In his essay, *The Pedagogy of Freedom*, Paulo Freire defines teaching as the quintessential "human act."³ With the possible exception of the higher forms of aquatic mammals, modern human beings, specifically *homo sapiens sapiens* has the unique capacity to perceive and interact with their universe to actively shape

¹ Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of Freedom* (New York, Rowman & Littlefield: 2001), p.117

² Ibid., p.45.

³ Ibid., p. 63.

and determine their own future.⁴ This capacity is a direct result of our ability to use language to organize, express and share our thoughts and perceptions of the physical, social and political world around us.

Freire tells us that it is the act of critical education where the teacher and student are co-adventurers in the journey to construct knowledge and critical literacy that allows us – should we so choose - the opportunity to govern our own fate. To do more than recognize and identify the nouns and pronouns, the subjects and objects of existence, but the verbs and adjectives, the conditional and imperative conjugations that allow us to qualify, analyze and - more poignantly - understand the internal and external psychological, cultural, sociological and political factors historically driving the present and influencing the future. The environmental causalities that define the present do not drive us toward a preordained future.⁵ They influence. They do not predetermine. We are the makers of history. Not its victims.

In an ideal world, we construct knowledge through the course of living and observing the world critically. Knowledge is neither transferred nor instilled. We are constantly in the act of becoming more truly ourselves.⁶ Freire's epistemology is singularly humanistic. All knowledge is politicized and ethically

⁴ Ibid., p.104.

⁵ Ibid., p.26.

⁶ Ibid., p.52

charged, while firmly seated in an ideology founded on respect and human dignity.⁷ To do this as fully potentialized human beings as well as educators we must listen as intently as we speak⁸. We must be forever willing to learn in order to fulfill our potential as vibrant, aware and self-determining human beings. And since knowledge is a pro-active as well as interactive state of being, each moment is subject to the rigors of discipline, the call for critical reflection and subsequent action, for the taking of risks and the taking of responsibility.

We have a moral and ethical obligation to question the mainstream belief system and challenge its generative epistemology. To question the questions they pose and look for the subtext of the worldview they imply. The entrenched modality of knowledge and education which would have us educate to reinforce the status quo is a fallacy by definition since the present is ever changing and so we as educators by definition must educate with an eye to recognize, provoke and participate in and with the changes that define both our present and future.

⁷ Ibid., p.61.

⁸ Ibid., pp.105-107.

Vedic Traditions in Education

Having received a traditionally western preparatory and college education, my personal experience with Vedic educational traditions is of course negligible. However, my brief sojourn as an aspirant to become a premie of Prem Rawat, also known as Guru Maharaji gave me some small insight into *shravana*, the initial stage of the traditional vedic educational system.¹ We would sit and listen to a lesson with me rarely getting little more than a basic gist of what was being taught. After a blessing, the more advanced premies present would lead us in more in-depth discussions, afterward there would be a period of reflection and meditation which I suspect roughly corresponded to the steps of *manana* and *nididhyasana* as discussed Reagan's chapters on "Traditional Hindu and Buddhist educational thought."

It was the twilight of the counter-culture. I was in high school experimenting with various forms of non-traditional belief systems from Jung to Qabbalah to Gnosticism to Transcendental Meditation and in turn to Maharaji through a friend. What attracted me to each of these systems was the underlying gnostic epistemology for individual enlightenment and spiritual growth, its respect for all life, and a conceptual framework that recognizes the validity of all belief systems that share underlying ethical and conceptual foundations.

¹ Timothy Reagan, *Non-Western Educational Traditions*, (Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum: 2005), p172.

The singularly troubling issue I've always had with Hindu traditions has always been the caste system, which I always felt to be contrary to an overall belief in the respect for all life. In this I found Reagan's explanation of the historical and political origins of this custom both illuminating and sad. Sad to see so much good once again distorted to serve selfish and unethical advantage to oppress one group for the sake of the few.²

Many of the underlying concepts that drew me to what I read about Vedic educational traditions seem to have parallels in Paulo Freire, most notably, Freire's assertion that the "components of knowledge"³ are not knowledge in and of themselves but merely signposts on the path toward critical understanding. That listening is as poignant to the art of education as speaking.⁴ That we are living as part of the act of becoming and the journey from signifier to signified to significant is a joyous journey of revelation.

While I eventually drifted away from what I perceived to be the financial exploitation of his followers, many of the perspectives and attitudes toward living a humane life that are now such an intimate part of who I am today, first came to me over thirty years ago during my visits to the ashram in Albany, New York in the early to mid 1970's.

² Ibid., p.169.

³ Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of Freedom* (New York, Rowman & Littlefield: 2001), p.105-107.

⁴ Op. cid., Reagan, p172.

Teaching Philosophy

“Compassion is the essential, and perhaps it is the only law in the life of all humankind.”

-- Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*

The process of education is one of inspiration. As educators we must aspire to inspire and be inspired, to create and collaborate in a world that is an ever-evolving work of art where each of us is simultaneously artist and audience, producer and consumer, teacher and disciple. We are the executive producers who equip and guide the cast and crew of this great production through active development and preproduction.

As Executive Producers it is our job to set the collaborative environment for both the craft and communication of creating. We are the instigators of inspiration. We inculcate the writers, director and actors to problematize the obvious and encourage them to reach deeper, extend themselves farther into the vision not readily apparent in the script. We schedule and budget the time and resources needed to construct the meaning and tell the story of each particular production. Each has its story to be told, and as educators we find ourselves at the shoulder of this fresh new talent who sits both thrilled and terrified with pen in hand, ready to take their turn. When the scene seems to be set, we usher them into wardrobe and makeup to try on the roles they have written for themselves and each other. They rehearse, improvise, form cabals and alliances. There is laughter. And tears. They rebel and compromise, and at times stand fast eventually creating something new and unique from the seeds originally sown and now cross

pollinated, a flower being something more than intended.

In order to accomplish this we need to be active participants contributing to this story. We must understand and reflect upon the setting, historically as well as culturally to weave the key strands that influence and drive the forces that govern us, the plot and subplots that will imbue and lend meaning to the theme of our lives.

We must endeavor to prepare our students to understand and critically reflect upon the various roles they will be asked to perform throughout their lives, in doing so, it is necessary to look upon the other performers in this drama with insight, empathy and whenever possible compassion. We can give students the tools and help them develop the crafts necessary for the roles they will play during their lives but ultimately the performance is their own to interpret and portray. As educators, we can inspire and guide the character arc and performances played out during our brief tenure with each student. We can provoke and inspire, but not impart. For knowledge to have meaning it must be incorporated into one's life philosophy.

Eventually, every production must be released to go out into the world and find an audience. To provoke, entertain or flounder. To be experienced, lived, acted and interacted upon. So in that sense there is no such thing as a Teaching Philosophy. There is only a philosophy of life and how to live. It is part of an unending cycle of becoming that is – indeed – for both teacher and student the performance of our lives.